



Supporting Young People
and Voluntary Youth Work



Peter McCall

IMPACT REVIEW FOR THE YOUTH COMMISSION – YOUNG CUMBRIA

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1 INTRODUCTION

The Cumbria Youth Commission is a project that enables young people aged 14-25 to inform decisions about policing and crime prevention in Cumbria, working in partnership with the Police and Crime Commissioner and Cumbria Police. Cumbria Youth Commission has been delivering since April 2017 and operates with funding from the Police and Crime Commissioner for Cumbria. The Cumbria Youth Commission is being delivered by Young Cumbria - an organisation that aims to create positive and lasting change in the lives of young people in Cumbria and particularly to make a significant difference in outcomes for those young people most disadvantaged in the county.

The key objectives of this project are to:

- Allow young people aged 14 to 25 to have their say about policing and crime in Cumbria.
- Identify and address the most urgent priorities effecting young people in Cumbria.
- Enhance the county's response to matters relating to policing and crime, and how these impact young people.
- Build on young people's knowledge and experience to help them identify and design solutions

- Train peer educators and researcher to provide peer education to young people on the priority areas and to gain their views on issues.
- Work alongside the Police and Crime Commissioner to help develop the response and approach to young people for the Police and Crime Plan and advise on the commissioning of services aimed at children and young people
- To bring together learning from existing work within the county on the priority issues to enhance the working knowledge of the Youth Commission
- To support and challenge the work of the Police Crime Commissioner.

In Year 2 there are 19 active Young Commissioners with 4 of those remaining from the Year 1 cohort. In total there are 28 young people working as part of the Youth Commission.

“It was felt that the use of a third party external evaluator would provide high levels of objectivity and ensure a non biased approach to evaluating the true impact of the Youth Commission project. It also ensures that the young people involved in the project could speak openly and honestly about the delivery team and the way the project has developed.

Due to the nature of Young Cumbria’s work we are always interested in the impact and distance travelled on the young people we engage with on a regular basis, the positive impacts of partnership working and more quantitative impact via the use of social media.”

***Ian Alcock, Senior Project Worker
Young Cumbria***

More information about Nicola Lynch of LynchPin Support is available at www.lynchpinsupport.co.uk

2 BRIEF & METHODOLOGY

The Young Cumbria – Cumbria Youth Commission team engaged Nicola Lynch to support them in creating a *light-touch* impact review of their project. This did not include auditing or verifying data provided by the client to the evaluator. The focus of this review was to understand and articulate the impact or ‘difference made’ by the Cumbria Youth Commission since its inception. The team have already provided data to the funder on activities and outputs - as well as detailing progress against the project’s specific objectives - and this review is designed to **augment** that data not duplicate it. Copies of previous Cumbria Youth Commission reports are included in the Appendices for reference.

With support from Young Cumbria the evaluator completed the following works :

- Reviewed data previously gathered & reported on by the client.
- Conducted an online survey with external organisational stakeholders.
- Conducted a focus group with young people and staff.
- Conducted interviews online, over the phone and in person with Youth Commission participants.
- Produced this short report detailing findings from the above activities.



3 IMPACT REVIEW FINDINGS – young people/project participants

The evaluator gathered participants' feedback via interviews and a focus group as well as conversations by 'phone and online. Interviewees included past and present participants. All young people were assured of their anonymity in engaging with the review.

Key outcomes which were mentioned regularly by the sample of young people consulted are below...

IMPROVED CONFIDENCE AROUND OTHER YOUNG PEOPLE

"When joining the youth commission I hoped to build my confidence and make friends but most importantly I wanted to be able to give my opinions and improve the lives of the young people in our county.



"I feel so far I have made friends, met some interesting people, built my confidence and had my opinions heard."

"I am more confident with sharing ideas to people I don't know as this is something that I previously found difficult."

"I have learned that I have the ability to speak confidently in public especially to those in positions of power who are older than me."

IMPROVED CONFIDENCE IN CHALLENGING AUTHORITY

"I feel more confident in terms of my self-presentation and putting across my own opinion and I also feel able to put across my own personal opinion."

"By taking part in the YC I feel more confident in public speaking after doing a presentation in front of a room of professionals."



“I feel I’m more comfortable talking to adults and happier to join in conversations.”

“I am more confident with sharing ideas to people I don’t know as this is something that I previously found difficult.”

INCREASED SENSE OF PERSONAL VALUE

“Sometimes I’ve felt like I have nothing to offer...like I’m pointless. This project has helped me see that I have got lots to offer and I’m proud of what I’ve done so far.”

“Becoming more aware of how hard other people’s lives are has made me really want to help others...and this has made me feel more positive about who I am. Like maybe someone out there needs me to help make things better and that means I matter too.”

INCREASED SENSE OF PURPOSE & AGENCY

“I learned to be even more open to other people’s opinions and to have confidence in myself and believe that I can make a difference.”

“Loads of adults think we don’t read or care about the news and stuff but we do...I just always felt hopeless. This project has made me realise we can all do something. I’ve got loads of things I want to do now and I know I *can* do them and help change things out there because of what we’ve achieved here.”

IMPROVED SOCIETAL AWARENESS

“Due to being part of the YC I feel I have learnt a lot more about areas of the Police and issues that occur for young people in Cumbria. This has then changed some of my opinions on certain things in life. I have also had the opportunity to get involved in volunteering opportunities that I wouldn’t of had the chance to if it wasn’t for the YC- IAG stop and search producers.”

“I think I am now more aware about what is happening in Cumbria with youths.”

“I have learned that we all have experienced or have known someone who has experienced things in Cumbria like drink driving, anti social behaviour etc. but not a lot was being done to address these issues with youths.”

“I have learned that the problems with crime were more heavily affecting young people than I thought it was previously.”

“Following the questionnaires, we found that many people chose to drink or take drugs because they were bored... which is something we can easily change by talking to the council to implement more activities etc to involve this target.”



“I was able to develop my research skills and I now know more about the society I live in and issues to be aware of.”

ENHANCED KNOWLEDGE & EXPERIENCE RELATING TO FUTURE CAREER CHOICES



“I also used the Youth Commission as part of my placement for college; I am currently studying public services at Lakes and hope that my future career will be in the Police service. I hoped that having the Youth Commission on my CV might help me in joining the Police service.”

“I wanted to do something that would benefit helping me do something in the public services as this is a future career that I hope to pursue, so far I think it has been rewarding and I have learned a lot. I also used this as my college placement and feel I have been given opportunities that I wouldn't normally be offered.”

NOTES ON THESE OUTCOMES

The evaluator found strong evidence of the above stated outcomes in talking to the young people involved on the project so far. It must be noted however that the project is in its early stages (at 18 months old) and therefore we can only claim these outcomes in the short term at this stage in the project's life-cycle.

The list of activities completed by the Commission are included in the reports in the Appendices. Discussions with the young people quoted above confirm that they are happy with the decision-making and delivery of these activities. They are full of ideas to improve them (as we would hope) but they believe that they have achieved the above outcomes because they have significant autonomy and decision-making power within the work of the Commission. They report that the staff are acting appropriately as facilitators and enablers and are willing to give the young people the space and time required to ensure their ownership of the Commission.



CONSTRUCTIVE CRITICISM...

The only 'negative' feedback from participants was based on the difficulty of arranging, co-ordinating and attending physical 'face-to-face' meetings. This is a concern raised previously by project staff in discussions with the evaluator. Part of the challenge comes from the nature of the majority of participants. In this particular project they are often quite active & engaged young people already – many of those in the sample were studying, working, volunteering and engaged in activities like sport or music. Young people are also spread across a wide geography so transport and accessibility play their part in this issue as they always do in Cumbria. Some young people wanted an established diary of meetings for the year ahead but some felt this would be too restrictive. It is a challenge that the staff will continue to address in consultation with the project participants.

4 IMPACT REVIEW FINDINGS – external stakeholders

A brief online survey was distributed to external stakeholders and 4 responses were returned. These included a mix of delivery and referral partners (eg, Schools, other youth delivery organisations, local police contacts.) The evaluator also spoke to another 4 representatives of organisations as listed here. All feedback was given anonymously.

The survey had 4 questions focussed on ‘change’ and ‘benefit’ for participating organisations and young people.

Most respondents had only had relatively light contact with participants but in that contact felt that the outcomes for those participants as a result of their involvement with the project were :

Improved self-confidence	75%
Improved understanding of issues relating to crime	75%
Improved knowledge and/or understanding of issues affecting young people in Cumbria	50%
Improved presentation skills	25%
Improved research skills	25%

There was some uncertainty in response to the question “Are you aware of any changes the Youth Commission has delivered in the community?”

One representative answer was...

“Not directly aware of ‘actual deliveries’ in terms of the YC’s work. But do feel they are very aware of the problems young people can face.”

Organisational stakeholders value the knowledge and awareness being developed through the project and as the Youth Commission moves each time from its research phases into delivery on separate issues it should encourage some reflection on the **visibility** of that delivery.

One respondent says...

“Keep up the good work. Get more people involved and publicise it more!”

5 IMPACT REVIEW FINDINGS – Youth Commission delivery

The evaluator requested that Young Cumbria provide some feedback on the reach of the Commission's recent delivery which is quoted below. The Commission has run 3 social media campaigns already with a further 2 planned to run before the end of February 2019.

As part of the Youth Commission project a lot of emphasis has been placed by Mr McCall in utilizing Social media to engage with young people. The following campaigns have been undertaken and provide some quantitative impact of the work undertaken. Though this shows particular level of reach and engagement it would be difficult to clarify the long term impact.

Social Media campaign (Mental Health Awareness Day):

Reach	Shares
3,770	30

The first youth commission social media campaign (SMC), using the first year report as a basis, sought to increase awareness of mental health services and provide some info on self care techniques. The group had input into the content provided but relied heavily on YC staff to populate some posts after the YP provided basic outlines to follow, the group were tasked with sharing the posts ensuring that they reached their peers with this information. As a first campaign and a test for it proved successful and provided some learning going forward to ensure future SMCs had a great impact.

Social Media campaign (Hate Crime Awareness Week):

Reach	Shares
725	10

Last year the Youth Commissioner's had Hate Crime as one of their priority areas. They wanted to continue to raise awareness on this issue during the second

year. They decided to put together a social media campaign to raise awareness on National Hate Crime awareness week. Youth Commissioner’s helped with the content in these posts and asked peers/ schools/colleges/parents to like and share there post. This did not work as well as planned as some of the young people forgot to share the posts, however we feel that this still reached a good number of people to raise awareness to Hate Crime.

Social Media campaign (Drink/Drug Driving):

Reach	Shares	Times video was watched
39,942	220	11,242

After the completion of the Drink/Drug Driving video the Youth Commissioners undertook a social media campaign to share the work they had created. The Young Cumbria Facebook page was used as the launching point with all youth commissioners tasked with sharing the work done and ensuring that their peers seen and engaged with the video created, therefore raising awareness and reaching the target group.

As part of the social media campaign the video received a flurry of positive comments some of which are detailed below.

“Well done Young Cumbria, a powerful film”

“Thought provoking message from [Young Cumbria](#)”

“AMAZING work by the young people involved in the Cumbria Youth Commission project!

“WBC, Please take time to watch. So SAD”

“Bloody brilliant video guys!

Never let your mates drive under the influence of drink or drugs and most definitely do not get in the car with them, with hearing about car crashes just about every week we need to take a stronger stance on driving laws under the influence. #notevenapint #noinfluncenoproblem #roadsafety# itsjustcommonsense”

Alongside the positive feedback from the social media campaign the video was also shared with key partners to further the reach and ensure the resource could be utilised beyond the life of the CYC project. Further feedback from practitioners has been gathered, some comments are detailed below;

"I have just had a good watch and this is really good"

"Thanks for this Ian, we will definitely be able to make use of this. Well done to the Youth Commission."

"What a great video, well done to all of the young people involved"

"Thank you so much for inviting me to yesterday's film premier. I was incredibly impressed by both the film and the young people who made it. They answered the questions from Mr McCall with such honesty and clarity that it made me feel very proud to be associated with the project"

"A very important message about drinking and drugs while driving. Thanks for posting this video"

"This was an actual realistic depiction of what young people do. Usually these commercials are super forced and lame. Good work. Great message"

In comparing Sections 4 and 5 above it is worth remembering that the Youth Commission's target in terms of its audience is largely *other young people*. The numbers above show significant and growing reach in terms of the online campaigns and the Commissioners themselves are growing in knowledge and confidence in the processes involved - researching issues and then presenting those issues in a way which promotes awareness, impacts on young people's perceptions and encourages debate.

6 SUMMARY POINTS

- There is good evidence from the data already gathered by Young Cumbria and through externally conducted interviews with young people that involvement with the Youth Commission is having a positive impact on participants.
- It is too early in the project life-cycle to comment robustly on the longer term impact of the individual projects being developed and delivered by the Youth Commissioners. The delivery is being very well received and there are strong early signs in the responses on social media that the delivery is encouraging visibility of and debate on key issues around crime and young people in Cumbria.
- Interested organisations value the existence of the Cumbria Youth Commission as a resource for enabling them to access and consult young people on issues pertinent to their organisations.
- Young Cumbria has ensured that the Commissioners have had the opportunity to work with a wide range of other organisations. They have worked directly with 20 other organisations and liaised with an even greater number. This collaborative and open approach is central to the young people's development journeys as well as the success of their individual projects.
- More work could be done ensuring all partner organisations are fully aware of the Commission's outputs, campaigns and spin-off projects as well as the existence of the Commission itself.
- The Youth Commissioners sampled feel empowered and well supported within the project by the project staff. They are proud of their outputs as a Commission and their development as a group is being well managed to ensure they benefit from the experience.



7 APPENDICES

See documents attached for previous Young Cumbria reports on the performance of the Cumbria Youth Commission project.