



## **Youth Commissioners Report to the West Midlands Police and Crime Panel**

Report of West Midlands Police and Crime Commissioner

### **Purpose**

1. The purpose of this report is to update the West Midlands Police and Crime Panel on the Youth Commissioners and the development of the Youth Commission. This paper sets out the approach that has been taken by the Commissioner for youth consultation across the West Midlands. The approach is designed to ensure that consultation and engagement is led and informed by young people and is an important strand of the Commissioner's consultation and engagement strategy. The main purpose of the Commissioner's first Youth Summit held on the 26 January 2013, was to give young people the opportunity to influence the development of on-going consultation and engagement mechanisms.

### **Background**

2. 180 young people attended the Commissioner's Youth Summit in January 2013. It included representatives from the seven Youth Offending Teams and Youth Parliaments, and School Councils across the West Midlands. In addition, there was representation from a number of other groups including the Prince's Trust and other smaller youth groups.
3. Young people were asked to consider the relative merits of a number of options for the development of on-going consultation structures, which included Youth Commissioners, a Youth Forum, a Youth Commission, an independent advisory group and the use of social media. Feedback included support for the use of existing structures to avoid duplication. There was no overall consensus on the suggested future structures, however there were a number of options that were considered by all in attendance as a possible way forward. These options were explored extensively in terms of practicality and feasibility in developing the preferred consultation structure to be used.
4. The Commissioner approved the consultation structures on the 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2013 following feedback from the workshop sessions at the first Youth Summit. They were:
  - Youth Commissioners: 2 in each local authority area

- A Youth Commission which would be a wider group of young people to ensure representation
  - The use of social media
5. West Midlands Police already had an established Youth Independent Advisory Group (IAG) and the Office for Policing and Crime has worked with the Force to develop this body into a Youth Commission. Young people had asked us to use existing structures and not to develop new ones. The Youth Independent Advisory Group consisted of 20 members. The Commissioner has made use of the existing membership of this Group with the addition of two Youth Commissioners from each local authority area (14). A further 4-6 members, will be added to ensure representation from special interest areas. The Office is now in the process of working with the Force to ensure representation from the IAG is maintained on the Youth Commission and other members will be co-opted.

### **The process**

6. Meetings were held with youth service providers in each of the local authority areas where it was agreed that there would be an election process for the Youth Commissioners. It was also agreed that:
- The selection process for the youth commissioners would be determined locally
  - They would be selected by their peers
  - The position is voluntary, although expenses would be paid
7. Each local authority area concluded the selection process by November 2013.

### **Terms of Reference**

8. Youth Commissioners will represent young people in their local authority area or town and sit on a Youth Commission.
9. The Youth Commission will:
- Lead on the Commissioners consultation with young people on the Commissioner's Police and Crime Plan, monitoring of priorities and police responses to young people
  - Be the voice of young people and Commission members will have the opportunity to speak directly with the Police and Crime Commissioner, police officers and decision makers. One of the key roles is to make sure they represent the views of young people in their area.
  - Engage and consult with other young people in their local communities and listen to their views
  - Be able to question, challenge and inform policy
  - Help to build relationships and break down barriers that exist between the police, young people and the community
  - Raise the profile of young people with the community in a positive way.
10. The Commission will assess their make-up to determine any under-representation and select up to a further 4-6 young people to ensure that the Commission is representative of the West Midlands.

11. WMOPC will support the Youth Commissioners in their role, alongside youth councils where it is possible to do so, and the Force.
12. The Youth Commissioners will report back on the work that has been done throughout the year, and consider the issues that young people want to raise during the coming year at the Youth Summit.

### **Where we are now**

13. The 2<sup>nd</sup> Youth Summit was held on 3 December 2013. The newly elected Youth Commissioners, and the new structures were launched. A summary of the best bits from the Summit can be watched here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kZG-8UsEm9g>
14. The theme of the Summit was knife crime and the Youth Commissioners have been working with us on the knife surrender campaign, they are involved in the work that Stephen Rimmer is doing around Child Sexual Exploitation, and are getting involved in activities within their local areas. They will also be developing a Youth Crime Action Plan that will influence the priorities in the Commissioner's Police and Crime Plan.
15. The Youth Commissioners Induction programme took place on the 30 January 2014, and they have developed a programme of meetings for the year that consists of 5 formal meetings and the annual youth summit.
16. Attached at Annex 1 are the biographies for the Youth Commissioners for each local authority area.

## WEST MIDLANDS YOUTH COMMISSIONERS

### Gabriel Dobrashian-Yates - Birmingham



I am 16 years old and I live in Harborne, in Birmingham and attend Handsworth Grammar school. I have a wide range of hobbies and interests, including politics, sport and music. They are very important to me because they shape the person I am today. I am extremely passionate about politics. I take an active role in the UK Youth Parliament, representing the young people of Northfield and Edgbaston. In this role I hold events, coordinate campaigns and make sure my constituents have a voice.

One of my highlights was on November 11th, where I had the amazing opportunity to represent the area I live and love, debating on the historic green benches in the House of Commons. I achieved a grade six on the Cello and a Grade five on the Piano. I play in the school orchestra and in Birmingham Schools' Orchestras. I am a keen debater and represent my school in competitions. I represent my tennis club in tennis, played for a Sunday league football club and represented my school in football, cricket, rugby and table tennis.

I wanted to become a youth commissioner because I believe that the relationship between the police and young people and how they work together is hugely important. If done successfully it can have an enormous positive impact on society and build a cohesive community. In my post I want to build a better relationship between the police and young people. Young people and the police are both working for the same goals, however overall we are not working as efficiently and as connected as we could. We are fighting the same problem, but we are clashing amongst ourselves and see each other as enemies, rather than partners in reducing crime. If we can work together, we can change society and change the future and outlook of many young people. I was interested in the role because this was an amazing opportunity to work with the police and help build a more united society. From the experience I can gain from this role couple with the passion I have for change, I believe this role will be extremely beneficial for me and the young people in my community.

### Sohail Hussain - Birmingham



My name is Sohail and I'm proud to be a Youth Crime Commissioner for Birmingham. I want to change the world and I believe one of the first few steps to take is to improve relationships between the police and young people and a platform such as that provided by the West Midlands PCC will help to do just that.

I'm a Chelsea fan (have never lived in London, just fell in love with the shirt many years ago and from then onwards became a devout fan!) I'm currently studying my A Levels at King Edward VI College, Stourbridge and will be completing them this summer, after which I will be taking a gap year to undertake further voluntary work and perhaps even travel!

I'm an elected member of UK Youth Parliament and represent the Birmingham constituencies of Ladywood and Perry Barr and one of the things made clear to me by Young People when they elected me in 2012 was that Violence in the community was an issue for them and I hope that through my work as Youth Crime Commissioner I can help to eradicate violence particularly youth violence. I will also work towards tackling issues such as Child Sex Exploitation which has gained notable media coverage over the past 18 months and is a very serious issue for children and young people.

I am always happy to hear from young people, whether that is in this capacity as Youth Crime Commissioner or as a Youth Parliament representative. Feel free to contact me on my email at Sohail-Hussain@outlook.com or follow me on Twitter @HeroHussain – I look forward to hearing from you soon! I want to change the world but I want to begin in Birmingham, my city.

### **Olivia McFadden - Coventry**



My names Olivia McFadden and I'm a 6th form student in Coventry, my family, friends and secondary school have played an important role in making me who I am today, I started getting involved in youth groups three years ago when I became a member of Coventry Youth Council, of which I am now chair. It is because of these things that I have found a platform to voice my strong opinions, I believe strongly in people being heard and the giving of second chances. I have a love of music, playing several instruments and enjoy spending time with friends and family.

I decided to run for the youth police and crime commissioner post not just to vocalise my opinion, but to vocalise the valuable opinions of all young people in Coventry, if asked what I would like to address then there are plenty of things I feel strongly about, for instance; the increase of human trafficking and the risk young people are at every day, the youth crime rate and focusing on ways to prevent and rehabilitate young people that make mistakes, rather than demonise them and risk their future ruined because of a stupid decision made in adolescence. I believe there have always been problems between the police and young people and it's time to break down that barrier and address them issues, so we can work together to achieve a common goal. It's time young people are listened to, not just heard.

### **Nafeesa Akhtar - Coventry** (picture to be added)

I'm Nafeesa Akhtar and I currently attend Blue Coat Church of England School. Hobbies of mine are very limited and difficult to actually carry out because of the humongous amount of workload that is linked with taking A-Levels. But when I am not slaving away, I like to read, debate and work! When I say work, I don't mean I voluntarily actually revise or anything silly like that, I mean actually going out and being paid to do something, which is always a bonus. As you can probably tell, I like to speak but what you probably haven't realised is that I love anything that is to do with law! As well as this I love to listen to music, which is so cliché as every teenager does. Obviously(!) Furthermore, I have a much perfected sense of sarcasm which sometimes may or may not get me into trouble.

To actually become a Young Police Commissioner was something I didn't think I would attain. Being against someone in the voting process who has had so many more opportunities than you have, you immediately think you've lost. But the reason why I wanted to become a Young Police Commissioner is because I want to be a part of the choices that affect me and my future. I want to bring across the viewpoints of other youths around me so the choices made are what we actually want! I want to achieve a sense of accomplishment, by this I mean I want to be able to say I have brought about change from the problems we face on a day to day basis.

### **Jay Cooper - Dudley**



My name is Jay and I live in the Dudley area. I am 13 and go to a school in Kingswinford. Some of the things I do in my spare time are swimming, fishing if the weather is ok and keeping in touch with friends. I love downloading apps, as I love my games.

I was voted in as a Youth Commissioner as I am part of the Safe and Sound Board in Dudley which makes Dudley a safer place. I volunteered at my first meeting with the youth council and have been attending the Safe and Sound meetings for over 9 months now. As a Youth Commissioner I hope to make Dudley a safer place for everyone and a nicer environment to live in. I look forward to my year as youth commissioner and hope to do the best I can.

### **Joanna Samuels - Dudley**



Hello, I am Joanna. I am sixteen years old and a pupil of Dormston School. I enjoy reading, writing, playing guitar, listening to several types of music, talking, helping people, listening to people and smiling. I am quite optimistic and I like to seize every opportunity I get that is likely to have a positive impact on people. That is partially why I enjoy being a member of the Dudley Youth Council because it gives the youth a voice.

I am looking forward to being a Youth Crime Commissioner as I believe it is a chance to give the youth some positive press. Through my roles on; The Dudley Safe and Sound Board (The Safe and Sound Board is a group of decision making people who oversee the work which makes sure Dudley is a safe place to live, work and visit) and The Police and Crime Board (The Police and Crime Board is made up of people from community groups as well as from the statutory sector) alongside my role in the Dudley Youth Council will

enable me to make well informed decisions and to represent the youth of Dudley in a more incisive way. The youth are the future and the future can be better.

### **Tasnim Miah - Sandwell**



As a young person living in Sandwell I have developed a passion to make positive change in my area. I am 19 years old and currently attending the University of Wolverhampton. I have always liked volunteering and getting involved in community projects which promote cohesion and create change. What led me to want to stand as a Youth Commissioner for Sandwell was the journey I took when leading on a 'Gang Culture and Crime' campaign for the Sandwell Shadow Youth Cabinet and the knowledge on crime and deviance I gained from studying Sociology in college.

I particularly believe that 'it is better and easier to build a child than to repair an adult' – Which is why my main focus as a Youth Commissioner would be to create more opportunities for young people and to raise aspirations. In order to do this I plan to work closely with schools and youth organisations to make sure the 'Youth Voice' gets across and that positive change is guaranteed!

### **Wasim Ali - Sandwell** (picture to be added)



My name is Wasim Ali; I am 20 years old and live in Oldbury, Sandwell. I am currently at university studying a Law degree as well as working part time with the NHS at City Hospital. Within my local area I am the elected Chair of the Sandwell Shadow Youth Cabinet, West Midlands representative for UK Youth Voice, I am also a director/board member for Healthwatch Sandwell and a member of the Sandwell police stop and search panel. My main interests are within community work I hope one day to become an aspiring politician. The above I believe are some of the most important factors affecting young people at present. This is why I believe it is important to that young people have a say on big decisions that affect them within these organisations. I hope to work directly with key decisions makers to ensure young people are heard.

The main reason I became a youth commissioner is because as a youth commissioner I feel it is the perfect opportunity to make change. I have come across Bob Jones on many occasions and he has always said that he wants young people involved and to give them a platform to be heard. I hope to engage with the young people within my local authority and to also engage young people within my local authority with young

people from other local authorities. Right after the first meeting I want to start up a way to connect and engage with young people within my local authority by setting up 'Sandwell Youth Commissioners Forum' this will enable me to hear any concerns, have open discussions and to feed back to the young people within my local authority. I am most looking forward to the experience and to see what it can offer.

### **Frank Oxley - Solihull**



Hello, my name is Frank Oxley; I'm 17 and proud to represent young Silhillians on the West Midlands' Youth Commission. I'm currently studying English Literature, French and History A-Level at St Peter's RC Sixth Form College in Solihull and hope to study Law at University. I'm a keen cyclist, debater and committed member of my Youth Council here in Solihull. I enjoy travelling and visiting new places and aim to get to see as much of the world as possible while I'm still young! I'm a proud Bluenose but don't worry, I'll try to represent all those Villa/Baggies fans just as well! I'm looking forward to meeting as many you as possible over the next year and keep Solihull the safe place we know it is! Both Solihull and the West Midlands are wonderful places to live and have so much going for them and that's why I'm so looking forward to representing them over the next year!

Being Youth Commissioner is an important responsibility and one I don't take lightly. Along with Ben Matthews, my fellow Solihull Youth Commissioner, I hope to visit as many schools across Solihull as possible and gather as many of your thoughts on what might make policing better in your area. One of the key areas I'm looking to explore is Child Sexual Exploitation which is a growing problem across the West Midlands. CSE is not isolated to any one individual community and affects us all and that's why I'd like to put this to the top of the Youth Commission's agenda. Not only will I attempt to raise awareness about this but I'll also work to improve the way the Police communicate with young people on this subject. Solihull is a diverse borough and many areas have different issues, but one thing I will do my utmost to ensure is that your opinions are represented with a strong voice regardless of where you live or study.

### **Ben Matthews - Solihull**

Picture and biography to be added

## **Matthew Rafferty - Walsall**



Hi my name is Matthew Rafferty and I am 16 years old. I have lived in Walsall all of my life and attend Barr Beacon School. I am currently in year 11 taking my GCSE exams and hope to stay on at Barr Beacon into the sixth form. My hobbies include training my dog Bailey at the Aldridge airport every Sunday and playing on my PS3. In my spare time attend Youth of Walsall (Y.O.W) meetings and events. I first got involved in Y.O.W over a year ago when I applied for U.K.Y.P. Being involved in Y.O.W has taught me many qualities such as teamwork, leadership skills and confidence particularly to speak to a crowd. This has been a huge boost in my life. Through Y.O.W I have had the chance to go to events and meetings that have taught me a lot about the area that I live in.

The reason for me wanting the role of Youth Commissioner is because it is very important to me; it allows me to contribute to ideas and decisions that will improve my area and the lives of those living in it. I would like to see more places where young people can meet up and feel safe, where they can access information and advice on issues that affect them, to develop future skills that will benefit their adult life and meet new people. Whilst I am a youth commissioner I would like to help contribute to the reduction of knife crime in the West Midlands area. Another important main topic that I would like to focus on is the safety of young people because I feel that they need to feel safe in their community. I would also like to look at young people and their education when it comes to drugs and alcohol.

## **Namir Chowdhury - Walsall**



Hi, my name's Namir. I'm 16 and I go to Queen Mary's in Walsall. I love swimming, especially as I work at the local swimming pool as an instructor, and I'm in the school cross-country team; I love to run. I am a part of the Cadets in the RAF section, with the hope that I'll be able to fly one day. I take an active role in the Youth of Walsall, a group who discuss and implement ways of improving Walsall for young people, and I took part in the United Kingdom Youth Parliament, because I want to make a difference for both the next generation and beyond. I'm not one-dimensional though, as I write novels which I hope one day will be published. I would also like to become a teacher, so that I can help children to achieve their potential and become everything they want to be.

I want to make a change, a difference, and helping to reduce youth crime throughout Birmingham could help save lives and prevent them from being hurt or damaged. The role as Youth Police Commissioner, therefore, is exactly what I want to have. I applied for this because, along with the other Commissioners, I feel that we can improve the circumstances that young people have to go through as they live their lives. By being a Youth Commissioner, I hope to address and combat any form of crime committed, and more importantly suffered, by youths, but especially the increasing use and distribution of drugs. More and more young people are being pressured into using them, not knowing it can so easily wreck their lives. We, as the next generation, deserve more than to have drugs destroy our futures. We deserve the right and opportunity to be everything we can be.

### **Samrita Basra – Wolverhampton**



My name is Samrita Basra; I am 18 years old and live in Wolverhampton. I am an apprentice at Wolverhampton City Council and am currently studying towards an NVQ in business and administration. In my spare time I spend my time watching crime documentaries and shopping! I was elected as a Youth Commissioner in November 2013.

I first saw the post advertised on the Wolverhampton City Council website so I found out more information and then applied for the role. The main thing that interested me was that I would be working with young people and having an opportunity to make a difference to young people and society.

The career path I want to follow is to be in the police therefore my role as Youth Commissioner will help me to learn some of the skills to achieve this.

Some of the things I want to achieve in my role are to represent the young people's views in Wolverhampton and to help break the barriers that exist between young people and the police. I am really excited to be one of the Youth Commissioners for Wolverhampton and can't wait to work with others and make a difference!

### **Sandeep Bains - Wolverhampton**



My name is Sandeep Bains and I am 16 years old. I am a sixth form pupil at Wednesfield High School. I have a passion for sports and I enjoy watching football the most, I also like playing football and cricket. I have also previously taken part in kickboxing tournaments. I enjoy learning about engineering and I have attended a number of events and schemes. I attended Wolverhampton University (Telford campus) for a week and I achieved a certificate in engineering from the Small Piece Trust. Soon after this I competed in the television program James May's Toy Story, where I designed, built and tested my glider. Another enjoyable experience for me was when I worked with SONY game developers on Little Big planet 2 (Wolverhampton level). I am also taking part in the Engineering Education Scheme, from this I will achieve a Science gold crest award and I will also gain the Duke of Edinburgh silver award.

The reason I was interested in the role is because I want to make a difference in our local communities, by educating young people on youth crime. Also there seems to be a divide between the youth of today and the police, I hope to educate and communicate with local youth groups and police forces to make Wolverhampton a safer place to live for everyone.

I have already visited Wednesfield High School with the local police force, Musician (Roach Killa) and my colleague Miss Basra who is the other Youth Commissioner for Wolverhampton, and I have scheduled another school to visit soon. My intention is to communicate and educate young people in schools about youth crime and the dangers of joining gangs. Also I plan to visit different religious organisations such as temples and churches to break down racial barriers within communities.

I am very grateful for this opportunity and I hope to successfully complete my goals within the role of Youth Police and Crime Commissioner.