

NIPB Consultation Event with Young People Report 24th November 2010



“You should feel safe when you see police but you automatically feel anxious”

Introduction

In autumn 2010 the Northern Ireland Policing Board embarked on a process to engage with young people in a positive way to find out their views of policing in the Greater Belfast area. The Board sees this as an important step to help it fulfil its statutory responsibility of increasing confidence in policing. A further and related aim is to help build young people's confidence in policing and to see greater co-operation between the police and young people with a subsequent reduction in crime.

The Board with support from its Youth Advisory Panel decided to conduct a survey and run an event aimed at young people. From the outset the Board wanted to involve young people directly in the planning of the event, Include Youth were asked to assist with this process.

Questionnaire

The questionnaire was sent out to a variety of organisations and projects operating within the greater Belfast area. The findings from the questionnaire provided quantitative information to the Board and can be found in appendix 1. The issues emerging from the survey responses were used as a basis to identify the themes discussed at the event.

Consultation Event

The consultation evening took place on 24th November 2010. 30 young people attended, 4 representatives from the Policing Board and members of the Policing Board Youth Panel. A group of 6 young people were involved in the planning of the event. These young people were involved in designing the invitations, writing letters of invite to Policing Board members and the Children's Commissioner, administration tasks, identifying themes and questions for the event and also presented at the actual event itself.

Following a welcome and introduction by the young people's planning group the young people discussed questions (see appendix 2) in relation to a number of key topics. Young people's feedback is summarised below (record of feedback can be found in appendix 3) and their recommendations have been listed.

The young people on the planning group intend to provide feedback from the event to the policing board and to key PSNI personnel. A follow up process should be held to feedback to the young people present at the event on how the outcomes from the event have been used to shape the policing of young people in the Greater Belfast area.

Feedback and Recommendations

1. Relationship with the Police

Young people described various contacts with the police whether through school, as a victim, being cautioned or arrested. Generally young people had a negative view of the police. Some young people felt police only engage with them if there's been a crime and only approach them when they do wrong, to stop and caution them or take drink off them. They shared experiences of having been moved on when they felt that they weren't doing anything wrong. Some felt the police were too 'forcible' and felt intimidated by response officers. Some young people were unclear about the role of the police and young people's rights.

"Young people feel police only around to pick on them, not to make sure they're ok"

"You should feel safe when you see police but you automatically feel anxious"

Many of the young people were coming from communities that don't trust the police and are often viewed with suspicion. They felt police need to listen and interact with the community. Young people also highlighted that police seem to be from a middle class background and thought they wouldn't relate to the problems working class communities face.

"Due to security alerts police will not come in and build relationships where we live"

"We need working class people from Protestant and Roman Catholic backgrounds, not middle/upper class"

Young people highlighted that there is a difference in behaviour between neighbourhood officers and response. Some felt neighbourhood officers do take the time to try and build relationships and described them as 'sound'. They find it easier to respect community officers but felt response officers wrecked any good relations which are built up. Some young people believed there was a need to respect officers and vice versa.

"Community police build relationships, but other police ruin them"

"Response police ruin it for community officers"

"Works two ways – if you respect police they will respect you"

Young people did describe some positive experiences of the police for example going to youth consultation events at Garnerville. One young person also shared that they had a positive experience of policing when they were arrested – they felt

the officer treated them with respect and explained the process clearly and why they were doing what they were doing.

“Only positive experience was youth worker trying to actively engage young people with the police – went to Garnerville, young people started to get to know them, but broke down after Whiterock riots – disengaged”

The young people were asked what might improve relations with the police. A number of young people said it was all about building good relationships. Some felt the only way to improve relations was to get involved in forums and planning groups. Some also felt the way police approached young people could be improved – they need to improve communication skills, they felt not every problem needs the hard approach and police could be more ‘young person friendly’. They also felt there was a need for officers to engage with the wider community not just young people.

“Unless you are involved in police forums and planning groups that’s the only way to meet and know police”

“Have more police and young people contact eg sports, youth groups, blue light disco where police get involved”

“Communication skills should be enhanced – can come across as abrupt”

“Response need to chill”

“Have manners – manners cost nothing”

“Don’t point finger in faces don’t have an attitude – don’t ask stuff in an abrupt manner. Don’t stereotype”

“May be have youth work skills”

“They’re only a service – forget about the uniform and more of being a person”

It was clear young people desired to feel safe and have a police service which is protective and preventative.

“Get in and build relationships so policing can be preventative”

Recommendations:

- **To invite youth workers to be involved in training new recruits. Police officers, especially response officers, should be trained in how to deal with young people respectfully.**
- **Police should be in ALL communities.**

- **Educate young people about the police and their rights in relation to police.**
- **Police should be given time to build relationships with the community and especially young people. Consideration should be given to what has worked in the past and efforts should be made to build on these and involve police more in meeting with young people in situations other than when there is a problem.**
- **Strengthen local policing – especially more interaction with young people, more police on the streets**

2. Complaints

Young people expressed that they would not make a complaint about the police. Reasons for this included a lack of confidence that something would be done. Generally the young people had a lack of knowledge on complaints mechanisms and there was a misunderstanding around the independence of the police ombudsman.

“Young people could not be annoyed with complaining as they have to write it down. Some can’t write, read, no literacy”.

Recommendation:

- **There should be more awareness raising about the Police Ombudsman with young people, outlining their independence and procedures for making complaints. This should be done in an accessible format taking into consideration literacy levels.**

3. Stereotypes

The young people felt that in general they are stereotyped negatively. They felt this was the case across society even in their own communities. They felt this was also the case for some police who stereotype for wearing hoodies or if you’ve been in trouble before. Often they are not allowed to enter shops with a hat on yet adults are, you’re not allowed to bring your school bag in yet adults can bring a bag. They cited that they aren’t noticed for good things they do and there are very few positive success stories in the media about young people.

“See a lot of adults in news for community relations work, but young people are doing a lot of serious work that isn’t noticed”

“Young people aren’t noticed for good things, just bad things”

“Not fair to assume you’ve committed a crime just because of how you look”

Recommendations:

- **Publish actual statistics regarding young people and crime – raise awareness of reality of crime and young people.**
- **Discriminatory policies against young people such as in shops should be discouraged.**
- **Promote the good, more praise without bringing up the negative.**

4. Stop and Search

The young people highlighted that many of their peers and they themselves are unclear about the law around stop and search. Some felt it was happening less but most who had experience of being stopped and searched felt it was intimidating and embarrassing – especially when they hadn’t done anything.

“If you refuse to be searched they become more suspicious – become more aggressive, feel like you have no choice”

“Know that female should search female etc but seen that not happen”

“Seen people stopped because of colour of their skin”

“Young people feel they’re targeted or unfairly affected if someone in their family has a criminal record”

Recommendations:

- **Police should record why they are stopping someone, whether or not anything is found and review this every year**
- **Young people should be educated on their rights and the laws; there should be development of educational materials also explaining what happens if you refuse.**
- **Give out leaflets around stop and search.**

- **Police should explain the process to young people.**

5. Young People as Victims

The young people felt that they were highly likely to be victims of crime. They were asked if they felt all victims are treated equally - some felt that young people are not as likely to get support if they were a victim of crime especially if they are 'known' to the police for committing crime. One young person said they do have confidence in police to do their job right.

“No – young people seen to have deserved it both by police and their communities”

“People with criminal records, not responded to as quickly/seriously – lack of confidence in police”

Some of the young people highlighted again that the police were not trusted in their communities so sometimes victims of crime would report to paramilitaries/vigilantes within the community and for some young people they felt paramilitaries would also be against them in the community.

“A lot of communities also don't have faith in police and would turn to paramilitaries – but a lot of young people don't agree because when paramilitaries called in, they set against young people, whereas older people trust paramilitaries more, but also for some communities young people starting to support paramilitaries.”

“Police haven't been involved in communities – paramilitaries were”

Recommendations:

- **Police need to continue relationship building in all communities.**
- **Police need to work with adults and young people.**
- **Young people who are victims of a crime should be treated equally and fairly.**

6. Drugs and Alcohol

Drugs and Alcohol was highlighted through the questionnaire as the biggest issue causing concern to young people. The young people attending the event reiterated this. They named mephedrone, NRG-1 is new big drug, dope, E's, blues and also said heroin starter packs were now available.

“Get involved because of peer pressure, to experiences it , a trend, age groups, easy access, cheaper, less facilities for young people”

“Police need to be out in community more, don't feel able to report drugs to police because of fear of paramilitary reprisal, need some kind of effective free hotline”

“Young people think they are invincible but they're not they see friends OD around them and doesn't stop them”

Some young people shared their experiences on having drink taken off them by police.

“Told that when it's taken off you it gets taken to police barricks and heard that it will do their end of year party, provoking young people”.

“Stopped by police had a bottle of juice and made to open it so they could smell it. Being accused and not even doing anything. Are they going to stop everyone who drinks juice. This was response officers”.

Recommendation:

- **Police should target dealers and they should get tougher sentences.**
- **More programmes/police projects are needed to engage with young people involved in drugs/alcohol.**

7. Street Drinking/Hanging around

Young people acknowledged that binge drinking and drunken activity was an issue in their community. They said it sometimes happens from boredom where youth provision is limited at the weekend.

“Do it for the thrill of the chase”

“Culture in NI is about excessive drinking”

“Some adults facilitate underage drinking”

Recommendations:

- **Provide better youth facilities for young people at weekends**
- **Prevent adults from providing young people with access to alcohol**
- **Alcohol free places in town, like cafes, should stay open late into the evening.**

8. Rioting and Anti-Social Behaviour

The young people were keen to highlight that child games should not be seen as anti-social behaviour, they wouldn't think kicking a ball is anti-social and felt there needs to be intention for it to be anti-social behaviour. They also said anti-social behaviour isn't necessarily a crime and pointed out that some young people might be proud about the amount of ASBOs they have. They feel there needs to be more places for young people to hang out and more facilities for young people to prevent anti-social behaviour.

“Police have made up anti-social behaviour now everyone calls anything that has happened in the street by young people anti-social behaviour”

“If there were more things for young people to do then they wouldn't be anti-social or riot”.

Recommendations:

- **Educate police and young people about it and parents**
- **Dedicate more places and facilities for young people to hang out.**

The young people discussed the issue of rioting in their communities, some felt it wasn't a big issue but others said it still was an issue for concern explaining that it was being encouraged by some adults. For some young people rioting is just a game and for others it is about protecting your community.

“Protecting your own community people in fear of the other side/stopping them from coming in”

“Told to – by paramilitaries “support your community”

“Police are not supported to deal with riots”

Recommendations:

- **There should be better resources for Interface projects, innovative initiatives, development of local networks and more community/youth workers.**
- **Response should be tailored to community**
- **Police should target the people who are coming in from other communities they should know who they are.**
- **Build relationships doing cross community work**

9. Domestic Violence

The young people expressed this as a hidden issue. They said there was a reluctance to report as they were afraid of getting a parent into trouble. Sometimes Domestic Violence is normalised because of its frequency. Some young people felt that domestic violence directed towards males was on the increase. Some also think the courts do not back the work that the police are doing in relation to domestic violence. They also felt there was a slow response rate.

“Attitudes to abuse and DV is not good”

“Unless partner has actually abused you physically there is no evidence”

“More of a family thing unless young people experience it themselves”

Recommendations:

- **More support for males experiencing domestic violence**
- **Needs to be dealt with better with the courts**

- **Work with young people to raise awareness that domestic violence is not normal and how to report it**

10. Car Theft

Some young people felt that car crime had reduced in their areas and there are groups providing alternatives to getting involved in this activity. Some felt there needed to be tougher sentences for repeat offending.

Recommendations

- **Keep resourcing car crime projects**
- **Better patrolling in particular areas where car crime is an issue**

11. Communities

Young people were asked what the main concerns were for their communities they highlighted drugs, joyriding, the interface, hoods and drug dealers who they said are police touts. Some young people said they would turn to paramilitaries before they would turn to the police.

“Tell paramilitaries before telling police. Paramilitaries sort stuff out in community get response from paramilitaries but police probably won’t”.

Recommendations:

- **There needs to be more community officers, they need to get to know the community.**

12. Policing Plan

The young people were asked if they think there should be a section dedicated to young people’s issues within the policing plan this provided a split opinion – some said they should have their own sections, others said their issues should be mentioned but not in their own section. They did stress that young people are not the next generation they are the present too.

Recommendations:

- **Police should do something each month with local young people**
- **Police should get to know young people through centres, street based by going out as a youth worker**
- **Suggestion was made that young people are encouraged to apply for positions on policing board**

Appendix 1

Findings from the Questionnaire issued September 2010

Question 1. Thinking about all types of crime, in general how worried are you about becoming a victim of crime?

Analysis of Responses

Almost two thirds (64%) of the young people who responded were not worried about becoming a victim of crime. However just over one third (36%) were worried about becoming a victim of crime.

Question 2. What do you think has happened to crime where you live over the past few years?

Analysis of Responses

Two out of every five (41%) young people who responded considered that crime had gone up in their area over the last few years. While almost the same number (38%) considered that it had stayed much the same. One out of every five (20%) considered that there had been a reduction in crime over the last few years.

Question 3. From the list of 12 issues which three issues are causing you most concern in your area at the moment?

Analysis of Responses

The issues causing most concern were:

Drugs, both dealing and taking drugs (21%)

Paramilitary activity 16%

Street drinking 12%

Question 4. From the list of 9 issues which three of the following would you prefer the police to focus on?

Analysis of Responses

The issues respondents thought the police should focus on are:

Working with schools and young people (21%)

Responding to emergency calls (16%) and

Patrolling on foot (14%)

Question 5. Have the police stopped you in the street in the last 12 months?

Analysis of Responses

Just over half (56%) of respondents had been stopped by police in the street in the last year while just under half (44%) had not been stopped.

Question 6. If police have stopped you in the street in the last 12 months, how satisfied were you with the way they treated you?

Analysis of Responses

Six out ten respondents (59%) were satisfied with the way they were treated by police when they were stopped in the street. Almost three out ten (28%) were dissatisfied while just over one out of every ten (14%) expressed no view either way,

Question 7. If police stopped you in the street in the last 12 months, did they explain why?

Analysis of Responses

Seven out of ten (71%) young people who responded knew why they had been stopped while almost three out of ten (29%) did not know.

Question 8. Have the police come to your home in the last 12 months?

Analysis of Responses

Three out of every five respondents (62%) had been visited at home by the police while two out of five (38%) had not.

Question 9. If police have come to your home in the last 12 months, how satisfied were you with the way they treated you?

Analysis of Responses

Opinion was fairly evenly split between all respondents with almost one third (29%) being satisfied, just over one third (37%) being dissatisfied and one third of respondents (33%) not expressing a view either way.

Question 10. If you needed the police, how confident would you be that they would be there to help you?

Analysis of Responses

Respondents on this issue were fairly evenly split with just over half (51%) not being confident that the police would be there should they need them while just under half (49%) were confident that the police would be there to help them.

Question 11. Without dialling 999, how would you go about contacting your local police?

Analysis of Responses

Respondents said they would contact their local police as follows:

Through their parents (25%)

Use the phone book (21%)

Call in person at their local station (17%)

Through their local youth group (11%)

Stop a police officer on the street (11%)

11 % of respondents did not know how to contact the police other than by phoning 999.

Question 12. Have you been the victim of crime in the last few months?

Analysis of Responses

Almost nine out of ten respondents (87%) stated that they had not been a victim of crime in the last few months while just over one out of every ten (13%) had been affected by crime.

Question 13. If you were the victim of crime in the last few months, did you report it to the police?

Analysis of Responses

Of those who had been the victim of crime in the last few months, six out ten (60%) reported the incident to the police while four out of ten (40%) did not.

Question 14. If you were a victim of crime in the last 12 months and you did report it to the police, how satisfied were you with the way the police treated you?

Analysis of Responses

Six out of ten (60%) respondents were satisfied with the way they were treated by the police while four out of every ten (40%) expressed no view either way. No one stated that they were dissatisfied with the way they were treated by the police.

Question 15. If you were a victim of crime in the last 12 months and you did report it to the police, how satisfied were you with the way the police dealt with your problem / concern?

Analysis of Responses

One third (33%) of young people surveyed said they were very satisfied with the way the police dealt with the issue, half of the respondents (50%) expressed no view either way while the remaining 17% considered it was too early to tell.

Question 16. If you were a victim of crime in the last 12 months and you did report it to the police, how satisfied were you with the way the police kept you informed?

Analysis of Responses

Two thirds (66%) of respondents were satisfied with how the police kept them informed. Just over one third (34%) stated that they were dissatisfied with how they were kept informed.

Question 17. If you were a victim of crime in the last 12 months and you did not report it to the police, what was your main reason for not doing so?

Analysis of Responses

Four out of every five (79%) of respondents said that fear was the main reason for not reporting an incident to the police as they considered reporting the crime would leave them vulnerable to further crime. One in every five (21%) either considered that the police would not believe them or that they would not investigate the incident.

Question 18. Do you know any members of the police who work in your local area?

Analysis of Responses

Almost two thirds (65%) of respondents said that they knew some members of the police who worked in their local area. The remaining one third (35%) did not personally know any police in their area.

Question 19. Do you know what the Policing Plan is?

Analysis of Responses

Seven out of ten respondents (71%) did not know what the Policing Plan was. While three out of ten (29%) were aware of it.

Additional comments

Respondents were asked for any other comments they thought would be helpful for the Policing Board to know about policing in their area. The following comments were received.

“No police in the Ashmore area.”

“Get faster PSNI officers.”

“More CCTV should be put up.”

“Their bastards, they make people nervous in the street! Don’t pull over any person for no reason! I saw one of the police officers in Broughshane drinking and starting fights with an old man I used to live beside!”

“Community Police Officers have been very helpful and trustworthy in the last 12 months. Response officers remain to be a problem as they are not at all trusted by the community.”

“Stop walking bout wif hands in body jacket.”

“I only see the police when there is a riot.”

Age Breakdown of Respondents

11% = 10-12 years	21% = 13-15 years	32% = 16-17 years	36% = 18-21 years
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Appendix 2

Questions for Consultation Event 24 November 2010

Relationships with the Police

- What kind of police have you encountered eg neighbourhood, response? What was the encounter like - describe this experience?
- What sort of relationship do you have with the police?
- Who/what stops you having a positive relationship with the police?
- Do you think relationships between young people and police in your area should be improved?
- How do you think this could be done?
- Is there anything else you think the Policing Board should know about this issue?

Complaints

- Have you ever made a complaint about the police? Who to?
- What could be done to make sure a complaint is taken seriously?

Young People as Victims

- Who is most likely to be a victim of a crime?
- Are all victims treated equally?
- What experiences have you had as a victim – how have police treated you?
- What are your expectations from the police?
- Would you ask police for help if you were a victim?
- What would make you more confident to report to police?
- Is there anything else you think the Policing Board should know about this issue?

Drugs and Alcohol

- How big an issue are drugs in your area?
How do young people get involved in drug taking?
- What are the most used drugs?
- What action should be taken against drug dealers?
- What could police be doing to reduce drug use in your area?
- Would you feel able to report drug dealers/users to police? What would make you more confident to report?

Stereotyping

- How are young people viewed in the media - why?
- How are young people viewed in general in your community – why?
- How are young people viewed by police - why?
- How could negative images be changed?

Stop and Search

- Why would police stop and search you on the street?
- What's it like to be stopped and searched?
- Could police do this better and how?

Rioting and Anti-Social Behaviour

- What do you think anti-social behaviour is?
- Why do young people get involved in Anti-social Behaviour?
- Why do young people get involved in rioting?
- What could be done to prevent this?
- Are there any other ways anti-social behaviour can be dealt with?
- What could work to reduce anti-social behaviour and rioting?
- What could police do in relation to anti-social behaviour/ rioting?

Car Theft

- How big an issue is car theft in your area? How do young people get involved in car theft?
- What action should police take against car theft?
- What could police be doing to reduce car theft in your area?
- Would you feel able to report car theft to police? What would make you more confident to report?

Domestic Violence

- How big an issue is domestic violence for young people?
- How do police deal with domestic violence?
- Could domestic violence be dealt with better? How?

Street Drinking/Hanging Around

- How big an issue is Street Drinking in your area? How do young people get involved in Street Drinking?
- What action should police take against Street Drinking?
- What could police be doing to reduce Street Drinking in your area?
- Why do young people 'hang around the streets' within communities?
- How do communities react to young people hanging around? What could change this?

Communities

- What are the main issues in relation to crime for your community?
- Do you feel safe in your community? Why?
- Who has the power in your community?
- How are police viewed in your community?

Policing Plan

- **Do you think that young people should:-**
 - a. have a section of their own in the policing plan
 - b. not be singled out in the policing plan as young people are just like any other member of society
 - c. be mentioned but not in their own section

Appendix 3

Record of Feedback

Relationship with the Police

- Not a very good one – don't seem very friendly
- Contact with neighbourhood police, some don't have neighbourhood police, or only show up occasionally, not enough on a patrol to prevent crime
- Community doesn't trust police
- Young people feel police only around to pick on them, not to make sure they're ok
- Police don't really engage unless there's been crime
- All young people in the group have met police, some in school, could get to know them
- Only positive experience was youth worker trying to actively engage young people with police – went to Garnerville, young people started to get to know them, but broke down after Whiterock riots (yp from Shankill area) – disengaged.
- Young people felt nothing would be done if they made a complaint – one young person had a negative experience but didn't complain
- Lack of knowledge/familiarity/complaints mechanisms (ie police ombudsman)
- Should be efforts to raise awareness of the ombudsman
- Negative attitudes possibly coming out of feeling that nothing would be done, lack of awareness of what police should do.
- Need to emphasize fact the Police Ombudsman is independent
- It's a good idea if youth workers could go out and train cadets
- Deal with small issues ie drunk young people/young women alone
- There is a difference between neighbour hood police and response in behaviour
- Young people seeing police with council member who get fined young people have more respect and will not drink in streets.
- Not respected
- Response police ruin it for community officers
- Think they can do what they want

What sort of relationship do you have with police?

- Didn't have a relationship when younger but due to cross community groups and police getting involved.
- Neighbour hood police are sound response are w***ers
- Neighbourhood police try more to build relationships. They take time

- Young people feel intimidated by response – feel as though they are just getting a job done
- Police are too forcible
- Due to security alerts police will not come in and build relationship where we live (Springfield Road)
- Have met neighbourhood police more than response
- Young people don't like police as they only stop to caution/take drink
- Seems as if young people think police only approach them when they do wrong
- Victim of crime but nothing has happened
- Negative profiling/borderline harassment from police
- Response time is long took an hour to respond to mugging
- Police are taught to profile
- Feeling that police are defensive as they don't feel that they have community support
- Shite
- Good experience when arrested
- If stop you in street they harass you
- Bad experience when they came to my door – came over back of fence – were looking for someone – asked for ID – went through my door – no warrant but they searched through my stuff
- Broke someone's teeth and knocked me out – went to Ombudsman, but it went no-where
- Can build relationships with community police but not with response
- Police are w***ers in their attitudes towards young people
- Don't listen to young people
- Survey on shankill – has got worse since 2006 after Whiterock riots
- Police provoke young people with sectarianism shouting
- People wind young people up
- Community police build relationships, but other police ruin them
- Police in Edinburgh great, but not Strathclyde police (Glasgow)
- Why are the police so middle class and we seem to have only problems in working class areas
- Denial of who you are on protestant side (orange order) but on RC side you can be member of GAA and have police GAA team.
- Police move young people who are doing no harm – on
- Why were police no's reduced when the working class people in both communities were starting to accept the police. We should have kept no's to give confidence
- We need working class people from protestant and RC backgrounds, not middle/upper class.

- Get working class on board
- Listen and interact with the community
- Not liked
- Viewed with suspicion
- Scumbags
- Mixed views with older people – young people hate them
- Should feel safe when you see police but automatically feel anxious.
- Community officers are respected but response officers wreck the good relations.
- It's all about building relationships
- No relationship
- Negative relationship
- Make problems worse
- Certain people try and wind people up. Point out certain individuals to wind up
- Stop certain crowd
- Target people
- Always negative
- People like to get police out to wind them up

Complaints

- One incident was described where officer put young person to the ground and hit face off it and broke 2 front teeth. Young person made complaint to ombudsman and whole process, everything was denied. Young person described experience perfectly and gave the name of the officer to Ombudsman but all denied every part of incident – they'd never been there that night! – “Complete joke”

How to improve relations?

- Get in and build relationships so policing can be preventative
- Impossible for young people to get on with police – safety, young people may not feel obliged to follow law if no police ever around
- Unless you are involved in police forums and planning groups that's the only way to meet and know police
- Have more police and young people contact eg sports, youth groups, blue light disco where police get involved
- Get police officers in youth centres as youth workers and after relationship building then tell them they are police
- Communication skills should be enhanced – can come across as abrupt

- Provide opportunities for trainee officers to empathise with different members of society to understand how they feel.
- Response need to chill
- Need to engage with community
- Not every problem needs hard approach
- Response makes young people worse by the way they behave
- Works 2 ways – if you respect police they will respect you
- Old police are better – young ones have bad approach
- Need proper engagement with community
- PACE programme – policing community engagement programme ran by Alternatives
- Have manners – manners cost nothing
- Need to change attitude – be more “young person friendly”.
- Relaxed and more casual and approach us in a whole different way – talk to each other with respect – works both ways
- Don't be pointing in your face – don't like that
- Doing things to young people out of boredom. – harassment. They be cheeky so we be cheeky back
- Don't point finger in faces don't have an attitude – don't ask stuff in an abrupt manner. Don't stereotype
- Class – difference – officers becoming more from middle class and perhaps don't relate so much to communities due to most bother being in working class areas and lack of understanding and can't relate as well.
- Relationship should be improved and can be. Getting involved in the area (call into the youth club)
- Only meeting them when they're investigating – getting involved would be more positive.
- Maybe have youth work skills
- Both responsible to build relationships – sit down and talk
- They're only a service – forget about the uniform and more of being a person.
- They respect us we will respect them.
- Training in how to deal with young people
- Less young people see of the police the better.

Recommendations:

1. Make sure police are in ALL communities
2. Educate people about police, their rights and how to complain to build confidence
3. Get the police to interact more with young people in schools etc.

Stereotypes

- Generalization of people
- Young people aren't noticed for good things, just bad things
- No positive story on media about young people that weren't pushed by youth organisations or schools – Stephen Nolan 'good' young person waste of airtime.
- Told that unless it was to do with someone with a disability or older people it wouldn't be covered
- See a lot of adults in news for community relations work, but young people are doing a lot of serious work that isn't noticed
- Negative image of young people in communities – assumptions with hoods, track bottoms, hanging about, people shouting at you, pulled by police with friends wearing hoods and track suits, asked to empty pockets
- Feeling that young people from certain areas with certain stereotypes
- Policy in shops ie young people can't wear hats but older people can, 2 school children allowed in at a time, asked why and were told it was 'crime prevention' because when there were incidents with young people stealing the police wouldn't turn up
- One young person got followed by security guard in a shop because in a track suit or just because they're young
- Told to leave school bags at the door
- Change – young people need to get involved, speak up about positive things they do, speaking/advocating for themselves, listen to young people
- Get more in media about young people being bad than good – all negative
- Young people viewed as scumbags
- Small group can bring area down
- Only concentrate on negatives
- Bad news sells papers

Recommendations:

1. It's hard to change stereotypes but don't give up
2. Publish actual statistics regarding young people and crime – raise awareness of reality of crime and young people.
3. Shouldn't be discriminatory policies against young people such as in shops.
4. Promote the good, more praise without bringing up the negative

Stop and Search

Why stop and search?

- Bored
- Look suspicious
- For the craic
- It's happening less
- It's embarrassing
- Should be interacting more rather than stopping and searching – should be in youth clubs
- Not fair to assume you've committed a crime just because of how you look

What's it like to be stopped and searched?

- Intimidating
- Scary even if you've not done anything
- They always have an excuse
- Their judgment/criteria
- If you refuse to be searched they become more suspicious – become more aggressive, feel like you have no choice
- Know that female should search female etc but seen that not happen
- Seen people stopped because of colour of their skin
- Most young people aren't aware of laws and rights around stop and search
- Shouldn't have power if they're going to misuse it
- Should have to record reasons why they stopped you, if search was positive or negative
- Need a review by each police district of conditions of stops
- Young people feel they're targeted or unfairly affected if someone in their family has a criminal record

Recommendations:

1. Record why stopping someone, whether or not anything found and review this every year
2. Education – raise awareness of your rights and the laws; development of educational materials, what happens if you refuse
3. Give out leaflets around stop and search

Young People as Victims

Who is most likely to be a victim?

- Young people are most likely to be victims, or in general those groups that are vulnerable
- Young people
- Most vulnerable most likely to be involved in a crime – pensioners easy target, people living by themselves, homeless, young people and women.

Are all victims treated equally/

- No – young people seen to have deserved it both by police and their communities.
 - A lot of police think young people don't know their rights and will just go along with it, young people seen as committing crime, not being victims
 - Depends on seriousness of crime
 - Stereotyping
-
- Young people do report crime, but felt nothing was done
 - A lot of communities also don't have faith in police and would turn to paramilitaries – but a lot of young people don't agree because when paramilitaries called in, they set against young people, whereas older people trust paramilitaries more, but also for some communities young people starting to support paramilitaries.
 - Still suspicious of police because they're not around, police don't do anything if you report a crime against you by a paramilitary, media don't report punishment beatings against young people.
 - Paramilitaries make things worse
 - A lot of paramilitary activity is against young people but media don't report it – they would if it's against adults
 - Police haven't been involved in communities – paramilitaries were
 - Would depend what the crime was if you would report it or not
 - People with criminal records, not responded to as quickly/seriously – lack of confidence in police
 - People don't want you interacting with police (families) as they don't like them
 - Police were never whole-heartily respected in loyalist working class communities – police shot in Shankill
 - Police told both loyalists and republicans that no-one would be charged with crimes before 1998.
 - Police deal with working class on RC side (Sinn Fein) but not working class on protestant side.
 - When young person is known to people and report something don't get responded to same way as others would. Wouldn't hardly report stuff though as have no confidence in police to do anything.

- Older officers deal with people differently to new ones coming out into force.
- One young person said they do have confidence in police to do their job right.
- Expect police to arrest people, sentences should be stronger, tougher sentence less victims, consistency in sentencing
- Deal with it yourself.

Recommendations:

1. Relationship building needed
2. You need to work with adults and young people.

Complaints

Have you ever made a complaint?

- No nothing will get done, no feedback, you don't hear what they do, not very encouraging
- Always need proof, need hard evidence
- They are quick at lifting young people off the streets but not quick at lifting people who are in trouble
- No back up; if the police do something wrong and young people complain they don't get back up as they stick together
- Ombudsman should meet more young people
- Young people could not be annoyed with complaining as they have to write it down. Some can't write, read, no literacy.

Drugs and Alcohol

- Huge issue
- Regular easy access to drugs
- Get involved through paramilitaries – sell you the drugs and then beat you for taking them
- Mephedrone
- Selling heroin starter packs
- NRG-1 is new big drug
- Dope, E's, blues
- Not right that you can find it on a street corner
- Action against drug dealers – need to get police involved, paramilitaries on both ends only 'get rid of' a drug dealer after someone's died; PR stunt

- Getting people as young as 9/10 hooked on drugs – police need to be out in community more, don't feel able to report drugs to police because of fear of paramilitary reprisal, need some kind of effective free hotline.
- Told that when it's taken off you it gets taken to police barracks and heard that it will do their end of year party, provoking young people.
- Stopped by police had a bottle of juice and made to open it so they could smell it. Being accused and not even doing anything. Are they going to stop everyone who drinks juice. This was response officers.
- Young girl walking alone drunk – police just drove past
- Young people are peer pressured into drink and drugs
- Young people are underestimated they can say no – this is an easy way out
- Young people are very curious, police should understand young people are bored. If you don't want to get addicted don't try.
- Drugs mostly used are cannabis, E's, Methadone
- Not as easy for young people to come to drug awareness groups – low confidence, ashamed.
- Get involved because of peer pressure, to experiences it, a trend, age groups, easy access, cheaper, less facilities for young people.
- Depend on area you're from
- Expectations people think can't achieve nothing else, not enough facilities.

What police could do..

- Make sure young people get home safe
- Young people think they are invincible but they're not they see friends OD around them and doesn't stop them.
- Police should target dealers, undercover
- Drugs have got worse over the years
- Police just driving by or watching the drinkers, glue sniffers and drug dealers
- Harsher on dealers, bigger sentencing
- No confidence in police to do it.

Rioting and Anti-Social Behaviour

- ASB – drinking on corners
- Paramilitaries used to do it (rioting) themselves, but now kids do it for them, both start them
- Feel that Whiterock was police's fault
- Something like football, parades, 12th can start riots
- Messing about in streets, waking people up at night

- There is a difference between anti-social behaviour and crime
- Don't think young people know what anti-social behaviour is
- Child games should not be anti-social behaviour
- Young people wouldn't think kicking a ball in street is anti-social behaviour
- There has to be intention for it to be anti-social behaviour
- Young people are proud of ASBO's
- Police response was not balanced
- Some rules are made to be broken
- Can be more drinking
- Breaking windows
- Rioting
- Vandalism
- Graffiti
- joyriding

How to tackle Anti-social behaviour?

- Educate police and young people about it and parents
- Have places for young people to hang out.
- Police have made up anti-social behaviour now everyone calls anything that has happened in the street by young people anti-social behaviour
- 11 year olds running the streets at 1.30 am parent's fault for letting out. Young people have no fear of parents. Depending on circumstances
- If there were more things for young people to do then they wouldn't be anti-social or riot.
- More facilities prevent anti-social behaviour

Why do young people get involved in riots?

- Told to – by paramilitaries “support your community”
- Also want to sometimes
- Adults send kids out
- Opportunism
- Not as big a deal – used to be every Sunday
- Protecting your own community people in fear of the other side/stopping them from coming in
- Young people looking up to older ones
- Such a shame politics comes in to fights/riots
- Riot is just a game for young people
- Doesn't matter which way police deal with it young people don't trust police
- Police are not supported to deal with riots
- Outside forces are encouraging rioting
- Recreational rioting is very real. Groups are contacting each to arrange riots

- Local communities need to take responsibility for the action of their members
- Boredom – something to do
- Not enough cross community work

How could it be stopped?

- Interface projects, mobiles phones
- Local networks, community workers (more)
- More CCTV cameras (riots in Ardoyne as not as bad now with cameras); maybe won't keep young people from rioting but may get police there quicker.
- Challenge people's attitudes; taught to "support your community"
- Other young people think police shouldn't come so much – go past because could be seen as antagonism, want more community workers.
- Response should be tailored to community
- Educate about costs of rioting ie over 12th means less somewhere else.
- Police should target the people who are coming in from other communities they should know who they are.
- Build relationships doing cross community
- Takes time to work

Domestic Violence

- Actually arrest people who offend
- Unless partner has actually abused you physically there is no evidence
- More of a family thing unless young people experience it themselves
- Young people wouldn't report it as they are afraid of parents getting into trouble.
- It's a huge hidden issue
- DV aimed at males is a big issue
- Response time is slow
- Failing in judicial system
- PPS & Court services are not supporting police work
- Attitudes to abuse and DV is not good (Queens research 2 yrs ago)
- Some areas have normalised DV because of frequency

Miscellaneous

- Car theft happening less, not a big issue
- Nobody really drinks on corners anymore – made out to be bigger problem than it is
- Groups being proactive in providing alternatives – need resources

- Should emphasize safety
- Youth centres need to be open later
- Some young people have been harassed by adults drinking
- Alcohol free places in town should stay open late (ie cafes)
- Need more community officers, get to know them

Street Drinking/Hanging Around

- Why is street drinking seen as a negative
- Binge drinking/drunken activity is an issue
- Happens from boredom
- Do it for the thrill of the chase
- Youth provision is limited at the weekend
- Culture in NI is about excessive drinking
- Some adults facilitate underage drinking

Car Theft

- Joyriding
- Killing people
- Breaking into cars
- Damaging cars
- Bigger in some areas
- Stronger convictions
- Want to be seen to do something about it
- Patrol the area
- Heavier sentence
- Tougher sentences for repeat offenders

Communities

The issues:

- Drugs
- Joyriding
- Interface
- Hoods
- Drug dealers are police touts

Do you feel safe in your community?

Tell paramilitaries before telling police. Paramilitaries sort stuff out in community get response from paramilitaries but police probably won't.

Who has the power

- All young people said that paramilitaries respond – police don't
- Police use paramilitaries when it suits them but claim they don't
- Paramilitaries take the power – intimidation
- Paramilitaries have role of police because police don't have evidence and aren't effective.
- If community supports police more there will be criminals but less.

Policing Plan

- Split opinion – some say should have own sections, other say mentioned but not in own sections.
- Young people are not the next generation they are the present too.
- Police should do something each month with local young people
- Police should get to know young people through centres, street based by going out as a youth worker

Recommendation:

- Suggestion was made that young people are encouraged to apply for positions on policing board

Overall recommendations

- Need more education for young people
 - Stop and search rules
 - General rights
 - More education for adults on reality of how many young people are really involved in crime.
- Strengthen local policing – especially more interaction with young people, more police on the streets
- Treat young people fairly and with the same respect as you would adults
- It's important that young people have a positive relationship with police

- More programmes/police projects are needed to engage with young people involved in drugs/alcohol.
- Police need to deal with people coming from different areas to riot instead of hassling people that live within the area.