



## Safer in Kent: Backing Young People

When I was elected as Kent's second Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) in May 2016, I made a promise that I would work hard to represent residents of all backgrounds. In fact, one of the many positives that this role has delivered is to give a voice to those who previously did not have one.

PCCs commission the services that many victims of crime - including abuse, violence and sexual assault - need to rebuild their lives. We hold Chief Constables to account for the provision of policing in local communities and set their police forces' priorities based on what local people want. We also work with and challenge other public bodies where appropriate, to ensure our counties are safe and secure places to live and work. PCCs have the ability to communicate with harder to reach groups and support those who might feel left out, are disenfranchised or, due to their age, cannot vote at all. That is why I have put together this statement of intent to support the vast majority of young people who are good citizens, and who want to be involved and have their say over what happens in their communities.

After all, under-24s make up around 29% of our population here in Kent and Medway.

There are of course already organisations that represent young people and give them a voice. Kent Youth County Council and Medway Youth Parliament have well-established means and good reputations for leading powerful and relevant campaigns. I have been impressed by the articulate arguments they have made and issues they have chosen to take on, showing they are in touch with their peers and the changes in society. I was keen, therefore, not to replicate further committees and boards.

It is also not to say that Kent Police has a particular issue in this area. Independent inspections have consistently shown the force has strong leadership, ethics and integrity and the force holds the confidence of the wider public. Officers are keen to listen and to learn too. There have been some great examples of Kent Police officers and staff going out of their way to engage and the force has appointed a Youth Ambassador.

However I am committed to playing my part too and, as PCC, I am keen to be doing this myself rather than abdicating responsibility. I have taken the same approach in other areas; for example by engaging directly with business owners and rural communities. I considered approaches previously undertaken in Kent and in other parts of the country and discussed engagement with those who have been involved in police-led and PCC-organised activities before.

This plan supplements the [Safer in Kent: Community Safety and Criminal Justice Plan](#) and sets out simple and clear commitments to supporting, working with and being directly accountable to Kent and Medway's young people. It is in three parts - accountability, engagement and commissioning - and will be kept under review based on what young people tell me they want.

I believe this plan will support young people, give them a voice and strengthen their relationship with Kent Police and the Office of the Kent Police and Crime Commissioner.

**Matthew Scott**  
**Kent Police and Crime Commissioner**

## Accountability

- Under my governance arrangements, I will report back to the Chief Constable on specific examples and questions submitted to me by young people when appropriate so that he is aware of concerns raised and issues young people believe are important.
- I will hold meetings in public where I also hold the Chief Constable to account. I commit to ensuring that matters raised by, and important to, young people are discussed at these meetings.
- Through the Independent Custody Visitors' scheme and liaison with providers of volunteer appropriate adult support, I shall monitor the fair treatment of young people in custody and those who come into contact with the police. This includes the treatment of young people with mental health issues - following the decision taken to ban the use of police cells as a place of safety for under 18s.

## Engagement

- Engagement with me directly is at the heart of this document and is an important principle.
- It is important that I go out to see people, and not expect them always to come to me. I will continue my engagement with local schools, colleges and universities and other youth organisations; including those which support Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children and Looked-After Children.
- I will support Kent Police's recruitment campaigns, and organise events for young people to increase their awareness of job opportunities within Kent Police, other emergency services and across the criminal justice sector.
- I will engage with the community safety and crime-related campaigns run by Kent Youth Council, Medway Youth Parliament and other youth groups and commit to helping them to deliver change that benefits young people.
- I will continue to invest in and work with Kent's Volunteer Police Cadets to promote their activities and see how the scheme can be developed to support young people in schools and communities.
- I will reach out to young people to understand their experiences of issues relevant to them, including cyber-bullying and violent crime, and will use their feedback to shape my commissioning strategy. Social media will be used safely and considerately to encourage debate and participation in surveys and consultations too.

## Commissioning

- I have funded a number of projects aimed at keeping young people away from crime and anti-social behaviour.
- I funded the start-up costs for the Kent Volunteer Police Cadets scheme in the county. I have continued to support the scheme financially for the duration of my term of office so that it can grow further and also provide a hardship fund to ensure young people from all backgrounds can get involved.
- Young people themselves are encouraged to apply for funding from my office for campaigns and projects that they wish to run on community safety, crime prevention or mental health for example. Guidance on the bidding process can be provided by my office and all bids will be subject to the same audit processes.
- I will continue to fund support services for young victims of crime, and commission independent child sexual violence advisors. I work with the NHS and others to ensure support is there for those who have been victims of abuse.