



# **CLEVELAND YOUTH COMMISSION:**

**FINAL REPORT TO THE**

**POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER**

**APRIL 2022**

**LEADERS  
UNLOCKED**







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# INTRODUCTION

The **Cleveland Youth Commission (CYC)** was established in **2020** with funding from the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC), and is now in its second year and has continued to be supported by Steve Turner PCC.

The CYC is a peer-led project that consists of **28 active members from a variety of diverse backgrounds and lived experiences**. The Youth Commission enables young people aged 14-25 living in Cleveland to voice their opinions on key issues affecting policing and crime in their area.

The key objectives of the Cleveland Youth Commission 2021-2022 were as follows:

- **Recruit and train 28 young people** from a variety of backgrounds and life experiences in Cleveland.
- Support and encourage CYC members to identify **key priorities** that they feel need to be addressed during the project.
- **Plan and deliver interactive workshops** with young people from across Cleveland during the CYC 'Big Conversation'.
- Equip CYC members with the **practical skillset** required for leading workshops.
- **Assist CYC members to analyse the research data gathered, and develop key findings and recommendations to present** at the Cleveland Youth Commission 'Big Conversation' conference to the PCC, Police and partner agencies.
- Allow CYC members opportunities **to work closely with Cleveland Police on projects to influence decision making** and promote the work of Cleveland police.

The Cleveland Youth Commission is facilitated by **Leaders Unlocked**, a social enterprise that has successfully delivered the Youth Commission peer-led model across 15 other 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](http://www.leaders-unlocked.org)

## ABOUT THIS REPORT

This report is founded on evidence provided by young people living in Cleveland who have participated in peer-led research. The CYC has reached **over 1,300 young people** from across Cleveland in 2021- 2022, exceeding their original target of 1,200. Responses have been collected through a variety of sources including: peer-led workshops, engagement surveys, social media posts and outreach stands.

Within this report **each priority is covered thoroughly**, including **an in-depth analysis of young people's perspectives**, building upon first-hand experiences, quotes from individual participants and data collected through social media posts, questionnaires and quizzes. All the peer-led research data gathered has been collated into **key findings and recommendations developed by CYC members**.

This report is intended to be an **authentic, inclusive and independent account of young people's opinions** accumulated through the CYC 'Big Conversation'. The report proposes a series of recommendations and aims to support the Cleveland Police and Crime Plan as well as any other work by the Police and Crime Commissioner, Cleveland Police and relevant partner agencies.



## ABOUT THE CLEVELAND YOUTH COMMISSION

The **Cleveland Youth Commission** gives young people a voice on police and crime issues within their local communities. The CYC works in partnership with the Police and Crime Commissioner, Steve Turner (PCC) to **challenge and advise** the work of the PCC, Cleveland Police and other local stakeholders.

Through leadership training, CYC members created 6 engaging **peer-led workshops that were delivered to other young people**. These **peer-to-peer conversations** created **wide-ranging** responses from young people with lived experiences of the priority issues. Research collected during the Big Conversation was analysed by the CYC members to produce the key findings and recommendations put forward in this report. The findings and recommendations were also presented to the PCC, Cleveland Police and partners at the Cleveland Youth Commission 'Big Conversation conference' on 15th March 2022.

The young-person-centred approach of the project has allowed members to further develop their **confidence and leadership qualities**. The peer-to-peer engagement model implemented is also beneficial to participants of the project, **providing a safe space for open and honest conversations**.

## WHAT WE DID

### RECRUITMENT

In September 2021, Leaders Unlocked carried out a 2-stage recruitment process. First we distributed an easy to access recruitment pack which included an application form and guidance information 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 sector. Our aim was to ensure that the CYC members were true **representatives of their communities** be that by locations, backgrounds or life experiences.

We have recruited **28 CYC members** from the following diverse backgrounds:

- **14 Male (50%), 13 Female (46%), 1 non-binary (4%)**
- **7 BAME (25%)**
- **5 identify as LGBTQ+ (19%)**

The geographic spread of Youth Commission members was made up of young people from the following areas:

**Coulby Newham, Eaglescliffe, Guisborough, Hartlepool, Middlesbrough, Redcar, Saltburn-by-the-Sea, Stockton-on-Tees, and Yarm.**

## IDENTIFYING PRIORITY ISSUES

In September 2021 the CYC members hosted its inaugural meeting, focusing on members discussing the **key issues faced by young people** that the project should focus on for this Phase.

CYC members decided that the following priorities were the important issues that young people living in Cleveland were concerned about:

1. **Relationship with Police**
2. **Mental Health**
3. **Drug and Alcohol Abuse and Gang Crime**
4. **Abusive Relationships**
5. **Hate Crime and Online Crime**
6. **Anti-Social Behaviour**

## CREATING THE TOOLS FOR THE CLEVELAND YOUTH COMMISSION

- CYC members **co-designed peer-led workshops for each of the priority issues**. This included creating presentations, quizzes, discussions and interactive activities. In workshops, participants were actively **encouraged to voice their opinions** on any priority they personally connected to, regardless of the workshop theme.
- To capture young people's responses, we developed a Youth Commission postcard depicting the six priorities and providing young people with a structure to record their views and suggested solutions. The postcards allowed for **anonymous responses to be collected on any of the 6 priorities without the fear of shame or stigma**.
- To **further encourage honesty and open conversation CYC utilised accessible online surveys** for each of the priorities. These surveys were distributed to educational settings, youth groups and other young people's services to help gather an even wider range of young people's opinions.

## TRAINING AND PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT OF CLEVELAND YOUTH COMMISSION MEMBERS

Throughout the process, CYC members were given **continuous opportunities for personal development**. Members received training on effective campaign designing and facilitation skills, as well as gaining a stronger understanding of how the Police operate. This involved a guided tour of Cleveland Police HQ control room, and conversations with officers on issues such as the Laws surrounding hate crime.

Through these varied activities, CYC members were able to develop their skills in various areas, including:

- Designing and creating engaging peer-led workshops
- Presenting and facilitating workshops
- Building on communicational skills including public speaking and active listening
- Networking with local organisations
- Gaining new leadership qualities
- Empowering young people to build on their lived experience to convey key messages

## JOINT WORK WITH CLEVELAND POLICE

CYC members were invited to attend **two Youth Ethics Boards** to discuss: the **recording of hate incidents, and the handling of protests by the Cleveland police force**, giving the police a fresh young person perspective on these serious matters.

Members also attended **IAG Youth Panel meetings** that gave CYC the opportunity to share their opinions on a range of topics affecting policing and crime. This included what **classifies as a Hate Crime and how did Cleveland police handle domestic abuse during Covid-19**.

Following on from discussions at the IAG Youth Panel, CYC members were particularly concerned with the lack of awareness of the signs of abuse and how young people can access support. This led to the production of the **first CYC TikTok**, with members taking active roles in designing, filming and acting to produce a short, impactful film.

In **October 2021**, members teamed up with Cleveland police to construct a social media campaign around **'Mischief night'**, a night where Anti-Social Behaviour is traditionally particularly high. Through the use of still images and catchy slogans such as **"don't throw away your life, think twice"** and **"you wouldn't do this to your nana"**, **Cleveland Youth Commission** in partnership with police were able to spread key messages to other young people that Anti-Social Behaviour is a serious offence.

In February 2022 members **sat on the bidding panel for a detached youth board project**. CYC members were able to contribute a young person's perspective on what a detached youth project should look like, and subsequently **played an active role in key decision making** within this project.

## WHO WE'VE REACHED

The CYC has actively engaged with over **1,300 young people** across Cleveland. In total, the CYC has **delivered 55 in-person engagement events** in a wide range of localities across Cleveland, in addition to six successful online surveys based on our priorities and numerous Instagram polls.

The breakdown for each priority is as follows:

<b>Relationship with Police</b>	<b>119</b>
<b>Mental Health</b>	<b>447</b>
<b>Drug and Alcohol Abuse and Gang Crime</b>	<b>173</b>
<b>Abusive Relationship</b>	<b>397</b>
<b>Hate Crime and Online Crime</b>	<b>99</b>
<b>Anti-Social Behaviour</b>	<b>84</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>1319</b>

## OUR PARTNERS

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

Acklam Grange School	Hartlepool Youth Service	Stockton Riverside College
Bright Minds Bright Futures	Hartlepool council YOS	The Cornerhouse Youth Project
Cleveland Police	Middlesbrough College	The King's Academy
Cleveland OPCC	NETA training groups	The Junction
Conyers School	Outwood Academy	The Skills Academy
Durham University International Centre	Redcar & Cleveland College	Teesside University
Freebrough Academy	Redcar Boxing Club	Trinty Church Youth Group
Hartlepool College	Stockton Council & YOS	Youth Focus

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

Ammelia Saul	Jack Harland	Nathan Osborne
Andrew Peacock	Jacob Varley	Paige Costello
Aqib Sajjad	Jagraj Singh	Phoenix Timney
Biani Onassis Stevenson	Jayden Foster	Philippa Newton
Chloe Prior	Kendal Douglass	Phoebe Grimwood
Catrina (Rina) Wardman	Liam Short	Saiyra Khan
Emily Howard	Lily Atkinson	Samirah Hussain
Holly Chapman	Martyna Goliasz	Shay Miah
Isabella (Bella) Fitzhigh	Michal (Mike) Ewertowski	Shoaib Salehi
Jack Ball	Mohammed (Ali) Sajjad	Zoe Stephenson

A final special thank you to this year's Project Coordinator Chloe Wright who was instrumental in bringing the project to fruition.





# PRIORITY 1: MENTAL HEALTH



**Cleveland Youth Commission** has spoken to **447 young people** in Cleveland on the topic of mental health awareness. Within today's society conversations surrounding mental health are slowly becoming more acceptable and less stigmatised. However, the young people of Cleveland believe that more education is needed within their area, particularly around male mental health, as young men still felt stigmatised. With an increasing awareness of mental health issues, more young people are seeking support, however, support services are over stretched and exhausted, which is having a direct impact on the people that need them most. More awareness of mental health first aid and self-help methods were called for by young people.

## WHAT WE FOUND

Most young people agreed that their mental health significantly decreased due to the covid-19 pandemic. **45.3%** of young people reported having struggled with mental health issues in the recent past, however out of the **45.3%** over **43.3%** also told us they would not seek mental health support services.

When further questioned why young people would not contact mental health support services, **stigma and a fear of being judged** remained a significant barrier to young people, particularly for young men.

***"Men's mental health is really stigmatised, I feel like I can't talk to any of my mates without being laughed at."***



**"People are struggling and not getting enough help. Since covid people's mental health has gotten worse and nobody speaks up"**

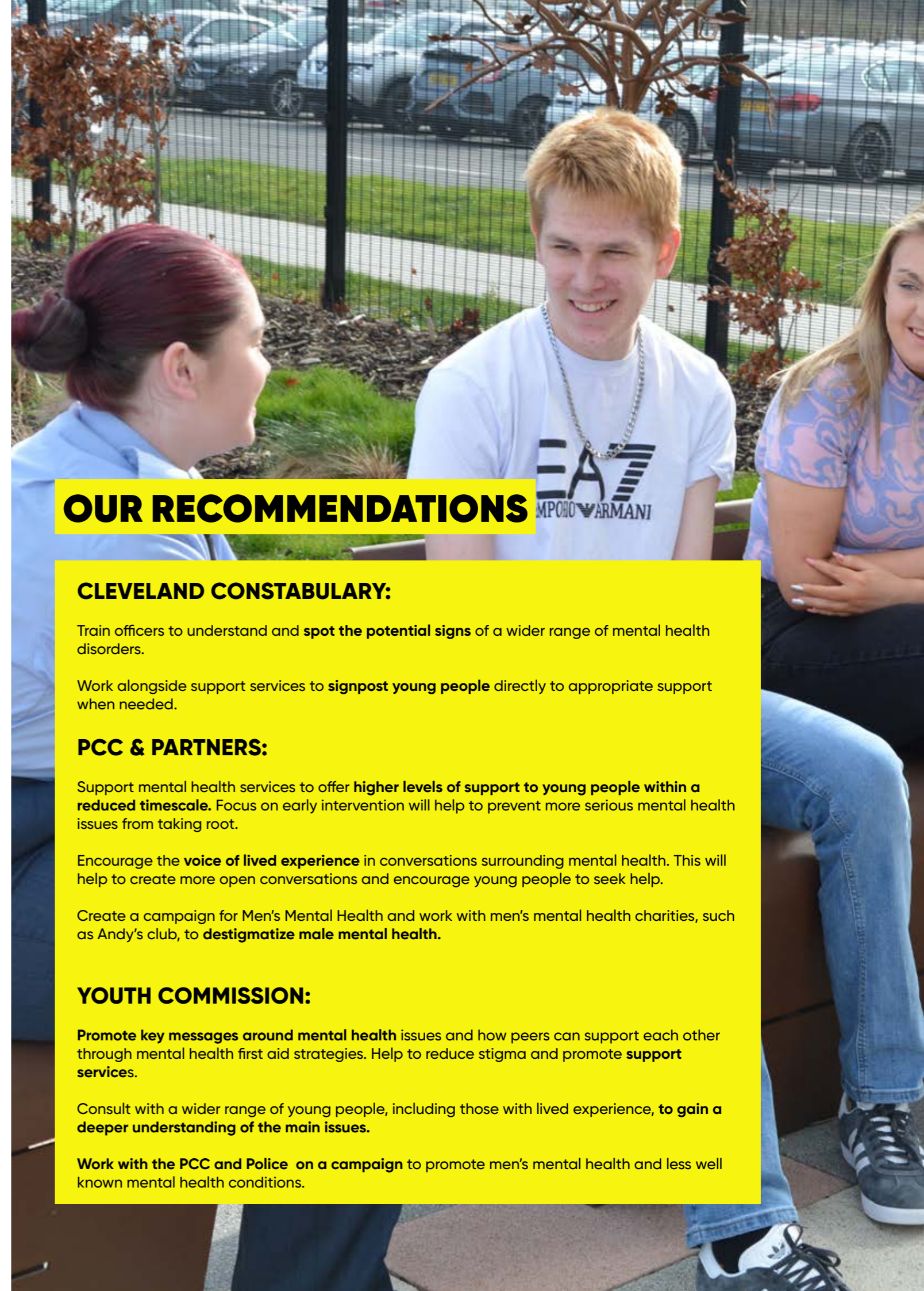
Stigma was not the only barrier faced by young people accessing mental health support. Young people told us that mental health **facilities** were **often inadequate**. **52.2%** of young people felt that support services were not as effective as they could be, with facilities being described as being unable to meet demand, requiring significant waiting times and lacking required support.

There was a range of causes that can lead to a decline in mental health. **Social media** played a key part in this decline, particularly during the pandemic. Increasing time spent on social media led to young people comparing themselves to **unrealistic beauty standards** and their perception of themselves was negatively impacted because of this.

**"I think that social media can trick a lot of people as for the most part what you post on social media is a glorified illusion of your life. In particular, Instagram. And someone who is not seen in society as pretty or handsome can see that it triggers anxiety."**

Although there is increasing awareness and understanding of mental health issues such as depression and anxiety within the police force and partners, further work is needed to raise awareness and destigmatize a wider range of lesser-known mental health conditions. Greater education on a variety of mental health issues within the police and community will provide a more well-rounded understanding and better support for those experiencing a mental health crisis.

**"There doesn't seem to be a lot of support for young people struggling with mental health and then when they get involved in Crime, CAMHS waiting list is far too long and interventions are not happening soon enough, meaning young people are struggling while engaged in crime."**



## OUR RECOMMENDATIONS

### CLEVELAND CONSTABULARY:

Train officers to understand and **spot the potential signs** of a wider range of mental health disorders.

Work alongside support services to **signpost young people** directly to appropriate support when needed.

### PCC & PARTNERS:

Support mental health services to offer **higher levels of support to young people within a reduced timescale**. Focus on early intervention will help to prevent more serious mental health issues from taking root.

Encourage the **voice of lived experience** in conversations surrounding mental health. This will help to create more open conversations and encourage young people to seek help.

Create a campaign for Men's Mental Health and work with men's mental health charities, such as Andy's club, to **destigmatize male mental health**.

### YOUTH COMMISSION:

**Promote key messages around mental health** issues and how peers can support each other through mental health first aid strategies. Help to reduce stigma and promote **support services**.

Consult with a wider range of young people, including those with lived experience, to **gain a deeper understanding of the main issues**.

**Work with the PCC and Police on a campaign** to promote men's mental health and less well known mental health conditions.





# PRIORITY 2: DRUG AND ALCOHOL ABUSE AND GANG CRIME



**The Cleveland Youth Commission** has spoken to **173 young people** in Cleveland relating to Drug and Alcohol Abuse and Gang Crime. There is a direct connection between drug and alcohol abuse and gang crime, with some young people selling drugs to provide themselves with a much-needed income, or to allow themselves further access to drugs for personal use. Drugs were seen as a form of entertainment for some young people. However, a majority of participants suggested that drugs and alcohol are too often used by young people who struggle with mental health issues. Gang crime was also related to a lack of youth activities in the area with young people expressing gangs and subsequent criminal behaviours coming about due to a lack of job opportunities.

## WHAT WE FOUND

Young people reported being concerned with the over accessibility of drugs in Cleveland, an issue that has remained a high priority since last year's CYC report. While we found a strong connection between the availability of drugs and gang activity, young people felt more comfortable discussing drug and alcohol-related issues over gangs due to fear of repercussions.

***"Lots of drugs easy accessible on the streets."***

Young people were not often aware of county lines, and the terminology surrounding it. Many were shocked to hear that gang recruitment is a form of grooming but recognised that young people are vulnerable and 'easy targets' from organised gangs



*"It is easy money dealing drugs and young people are easy targets to get into drugs."*

*"Go and talk to secondary school children as they use a lot of social media and can easily get swept up into this through the peer pressure of friends and people older than them"*

Young people told us that preventative methods, need to be **stimulating and interactive** such as in the form of youth clubs or sports teams. Having more opportunities for young people to **build on talents and skills** will divert them away from seeing drugs and gangs as attractive options of income or entertainment.

*" There needs to be an increase in opportunities for young people, with good money so you are not tempted into gangs."*

There needs to be a greater focus by the PCC, police and partners on **how to escape gangs** once you are in the cycle. Fear of gang violence against those speaking out was the biggest barrier for young people seeking help.

*"Acknowledge victims as victims and not just offenders"*

Further education is needed on both topics. In regards to drugs and alcohol, **90%** of young people believed alcohol is as damaging as illegal drugs. Many young people felt that more education into the consequences of addiction, as well as the impact of living with an addict, is needed.

The recent rise in reports of spiking in the night-time economy has impacted young people, and particularly young women's, feelings of safety and confidence in public spaces. This impact is reflected in our research with young women wanting to see pubs and clubs better educated on preventing incidents and a stronger police presence in "vulnerable areas".

*"Education and imprisonment is the best punishment for spiking. It is mostly women getting spiked, we're scared to leave and go and have fun because of spiking done by men."*

## OUR RECOMMENDATIONS

### CLEVELAND CONSTABULARY:

Promote ways out of gang crime that make young people **feel safe and protected against retaliation** and violence. Young people are more likely to be the victims.

**Increase police presence** in the night-time economy, and work with hospitality venues to raise awareness of spiking prevention.

### PCC & PARTNERS:

Work with youth organisations to tackle gang crime and give **alternative opportunities** to young people.

Work with the CYC to **raise awareness of county lines** and the dangers of drugs and gangs. Promote how and where to go to get out of a gang.

Create an awareness-raising campaign around safety at night with the CYC and partners and include Ask for Angela.

### YOUTH COMMISSION:

Raise awareness of gangs and county lines, including a **focus on grooming through social media**. Work with the PCC to raise awareness of the consequences of gang life.

Promote how to **spot the signs of someone being groomed** and the support services that help young people to get out of gangs.

Discuss the **causes of drug use and the motivation for joining a gang**. Collaborate with Cleveland Police and those with lived experience of the issues to explore the causes and effects.





# PRIORITY 3: ABUSIVE RELATIONSHIPS



The Cleveland Youth Commission has spoken to **397 young people** in Cleveland about the topic of abusive relationships, including what an unhealthy relationship looks like and how to remove yourself from one. Building on the previous reports findings, social media played a major role in encouraging unhealthy relationships, with 61.7% of participants suggesting that social media, music culture, and advertisement impacts men's behaviour and perceptions of women. Although 53.2% of survey respondents feel there is enough information on how to get support, many young people, particularly males, felt they would face stigma if they accessed support for an abusive relationship.

## WHAT WE FOUND

The majority of young people were **unsure of the different signs of abusive relationships such as coercive control**. This was especially true for **young men**, who often dismissed controlling behaviour and emotional abuse as signs of their partners insecurity. Additional education on identifying all types of abuse is needed.

*"Abuse should be spoken about more and should be educated on how to spot the signs."*

*"Boys don't realise girls blowing up their phone is abusive and girls can be really emotionally abusive. Boys also feel like they can't come forward and tell people they have been abused and think they have to deal with it."*

Young people felt that they particularly lacked awareness when it came to **online grooming**. With social media playing an increasing role in young people's social lives, a stronger focus on online exploitation and the signs of this was needed. Parents, teachers, the police and young people would all benefit from additional education.



**"Too many young people are checking phones without other persons consent."**

In terms of prevention strategies, young people preferred to seek support from their **peers or people of a similar age**. They told us that it was easier to open up to someone their own age, as they would be more likely to understand and offer better advice. Overall, young people wanted a service built around **a peer-model support system**.

**"I would rather have a younger person to counsel me. A 17 year old doesn't want to talk to an older person- they'll feel daft. Drop-in sessions would be best."**

Helplines and support for victims of abusive relationships should be available in a wide range of places. Young people told us everyday environments, such as supermarkets would be easier to seek help in rather than potentially intimidating police stations or official sites. The general public needs to have a greater awareness of the signs of abuse as well as the key phrases and hand signals used by victims in public spaces in order to alert they need help.

**" We need more discreet ways to report. Teach young children and teenagers their rights regarding abuse, how to spot it and what to do if they do."**

## OUR RECOMMENDATIONS

### CLEVELAND CONSTABULARY:

Include people with lived experience in officer training to ensure that officers are appropriately **educated and are aware of different forms of abuse** and the impact this has on young people's lives.

**More collaborative support is needed by the police and support services for victims of abuse** via online grooming

**Officers should be more present in community settings**, where victims may feel more confident coming forward.

### PCC & PARTNERS:

Work on a campaign with the Youth Commission to raise awareness of the signs of abusive relationships, including easy ways for victims to come forward. This can be promoted in the community and local businesses. **Greater awareness will lead to more successful reporting.**

Increase **funding to victim support services** to help victims of abuse get the appropriate help.

### YOUTH COMMISSION:

Expand outreach to **engage a wider range of young people**, including in detached youth settings, such as in city centres, as well as getting the message out to rural areas.

Work on **breaking down the gender imbalance** that is present. Further conversations are needed surrounding male stigma.

Raise awareness of the harms of **grooming and online abuse**.





# PRIORITY 4: HATE CRIME AND ONLINE CRIME



**The Cleveland Youth Commission** has spoken to **99 young people** in Cleveland on the issue of Hate Crime and Online Crime. Our findings on social media show that young people are aware of how social media allows perpetrators to commit anonymous attacks on their victims. Overall, young people were unsure how or if they would report hate crimes committed against themselves due to their mistrust in the police. However they were more comfortable taking on the role of an active bystander when witnessing a hate crime.

## WHAT WE FOUND

**Hate crimes due to race, gender and sexuality** were the leading causes of concern for young people within Cleveland. **Online Hate Crime** was also a concern, particularly for more **marginalized groups**. Young people told us of suffering hateful messages online with little awareness of how this could be reported to the police or other organisations. Young people were particularly wary of the anonymous nature of online crime.

*"I feel like people are too comfortable saying hateful and rude comments online and in public because there is no consequence and is so normalised."*

*"A lot of people are abused online on social media on fake accounts pretending to be someone they're not."*

**70%** of young people did not believe that the police dealt with hate crimes in an appropriate manner, with some young people saying that they felt that the police were sometimes perpetrators of hate crime and discrimination. Often young people were **unaware of the procedures** that police go through when dealing with hate crimes and hate incidents. More education on the police's responses to hate crimes and hate incidents is needed, as is building positive bridges between marginalised groups and the police.



**"I am a victim of hate crime as a member of the LGBTQ+ community. They hung around hurled abuse at me and made me not want to walk around the areas. The police said there is nothing they can do."**

Young people felt that Hate Crime is a serious offence and should not be tolerated. However, only **54.5%** of young people knew how to report a Hate Crime and only **25%** of young people would feel comfortable making a report as a victim. This is due to a **lack of awareness and a fear of not being taken seriously**.

Young people said they are keen to help as witnesses to hate crimes, either by recording, personal intervention or by contacting an appropriate adult.

**"I speak up to any hate crime or sexual comments it's not right to sit by as a bystander."**

Young people had a variety of solutions to tackle hate crime within their area. Better promotion of **punishments** was suggested to act as a deterrent, as well as more policing of social media. Young people were unaware of '**sentence uplifts**', sometimes leading to the belief that hate crime goes unpunished. A general consensus shows us that young people also wanted additional education for themselves on what a hate crime is and how to report this.

**"We should bring hate crime victims in to talk on their experiences of being a hate crime victim to the police force and in schools."**

## OUR RECOMMENDATIONS

### CLEVELAND CONSTABULARY:

Promote stories of successful hate crime convictions and positive sentence uplifts. This will **raise public confidence in reporting**.

Take more of a **proactive stance against hate crime**, including online crime, where impacts may be less visible, but equally damaging to victims.

**Celebrate diversity within Cleveland Police**. The police should lead by example within the community.

### PCC & PARTNERS:

Increase promotion of **alternative reporting methods**, such as the True Vision and third-party reporting centres.

**Celebrate and encourage diversity across Cleveland** through the promotion of local campaign groups and events to destigmatize marginalized groups.

Work with CYC to develop a **campaign to raise awareness of what hate crime is and what hate incidents are**.

### YOUTH COMMISSION:

Continue to **raise awareness of hate crime and hate incidents** and include the voice of those with lived experience to help show the harm caused to victims.

Work alongside the PCC and Cleveland police to **promote alternative reporting methods and support services available to victims**.

Encourage young people to become active bystanders against hate crime and hate incidents.





# PRIORITY 5: ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR



The Cleveland Youth Commission has spoken to **84 young people** in Cleveland about the topic of Anti-Social Behaviour. We found that young people were concerned with rising Anti-Social Behaviour levels in their area. Damage to property (particularly brick-throwing), intimidation from young people in gangs, fires, and misuse of vehicles, such as Mopeds, were some of the most prominent forms of Anti-Social Behaviour that dominated young people's communities.

## WHAT WE FOUND

A majority of young people we spoke to thought that the **root cause** of anti-social behaviour in Cleveland was upbringing and childhood trauma, such as neglect. By tackling this root cause through support services and a better understanding of the impact **childhood trauma** has on behaviour we believe that anti-social behaviour can be reduced.

**"Individuals backgrounds and learnt behaviour are some of the root causes of Anti-Social Behaviour."**

Young people told us that there were **not enough facilities or opportunities** for young people in the area which left them few alternatives to anti-social behaviour. They suggested that an increase and improvement of local facilities such as youth clubs would reduce the problem and encourage young people to explore alternative ways to reduce boredom.

**"We as young people get told to not hang around the shops, can't go to the parks cause we're too old for them, don't go round the streets, don't go on fields. Where are we supposed to go?"**



*"If we had places for young people to go to where there could be tutors, volunteers, police officers, places for people to express their feelings and go to for advice, games, graffiti wall to make sure if people do it they do it legally and in a safe place, food and a lot more."*

With reference to Relationship with the Police priority, young people felt targeted by the police when it came to crimes of an Anti-Social nature (**40%** of young people agreed and another **40%** were unsure). The police should be understanding and sympathetic to the root causes and the impact this has on young people. A **stronger police presence along with youth workers and mentors** is needed to reduce anti-social behaviour and allow the police an opportunity to become a familiar face within the community.

*"The police should treat reports from everyone the same. Police ignore reports from the younger generation."*

*"More police or neighbourhood enforcement officers present and communication with the local secondary school is needed in this area as getting out of hand."*

Young people were strongly in favour of restorative justice solutions to anti-social behaviour. They told us that having a conversation between police, perpetrator and victim would allow for resolution and meaningful change.

Change is needed when it comes to arresting and convicting for Anti-Social Behaviour. **30%** believed that the police were not doing enough whilst the remainder were unsure. 50% of young people that we asked did not know what the punishments for Anti-Social Behaviour were.

*"Explaining to young people what it actually is but also listening to what we have to say to it so together we come up with a solution to help tackle it."*

*"More community conversation to see wider impact."*

## OUR RECOMMENDATIONS

### CLEVELAND CONSTABULARY:

Increase **police patrols**, paying particular attention to areas of high anti-social behavior. More people would like to see the police taking an **active role within the community**.

Increase **surveillance in the local community** in order to reduce the level of crime.

Where possible, **offer restorative justice solutions** for anti-social behavior.

### PCC & PARTNERS:

Support the development of **community-based facilities for young people**. This will provide more productive alternatives to anti-social behaviour.

Provide **funding to more young people's support services** to help tackle the root causes of anti-social behavior.

**Promote restorative justice** as a positive solution to Anti-Social Behaviour.

### YOUTH COMMISSION:

Support Cleveland Police in finding **new ways to engage with young people** and create conversation in a wider age range.

Work in education settings with young people and discuss the impact anti-social behavior has on the community by **promoting the voice of victims**.

Work to **break down stereotypes** that stigmatize all young people as perpetrators of gangs and anti-social behavior.





# PRIORITY 6: RELATIONSHIP WITH THE POLICE



The Cleveland Youth Commission has spoken to 119 young people in Cleveland in relation to young people's relationship with the police. Young people held very mixed opinions on the police. Although young people accepted that there are good police officers and some even shared positive experiences with the police, many held negative opinions of police and believed that further work is needed to improve the relationship.

## WHAT WE FOUND

50% of the young people we spoke to felt targeted by the police, with factors such as where they live, who they're friends with and what they wear affecting the treatment they felt they received from police.

*"Police look at us in Hemlington as always doing something bad when really we have nothing to do so what do they expect"*

Many young people believe that this stereotyping and disrespect from the police was due to unconscious bias held by the police against young people. The topic of institutional racism was also of high concern for young people. Issues concerning unconscious bias and institutional racism need to be reviewed and where standards are not met, consequences against offending officers are needed. Young people from diverse or underrepresented backgrounds felt it was vitally important to see themselves reflected in their police force.



*"Police should be from working class backgrounds and resemble us."*

*"I would like to see more police officers who represent me, who are black. I think it would also be useful to have a training courses and bursaries so more black officers can become police officers."*

Young people had a variety of **solutions to improve the relationship** between young people and the police. A general consensus was held amongst young people that more activities are needed in the area to steer young people away from crime. Young people also felt it was important to see a stronger police presence within the community, **75%** of young people were unaware who their local PCSO is.

*"The police need training on how to deal with Young people, we won't respect you if you don't respect us. We need more services such as football pitches to keep us busy and off the streets"*

Within both our online surveys and workshops it was evident that young people were **unclear of their stop and search rights**. Many young people felt that they had been unfairly stopped and searched in the past which led to further feelings of mistrust and a lack of confidence in the police. More education is needed to inform young people of their rights.

*"I was stopped and searched because I was with a friend who has been in trouble before. I haven't been in trouble but was stopped anyway."*

*" I was stopped and searched for a knife when I was only carrying handlebars. The police were rough with me and I lost a lot of respect for the police after that."*

## OUR RECOMMENDATIONS

### CLEVELAND CONSTABULARY:

Increase **community engagement with young people** in positive, non-crime related situations.

Ensure that **officers represent the communities they serve. Work to diversify** Cleveland Police and promote what the force is doing to achieve this.

Place a higher focus on **addressing potential unconscious bias** when engaging with young people.

### PCC & PARTNERS:

Work with Cleveland Police to **attract a more diverse workforce**.

Work with CYC to **raise awareness of Stop and Search rights** and policing procedures to help raise public confidence.

Develop new campaigns that **bring police and young people together** to build trust.

### YOUTH COMMISSION:

Raise greater **awareness of Stop and search rights** amongst young people.

Act as an impartial third party to **allow police and young people to develop new positive relationships**.

Continue to work with Cleveland Police through the **Youth IAG and Youth Ethics groups** as well as being a **sounding board for the police and OPCC**.



# CONCLUSION: LOOKING TOWARDS THE FUTURE



The Cleveland Youth Commission members have dedicated their free time to ensuring the success of this project. We are very proud of them, and extremely thankful. They **have displayed true commitment** to the big conversation and each member has brought a new skill and perspective to the table. Without this dynamic and vibrant team of individuals, this project could not have been as beneficial as it has.

On behalf of Leaders Unlocked and the OPCC, we would also like to **pass our thanks to all of the local partners and their young people** who have been involved in this project. Without these organisations, we could never have held such wide-ranging conversations with a diverse range of young people.

The CYC is **committed to continue working alongside the Police and Crime Commissioner, Cleveland Police and Partners** in order to carry out this amazing peer-led research and empower the voices of all young people across the region. The Cleveland Youth Commission will continue to reach out to even more young people and empower them to share their opinions, experiences and perspectives.

The Cleveland Youth Commission will be an **active partner** during the implementation of the recommendations that have been set out in this report. It is evident that more needs to be done to **break generational stigma**. The Cleveland Youth Commission is committed to supporting young people in finding their voices and influencing the decisions that most affect their lives.

# TESTIMONIALS

"When I was elected as Police and Crime Commissioner, I wanted to ensure that I listened to all of Cleveland's communities – taking in opinions from people of all ages, ethnicities and backgrounds.

"A really important part of that is understanding what the next generation want to see done about crime and community safety issues in their area. In just a few short years, these young people will be taking bigger steps in their lives and should have confidence to do so without fear of crime or other issues.

"The Youth Commission are such an inspiring, diverse group of young people, with a passion for making a difference in their communities. The vast consultation they've conducted gives leaders like me a priceless insight into what issues young people in Cleveland are concerned about – and what they think we should do to tackle it.

"Not only do they greatly assist me in my role as PCC to develop policies and initiatives that address their needs, they also destroy any misguided views people have about young people and their desire to be a positive force in their communities.

"I want to thank them for the work they've done in preparing this report and look forward to working with them again next year."

**Steve Turner – Cleveland Police and Crime Commissioner**

"It has been an absolute pleasure working with the Youth Commission over the last 12 months. I have been inspired by some of the passion, commitment, and enthusiasm to influence meaningful change within policing."

"The young people should be proud of their involvement and commitment to the Youth Commission and I look forward to working with them in the future."

**Daryll Tomlinson – Chief Inspector**

"I first became involved with the Cleveland Youth Commission midway through 2021 at our first Youth Independent Advisory Group (YIAG) which we held via 'Teams'. We have also held key Scrutiny Panels that covered Policing and Community issues including Stop & Search and Use of Force powers."

"Most recently we have covered Hate crimes, Equality & Diversity and Domestic violence during which the Youth Commission members were highly engaged, objective and invested in shaping and developing the relationship between our communities and the police service."

"The Youth Commission are currently working on a social media release to raise awareness around Domestic Violence and Violence against Women and Girls, the importance of which has been recognised nationally and has been added to the Strategic Policing Requirement."

**Sergeant Martin Skirving-Chehab – Neighbourhood Policing Team**



"I am proud to work with the Youth Commission members who are today's and tomorrow's future leaders, helping to improve the policing service we deliver to our communities."

**Nicholas Fuller – Engagement Team PCSO**

The Cleveland Youth Commission have supported Cleveland Police by engaging in important discussions and have helped build relations between Cleveland Police and the local community. The Commission provide invaluable insight and guidance that helps influence how we as an organisation behave. The group display leadership and inclusivity that is admirable, demonstrating their passion for their community. I look forward to working with the Commission in the future.

**Neal Gillson – Operational Ethics Lead, Cleveland Police**

"I would like to first of all thank each and every member who has worked on this years commission. I have never had such an opportunity to work with a vibrant and dynamic team. All your brilliance's is displayed through all your hard work! Every one of you should be as proud as I am of you, the change in confidence I have seen in you all from September is amazing. I hope you have all enjoyed your time on the commission just as much as I have, through our monthly meetings and my daily WhatsApp's it's been lovely to see your friendships blooms.

"As leaders of the next generation we are all playing key roles in encouraging our peers to reflect on their experiences and find their own independent voice and opinion. You have all shown compassion for your peers during your workshops and this is displayed in the quality and quantity of responses. Over 1,300 responses, just wow! The key skill set that our members have developed and nurtured for the duration of this project will be transferable for wherever life takes them."

"I'd like to extend a big thank you on behalf of CYC to all staff at Leaders Unlocked especially Kaytea and Emily for their consistent support and encouragement, The PCC and Cleveland Police for making this project possible and allowing the members multiple opportunities to get involved with your own project. I can't wait to see the fruition of our recommendations and the impact this will have not just for the young people of Cleveland but also the wider community".

**Chloe Wright – Cleveland Youth Commission Project Coordinator**

"I've had a positive experience with Cleveland police commission this year, it was nice to be a part of it the second year around, it's great to hear all these different voices and views around significant social issues. I feel like my communication skills have vastly improved from it being online last year to in person this year and learnt a great amount of empathy from people who shared their past difficult experiences, which I believe are both highly transferable skills to future career choices."

**Saiyra Khan – Cleveland Youth Commission member**

"Since I joined the Police and Crime Commission in August, it has been an unforgettable and enjoyable experience. I have met new people from all around Cleveland and worked closely with many agencies and Cleveland Police along with the Police Commission to give my opinions and says on topics that affect young people like myself. The Youth Commission has helped me build on my skills and develop new ones like public speaking. I'm really proud of us all and look forward to seeing how our recommendations be put in place because I believe it is so important to have youth voice listened too especially on the issues we've worked closely on."

**Jayden Foster – Cleveland Youth Commission member**

"My experience with the youth crime commission has allowed me to open my eyes to the social problems that surround young people in my community. I have also learned how my voice can make a big difference for young people who think their voice is going unheard or that their issues and problems are not relevant enough for the adults in charge to do anything about. During the research project, I now understand that young people are very aware of the problem surrounding our generation such as drugs, alcohol and gangs. During our presentations in front of council leaders and the police crime commissioner I have learned that my voice matters and that it can make a difference to young people and can change things within our society."

**Catrina Wardman – Cleveland Youth Commission member**

"My experience from the Commission was very informative, as it allowed me to hear people's thoughts on the ideals of the police, their own experiences with the Police, and the changes that they wanted. With the Commission I also met some good people who were also very helpful with the Commission and its goal of getting Young people's ideas, and well without it, we wouldn't have been able to do the conference, so overall I'd say the experience with the commission was fun, as it allowed me to do something interesting and worthwhile."

**Mike Ewertowski – Cleveland Youth Commission member**

" I always feel like in surveys like this, most the time most things get said in a meeting or something like that, But after the meeting nothing actually happens to help fix the problem. Us as young people need to be listened to, it's important for our future and the future of our community. If our ideas and feelings don't get heard and put through, our trust and confidence in the authority's will decrease as we won't feel like we are being listened too and will ultimately give up on trying."

**Anonymous Young Person from Cleveland**



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