







**SPEAK
OUT!**



Cheshire
Police Authority

YOUTH CONFERENCE

HEADLINES

-  The majority of young people do not behave inappropriately and wish to be treated and spoken to as young adults by police officers and PCSOs.
-  Two way dialogue needed to be stimulated in order to develop mutual trust which would lead to young people being more willing to work positively with the police in school, during leisure time and in their community;
-  Better information should be provided to young people about the most appropriate way to contact the police;
-  Young people who behave inappropriately should be seen to be punished. Restorative justice is a positive way for young people to make amends;
-  Young people want to be involved in developing policing services and are willing to help with new methods of communication.
-  Positive behaviour should be rewarded.



Cheshire
Constabulary

BE SAFE, FEEL SAFE



INTRODUCTION

The Police Authority and Constabulary held a Youth Conference on 3 November 2008 during Youth Work, anti-bullying week and the Government's '11 Million Take Over' week.

AIMS

The aim of the conference was to work in partnership with relevant organisations and host a consultation event for a diverse spectrum of young people to raise awareness about the role of the Police Authority and to influence policing services.

The desired outcomes were to:-

- contribute to 'Hear by Right' activity;
- gather feedback about policing services from young people
- increase feelings of safety;
- communicate 'Know Your Rights' and Stop/ Stop and Search information to young people and ensure that they know how to make a complaint;
- discuss community cohesion and hate crime
- encourage responsible behaviour particularly relating to alcohol.

PLANNING THE EVENT

From the outset it was important that young people were involved in the design and delivery of the event. Several evening meetings were held with young people from Halton Youth Cabinet, Cheshire Connexions and Warrington Integrated Youth Support Service to establish the purpose, key themes and framework for the event.



The young people provided invaluable guidance about the tone, level and pitch of the day; about embracing diversity and ensuring that the event would not just be a "tick box" exercise but that follow up should be just as important as the day itself.

BRANDING

The "Speak Out" logo and street scene were designed by a group of young people from Cheshire and Warrington Connexions who attended an evening meeting to develop ideas for the event. Final artwork was provided by Cheshire Connexions and the cartoon drawn by Cheshire Constabulary Corporate Communications Public Relations Officer.

The young people wanted the branding to represent that they would be given the opportunity to speak out honestly and openly about policing and about what life is like for a young person.



DELEGATES

By working in partnership with Local Education Authorities, the Youth Service, schools liaison officers, youth offending teams, restorative justice operators and Connexions, a broad range of diverse young people between the ages of fourteen to sixteen years were invited to attend the conference in order to gather a representative view.

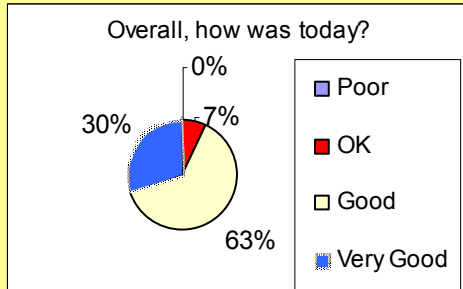
An letter of invitation and flyer was sent to the head teacher of every secondary school in the policing area and key young people were invited by anti-social behaviour co-ordinators, schools liaison officers, Constabulary community safety teams, youth offending teams and youth services.

Eighty nine young people attended the event from the following:-

Eastern Area	Northern Area	Western Area
*William Stannier School, Crewe	*William Beaumont High School, Warrington	Hartford High School, Northwich
Holmes Chapel High School,	*Penketh High School, Warrington	Verdin High School, Winsford
Macclesfield Youth Offending Team	*St Chad's, Runcorn	Helsby High School, Chester
	Ashley School, Widnes	'Building Young People's Potential', Blacon
	*Bankfield High School, Widnes	Cheshire, Warrington and Halton Connexions
	Warrington & Halton Youth Offending Team	

FEEDBACK

One the day, feedback was gathered from 82 respondents, 58% female, 42% male who all received a goodie bag which included a T-shirt, notebook, phone charm and screen cleaner, frisby, key ring torch and pen. Items were provided by the Police Authority, Cheshire Connexions and Safer Halton Partnership. Their comments included "It went perfect", "the whole day was cool" and "it was good". Their views about the day are summarised below:-



THE VENUE

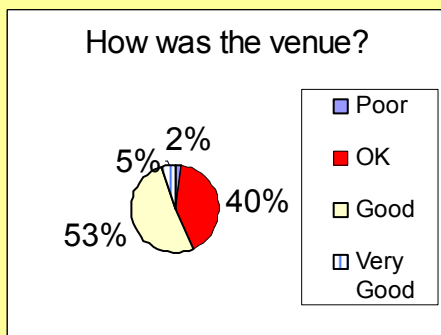
The event was held at the Connexions 'The Venue' Youth Centre, Northwich.

Benefits

- Not a "police" building. This was a request made by young people in the conference planning meetings as they wished to feel comfortable in the environment and felt that they may feel "intimidated" on police premises.
- A central location with ample parking
- Fitted for purpose with it's own risk assessment for young people
- A large hall with 4 additional training rooms which were used for workshops
- All refreshments, IT and presentation facilities included

Disadvantages

Five of the people who commented about the venue in their feedback said that it could have been bigger and one person asked for "a more interesting venue".



One delegate requested that the event should have been non-uniform for students and there were three comments about a lack of hot food.

DISPLAYS AND INFORMATION

Partner organisations were invited to attend with display stands and useful information which included:-

- Police Authority
- Constabulary – ARCangel and Diversity Advisory Unit
- Connexions
- NSPCC
- DISC – Drug Intervention Service Cheshire
- Criminal Justice Service
- Cheshire Domestic Abuse Partnership

PHOTOGRAPHY

All of the participating establishments were asked to sign a consent form giving permission for photographs to be taken on the day by the Constabulary's Forensic Imaging Department. In a follow up e.mail, all were asked to notify the organiser if parental consent had not been given.

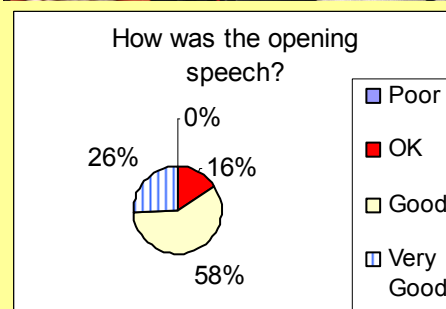
OPENING SPEECHES

The young people were welcomed to the event, ground rules were set and the purpose of the event explained by:-

- Assistant Chief Constable Garry Shewan;
- Lead Authority Member for Children and Young People Moira Chapman; and
- Halton Youth Cabinet Member, Emily Klieve

Key messages:

- young people matter – as victims, witnesses, offenders and future taxpayers;
- this is a chance to get involved in policing and have an influence;
- will learn about new areas of policing and will be consulted about the impact of the behaviour of young people on the local community;
- will challenge perceptions;
- enjoy themselves; and
- will give them guidance and advice to help them to stay safe.



WORKSHOPS

Delegates were split into five groups using random coloured cards in order to mix the groups. The feedback obtained about this aspect said that it would have been better if:-

- keeping us together would have given us more confidence to speak out;
- greater mix of people from different schools;
- if you could chose which group you were in with your friends; and
- be put with at least one person that you know.

Each of the groups rotated around five workshops of half an hour each with breaks for refreshments. The following provides an outline of each of the workshops, the feedback and recommendations for change.

Responsible Behaviour – Get Your Head Round It

This workshop was delivered by an inspirational pair of puppeteers who featured on Dragon's Den.

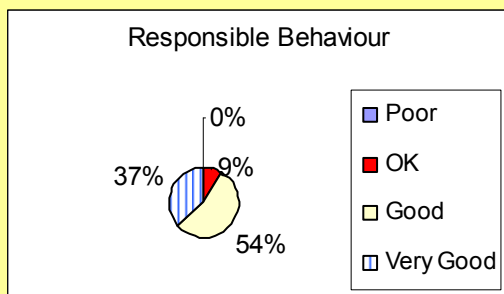


They use life sized characters to portray key messages about behaving responsibly. Their input has been developed in line with the Citizenship element of the school curriculum.

More information can be found at www.getyourheadroundit.co.uk

The young people said:-

- A clever idea and a good way for young people to communicate;
- Grabbed our attention using comedy;
- It helps when yr not too serious;
- Great and funny;
- Funny and interesting;
- Interacted at our level; and
- Engaging, entertaining, got a good message across & the young people listened.



Community Cohesion

The workshop was facilitated by DC Lesley Price, SGT Brian Hughes, PC Geraint Davies and Laura Woodrow Hurst -Anti Social Behaviour Co-coordinator



The young people were asked to discuss "what is a community?"

Themes included:-

- the school community;
- faith community; and
- local community.

"How involved in your community do you feel?"

They discussed the community where they live. Attendees were asked to mark a point on a target board. The board was split into the three BCUs marked with four areas to choose from:- totally, sometimes, not much or not at all. Males and females used different coloured marker pens.

Responses (%)	Totally		Some-times		Not much		Not at all	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
Eastern	0	0	2	6	8	4	0	0
Western	0	12	14	8	8	10	2	4
Northern	0	0	6	8	0	2	4	2

The session moved on to exploring the barriers to effective communication, and understanding between certain groups about:-

- Youth Images, gangs, "hoodies" and the media
- "Green Street", the name used for middle England/ 2.4 children / semi detached housing areas
- Ethnicity – BME, Gypsy & Traveller communities , Polish people etc.
- Faith – Religion, football clubs, music, and beliefs

The young people were asked; "what can the police do?" Responses included:-

Accessibility

- Better and easier access to police;
- More visible police on the streets;
- Police in schools more friendly and informal;
- The police should treat everyone the same;
- Build relationships; and
- Have courses in customer care and communication skills;

Interaction with young people

- The police should get to know all kids – just talk to us;
- Talk to the "good kids" and "bad kids". It seems bad kids get all the attention;
- Police should deal with the "untouchable ASBO kings/queens" more strictly;
- PCs in school at lunchtime just for a chat not at the school with a presentation or for a bad reason;
- Listen to youths; talk to people in a non-threatening way and speak to youth as adults don't talk down to us; value us.
- Take youth complaints seriously

Justice

- More restorative justice – seems like a great idea we just don't see much of it;
- Police to get tougher on criminals; and
- Police discourage youth from making complaints against other pupils. Want justice and want assaults and criminal damage or theft taken seriously.

Communication

- Police and media need to promote positive messages around Youth / good news stories;
- More and improved communication between Police and Youth "Be creative" Internet / Blue tooth;
- Local website or Facebook as a method of communicating key messages; and
- Stereo types are fed by TV and our parents.

Stuff to do

- More youth events; youth clubs, skate parks and out of school areas – "there's nowhere to go, we're always moved on and need stuff to do and places to go."

Cultural Awareness

- Education of cultural differences. Visits to Mosques, churches, religious meeting places; language classes more freely available to help with cultural differences.
- Educate older people and primary school people in faith issues, religion and cultural differences;

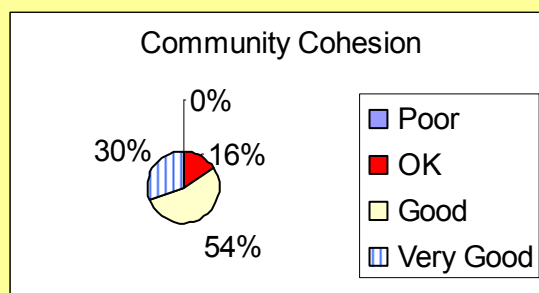
In the Community

- Better mixing with neighbours;
- Parents and "middle England" have the power base. Get our parents involved; and
- Introduce different groups to each other – better understanding will happen.



Other comments included:-

- Need more diverse police from different backgrounds; and
- Age difference of youth and police doesn't help.



Responsible Drinking – The 'Y' Factor



The ARC Angel message about responsible attitudes to alcohol and the law was delivered by Corporate Communications and the Safer and Stronger Communities Unit. The Constabulary exhibition vehicle was present during the day and served as a "diary room" for volunteers to be videoed and express their views and concerns.

The groups were asked the following questions:-

Q. Why do young people get bad press?

- Because there is a stereotypical point of view
- Because we hang around in gangs.
- Were used as a scapegoat.
- Media reporting is always bad.
- Communities are changing – young people's actions are being punished more now.
- Because some young people get into trouble.
- We are seen as an easy target.
- It gives the media something to talk about.
- The media focuses on them.
- Because a lot of youths act stupid and cause others to get a bad name.
- Because a small minority cause trouble.
- People believe all youths are a nuisance – when it's only a few.
- Because they hang around with friends in the street.
- The media think that all young people are the same.
- The media put emphasis on problems that are only caused by a small number of youths.
- All young people are portrayed as being involved in ASB and members of violent gangs.
- The press lead people to believe that all young people are drinking alcohol, taking drugs and having underage sex.
- There is little communication between older and younger people.
- Older people have always given younger people bad press – its just history!
- People always assume young people are up to no good.
- Its 'easy' reporting for the media.
- Because older people forget what they did when they were young and they are jealous





Q. Why do young people hang round in gangs?

- Because it's cool and peer pressure.
- They want to stay with their friends and enjoy themselves in their spare time.
- For their own safety and security.
- To be with friends.
- It's their social groups – it's natural and has been going on for years.
- They feel safe. Safety in numbers.
- Too scared to go out on their own.
- Nothing else to do in the community.
- Don't want to be bullied by friends.
- They don't hang around in 'gangs' – they just hang around with their friends.
- What are gangs? – They are just a group of like minded people.
- They're bored.
- To give themselves confidence.
- For a sense of belonging and acceptance.
- Identity.
- To have a laugh.
- Why should we only hang round with 1 or 2 friends if we have done nothing wrong?
- To make them feel hard.
- To relax.

Q. Why should the community help you?

- Because we are the future.
- To make towns a happier place for everyone.
- Because we are part of the community too.
- To help us decide what to do with our lives.
- To keep us safe and warm in the winter.
- Because we are growing up and need to know where to stand.
- Because we need something to do.

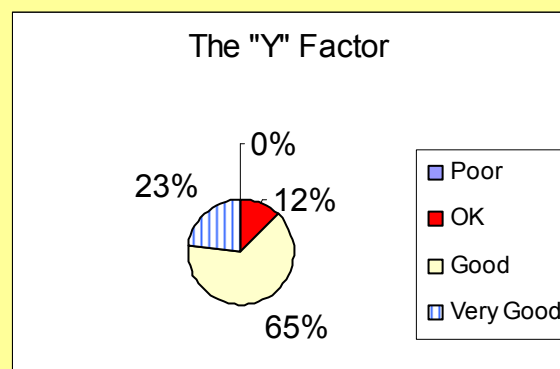
Q. What do you want?

- A better future.
- Therapy centres.
- Build a skate park or other stuff to do.
- Make everyone get along.
- Have better community leaders that will sort activities for youths.

- We want to be trusted.
- A safe community – where everyone is happy.
- Somewhere to go.
- Action in the community.
- More youth centres.
- Under 18's nightclubs.
- Practical things for youths to do.

Q. Why do young people drink?

- Some drink to rebel, but the majority don't.
- It gets them into the group they want to be in.
- Something to do.
- Following the crowd.
- They enjoy the thrill.
- To relax.
- To get away from life's problems.
- To make them more confident – and make them the person they want to be.
- They feel big.
- Peer pressure.
- To have a good time with friends.
- It makes them feel older and mature.
- Only some young people drink – not all of them, because it is hard to buy alcohol.
- They think they're cool and hard.
- Because they see adults doing it.
- The alcohol industry target youths.
- To socialise.
- To have a laugh and there is nothing else to do.
- To show off.
- They enjoy it.
- To fit in.
- To deal with family problems.



Policing Perceptions

The workshop was facilitated by the Police Authority and six young people from Halton Youth Cabinet. The young people had pre-scripted scenarios of encounters between uniformed officers and young people as victims, witnesses, offenders and being accused of offending but not actually committing crime. The scenarios included:-

- A victim of homophobic hate crime
- A victim of a mugging calling 999
- Young people hanging around drinking soft drinks
- Young people committing criminal damage
- A witness of a theft

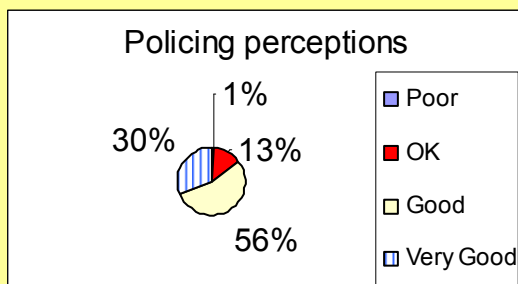


Having acted out the scenarios, delegates were invited to comment on the interaction and language used, whether it was appropriate and what could have been done better. The discussions provided the

opportunity to raise awareness of stop and search rights, when it is appropriate to dial 999 and alternative methods of contact, the definition of a hate crime and how to report one, perceptions of policing and how young people feel about the police.

Comments raised included:-

- Treat and speak to us like adults
- Give us more information about how to get hold of the police
- PCSOs are "power crazy"
- Take time with us
- Don't move us on, where are we supposed to go?
- If no-one is going to come, explain why
- There aren't enough officers in schools, they do "stranger danger" when we are small then we don't see them again.
- Don't assume we have done something wrong, it may not be us but we may know who did, accusing us isn't the best way of finding out what we know.
- Hate crime reporting – need more info
- We need to trust them, how can we when they treat us like they do?



Personal Safety

The crime prevention and internet safety workshop was delivered by schools liaison officers (SLOs) and comprised of two elements; the first part was a quiz in the format of Who Wants To Be A Millionaire with questions about internet safety. This was used as an icebreaker as well as having some serious points to get across. It also gave the young people an idea about the kind of work SLOs undertake in schools and colleges.

The second part of the session was an informal two-way discussion about those subjects which young people would like to learn more about and also how they would like to see this information presented.

Ideas included:-

Subjects

- Stop bullying
- Police Powers – Youth Related Topics
- After Arrest
- Internet Safety
- Safety Messages
- Knife/Weapon Info
- Rights
- Local Area Information
- Computer Viral Protection
- Crime Procedures
- Stop Search Laws
- Cyber Laws
- Crime & Consequences
- Opinion Polls
- Hate Crime
- Law-Smoking, Drinking, ASB
- Police Dogs

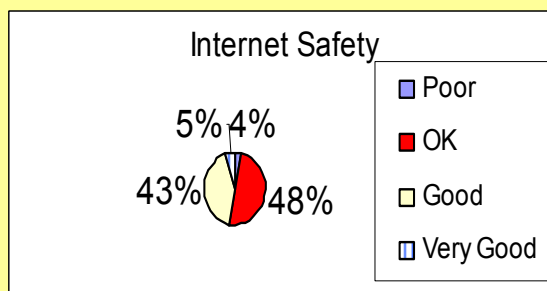


How do you want the info?

- MSN
- Can/Can't do website – Law
- Support Networks
- Info Website – Things to do!!
- Info Email/Texts
- Reporting Site Forum
- Posters/SLD's/PCSOs/Info/Pop-ups
- BEBO, Facebook
- Eyecatching Website

What else do you want?

- Youth Clubs:- Age Groups
- Sports Competitions
- Reward for Community Work
- More Good Press



Give me back my neighbourhood

A separate workshop was held for mentors and chaperones who engaged in facilitated discussion about young people and policing entitled 'Give me back my neighbourhood'. The delegates were invited to discuss the role of schools, parents and public service providers in developing community cohesion.

There was a lively debate, those present accepted that whilst "place" management was a valid idea they felt that there should be some development/lead from the police and partners in developing community leadership courses for both adults and young people, targeted perhaps at those who cause some problems. These would then become shakers and movers in their own group.

The development of parenting classes was discussed where a multi-agency approach to targets those people in the large group below those who already get assistance.

The group also stated that young people should be included in Constabulary surveys and analysis of confidence and satisfaction as we miss a large part of the community by excluding those under 18.

IF I WERE CHIEF CONSTABLE...



The young people were asked: "If you were Chief Constable, what **ONE** thing would you change about the police to improve services for young people?"

Answers included:-

- Training for police officers on how to deal with young people
- Let young people have their say more often
- Discipline the bad kids be easier and nicer to the good kids
- If anyone does criminal damage they should either repair it or pay for it to be fixed
- More service, more benefits
- More PCSOs on streets
- Talk to us like people and don't just think we're trouble
- To trust young people, get rid of stereo types
- Treat us as equals –same as adults
- Get more activities involving youth, adults and police officers set up
- More involvement in schools
- More focus on local communities
- More involvement with families, young people and groups
- More police in special schools and on the streets
- Listen to groups of children and learn from them.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations for change will be pursued following the feedback from the event:-

1. the Chief Constable consider the provision of training for Police Community Support Officers about the needs and perceptions of young people during their two one-day conferences in February 2009;
2. the DVD which was developed with Cheshire Youth Parliament and the Constabulary Learning & Development Department about how to engage with young people be used as part of the Constable probationer training programme;
3. the Chief Constable be asked to consider developing better information for young people about how and when to contact the police;
4. corporate support be provided to schools based officers to develop information packages for delivery in schools which address the issues raised at the Youth Conference;
5. the Chief Constable consider establishing a network of volunteer young people to help develop web based communication with young people;
6. the Chief Constable consider developing an award scheme for young people who have made a positive contribution in their community; and
7. the Authority establish a Young People's panel to inform future consultation exercises.

And finally...many thanks to the following, without whom, the Speak out event would not have happened:-

Halton Youth Cabinet
Cheshire Connexions
Warrington Integrated Youth Services
Cheshire Constabulary
Safer Halton Partnership
NSPCC
DISC
Cheshire Criminal Justice Board
Youth Offending Teams
The Wright Stuff