



## Safer in Kent: Backing Young People

When I was elected as Kent's second Police and Crime Commissioner 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 have given a voice to those who previously did not have one.

We commission the services that victims of crime, abuse, violence and sexual assaults need to rebuild their lives. PCCs 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, where appropriate, challenge other public bodies to ensure that 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, who want to be involved and want to have a say over what happens in their communities. After all, under-24s make up around 29% of our population here in Kent and Medway.

I have already made efforts to support young people. I have engaged with students at the University of Kent and Canterbury Christ Church University. I have visited primary and secondary schools and spoken with children directly. I held a Youth Forum whereby representatives of youth organisations were able to come along and challenge me on community safety issues. I have funded a number of projects that will help keep young people away from crime and antisocial behaviour.

I believe that there is more that I can do and I am keen that, 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.

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 show that they have strong leadership, ethics and integrity and hold 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.

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

# Safer in Kent: Backing Young People

## Accountability

- Under my new Governance arrangements, at monthly one-to-one meetings with the Chief Constable, I will scrutinise him on key aspects of performance and engagement related to young people.
- This will be assisted by the regular compilation by my office of key data from Kent Police and other sources. This data will include the age profiles of victims of crime, the use of stop and search powers, mental health statistics and recruitment.
- 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.
- I shall report back to the Chief Constable on specific examples and questions submitted to me by young people so that he is aware, from me, of concerns raised and issues young people believe are important.
- I hold meetings in public where I also hold the Chief Constable to account. I commit to ensuring that matters raised by young people are discussed at those meetings.

## Engagement

- Engagement with me directly is at the heart of this document and is an important principle.
- I will hold specific Question Time sessions devoted to young people where they can challenge me and provide feedback on policing and crime.
- I will hold a county-wide Annual Youth Forum for young people to get together to talk about policing and crime with me and provide feedback.
- 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 shall engage with the community safety and crime-related campaigns run by Kent Youth County Council, Medway Youth Parliament and other youth groups and see I, as PCC, can help them to deliver change that benefits young people.
- I will work with Kent's Volunteer Police Cadets to promote their activities and see how their roles can be developed to support young people in schools and communities.
- Social media will be used safely and considerably alongside these proposals to encourage debate and participation in surveys and consultations.

## Commissioning

- I have committed to funding the start-up costs for the new Kent Volunteer Police Cadets scheme in the county. I will maintain this funding 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.
- My Commissioning Strategy allows projects which benefit young people to apply for greater investment through funding pots available from my office. Depending on the fund this was £5,000 or £7,500 maximum in the past. This will rise to £10,000, with bids being accepted where a need is backed by evidence.
- 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 processes 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 child independent sexual violence advisers. I shall also work with the NHS and others to ensure support is there for those who have been victims of abuse.