The PFCC asked ECVYS to engage with young people's views around the new Crime plan. They were keen to hear from young people to make sure that the plan is relevant and centred around what people in our communities say they want and need. The PFCC recognised that young people have a valuable contribution to make and we hope that this report will enable the young people's views to impact change in a positive way for the PFCC and the new Crime plan.

In order to help young people think about and understand the Crime plan in a 45 minute, youth group setting we paraphrased the priorities and linked some together so that they were easier to engage with.
We used the Crime plan priorities in a word cloud format for the youth groups and encouraged discussion and games around the priority areas that were led by the young peoples own trusted youth leaders for a more open and honest discussion. Youth leaders kept a record of all feedback so that we could collate this and put together a report for the PFCC.

The 9 groups that took part in the listening project were:
- Colchester Sea Cadets, based in the Colchester District
- KAOS youth club, based in the Rochford District
- Gateway community media, youth radio, based in the Basildon District
- Epping Forest Youth Council, based in the Epping Forest District
- Harlow police cadets, based in the Harlow District
- An Essex Boys and Girls youth club, based in the Uttlesford District
- 2nd Lexdon Guides, based in the Colchester District
- St Stephens Community Trust, based in the unitary authority of Thurrock
- Southend United Community Educational Trust, based in the unitary authority of Southend
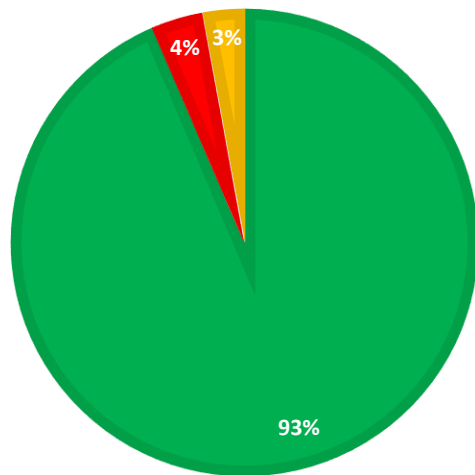
140 young people took part in the project. Their ages were-

10yrs	11yrs	12yrs	13yrs	14yrs	15yrs	16yrs	17yrs	18yrs	19yrs	20yrs	21yrs	22yrs
5	5	6	18	35	34	23	10	4	1		1	1

1.) Feedback from young people around 'Crime prevention and reducing drug driven violence'

Do young people think that 'Crime prevention' & 'reducing drug driven violence' are good priorities to have?

4% 3%

93%

93% of young people said YES

Yes: 131   Not sure: 4   No: 5

'Yes it is important. We need to feel safe'

What are the most important issues to be addressed in 'Crime prevention & 'reducing drug driven violence' according to young people?

1.) Support for people to step away from gang life
2.) More Police
3.) Early help and projects for young people
4.) Work with local communities to identify changes needed
5.) Close down County lines
6.) Use technology (like apps, social media, tasers, body cams)

Why did young people choose these as their top answers?

'If there is support early then this will prevent people from getting in the cycle of crime and therefore reduce it.'

'People who are in gangs do not have much protection or support to come out and could be risking their lives by leaving'

'More police officers visible on the street would help deter people from criminal and anti-social behaviour'

'More early help will take the pressure off the police that are needed to attend serious crimes. Will also allow for more local interactions'

'To base more policing around areas were problems most occur is a good idea as this may help to prevent further crimes'

'More police dogs on routine patrols; youth centres; Educate people about the consequences of crime to steer them away from that kind of life; more help in and from the community to prevent crime'

'County lines are a huge problem, if they are closed then it will protect people and possibly prevent people from getting dangerous addictions'

'These are important priorities because they are mostly about stopping crimes at the bottom before they became a larger problem'

'These priorities will help the widest range of people'

'Technology could be used to good effect in the fight against crime of all types'

Any other key comments from young people about this priority?

'Make sure young people and children are protected from exploitation'

'When I reported drug use to the police, no one showed up'

'Take more substances off the streets'

'Invest in more CCTV in the community'

'More undercover police officers. Could possibly get into gangs and find out how they're working or use undercover cars to patrol'

'We have been learning about Heritage crime and have completed a project of our own in a Local Church yard, from this we found that our heritage sites can and are used for the purposes of drinking and drugs. Therefore, we would like to see more policing around heritage sites and churches'

More people are drinking cheap alcohol and drugs is very common everywhere'

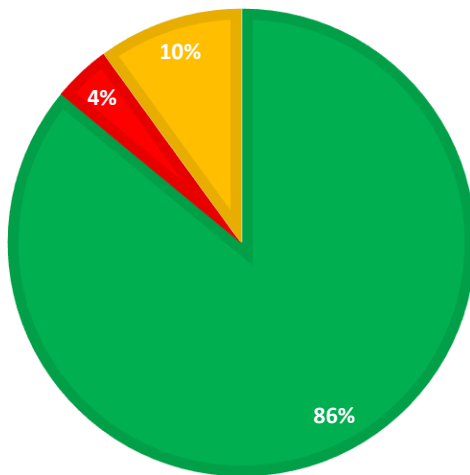'How is it even possible to protect people from gangs?'

'If you forever label known offenders by using stop and search on them and continue to search them they may live up to the label and continue to offend. They will also never be able to steer away from being a criminal or change their lives if the police always target them'

'There is a lack of street lights in rural areas e.g. Gt Sampford . If we have brighter area's it may help prevent crimes from happening'

2.) Feedback from young people around 'Protect Rural and Isolated Areas & Improve road safety'

Create a temporary site for travellers who need somewhere to stay

Invest in technology so Police can use more dash cam footage as evidence

Educate & protect all road users (like motorcyclists & road safety in schs)

More road safety cameras

Ensure Police, Fire & Ambulance work closer together for better links

Increase policing on roads

Lobby vehicle manufacturers to roll out active safety technology to stop driver error

Aim to stop people dying on roads

Fight rural crimes (illegal hare hunting, fly tipping, theft of farm equipment)

Community speed watch

More behaviour change & support programmes for drivers caught drink driving

Support an increase in road sentencing for death by dangerous driving

Do young people think that 'Protecting Rural & Isolated Areas & Improving road safety' are good priorities to have?

10%

4%

86%

86% of young people said YES

Yes: 129   **Not sure:** 15   **No: 6**

'To achieve this priority the PFCC need to make sure that services work more closely together, because the more that services work together, the more they can reduce crime'

What are the most important issues to be addressed in 'Protecting Rural and Isolated Areas & Improving road safety' for young people?

1.) Emergency services work more closely together
2.) More Awareness by motorists
3.) Invest in technology so Police can use more dash cam footage as evidence
4.) Educate and protect all road users (like motorcyclists & road safety in schools)
5.) Fight rural crimes (illegal hare hunting, fly tipping, theft of farm equipment)
6.) More behaviour change and support programmes for drivers caught drink driving
7.) Aim to stop people dying on roads

Why did young people choose these as their top answers?

'These top answers will prevent some accidents, and if an accident was still to occur there would be services to provide the help they need and prevent it from happening again'

'Investing in technology is a key element to ensure the safety of our local community and the Police'

'Safety on the roads in rural and local areas must be a top priority because people speed too much'

'Drink and drug driving education for drivers is important to reduce road risks. These drink and drug drivers put us at risk''

'If the PFCC follow through with this priority, then it will give people confidence to know they are safe'

'If there is more policing on the road's, then they can look out for signs of criminal behaviour and help to prevent crime before it happens'

Any other key comments from young people about this priority?

'My grandparents had an accident due to a pot hole so I know the roads are not in good condition'

'More cameras, lamp posts and undercover police on the roads'

'By the emergency services working more closely together it will make them more efficient and by sharing information it could build a bigger picture or what to look out for, like when ambulances and fire engines return to base they my drive through a crime area but not even know it'

'Improve safety in rural areas by having more lighting and more restricted parking zones'

'Reduce the speed limit in some country and rural areas to protect the wildlife'

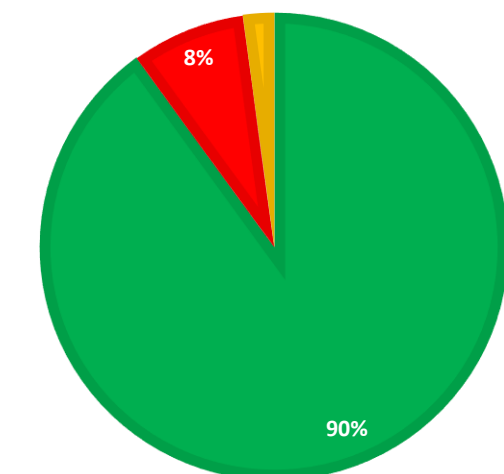'Improving road safety is far more important than protecting rural isolated areas'

'Rural Heritage buildings like churches, castles, ruins etc should be patrolled more often'

'More cycle paths to keep cyclists safe would be good'

3.) Young peoples feedback on 'Encouraging Volunteers and Community Support'

Make sure the Government follow through on their promise to invest money in youth work

Work with youth groups to understand the risks & challenges young people face

Support Neighbourhood Watch & develop programmes like this for areas with Farms & Pubs

Grow the Special Constabulary so there is one in every town/ parish, & major business

Get Police & Fire cadets up and running again after Covid

Help young people understand how they can support their communities by engaging in positive activity

Do young people think that 'Encouraging Volunteers & Community Support' are good priorities to have?

8%

90%

YES NO **90% of young people said YES**

Yes:126   **Unsure:**3   **No: 11**

'If you invest in young people early, then you are already investing in their future'

What are the most important issues to be addressed in 'Encouraging volunteers and community support' for young people?

(Young people from Southend united who took part in the project)

1.) Make sure the government follow through on their promise to invest more money into youth work

2.) Work with youth groups to understand the risks and challenges young people face

3.) Help young people understand how they can support their communities by engaging in positive activity

Why did young people choose these as their top answers?

'Without the funding, young people are missing out on services that they need. No funding means minimal support for young people'

'There is very little or no support for volunteers that support youth and vulnerable people. Help is there but limited'

'If young people are understood more with the challenges they face, they may not have a bad label attached and people can show empathy towards problems they are facing'

'There's not enough cheap things for us to do so we just sit in the park'

Any other key comments from young people about this priority?

'You should remove major business from the list as they can provide their own security'

'We want to volunteer but don't know about many opportunities'

'Encourage more positive relationships between the community (especially young people) and the police'

'More officers that are aimed at young people'

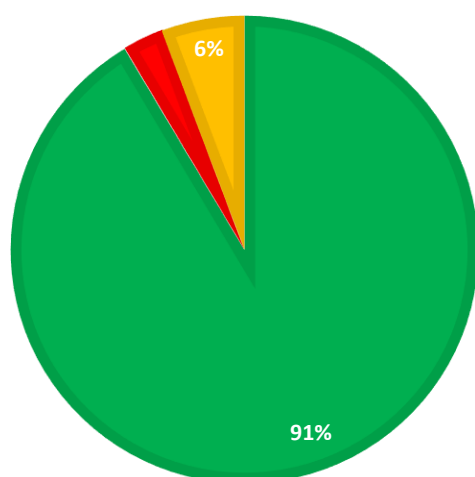'If we already have second largest amount of Special Constable's then isn't that enough?'

'If we didn't have our youth club, then we wouldn't have places to go to with adults that we trust, outside of school'

4.) Feedback from young people on 'Protecting vulnerable people (including violence against women & girls) & support victims of crime

Have specialist officers

Male violence against women will not be tolerated

Champion the rights of victims & support services for individual needs

Use more electronic tags for perpetrators of domestic abuse & related offences

Focus on prevention initiatives such as schs work around risky behaviours & healthy relationships

Support victims of human trafficking, modern slavery & sexual exploitation

Protect & support victims (including their families)

Raise awareness around domestic abuse

Work with schools to educate our children to create a culture where male violence against women is not tolerated

Victims will be encouraged to report crime & then supported through the system

Bring together agencies to improve offender management

Bring perpetrators to justice

Encourage measures & initiatives in communities to make public space free from abuse & harassment

Work with organisations & communities to find ways to help reduce the fear women feel

Apply for funding to improve lighting, cctv & safety in town centres & key hotspots

Invest in behavioural change programmes for offenders

Do young people think that 'Protecting vulnerable people (including violence against women & girls) & supporting victims of crime' are good priorities to have?

6%

91%

91% of young people said **YES**

Yes:128   Unsure:8   No:4

Many groups felt strongly that 'the statements that say ''male violence against women is not tolerated'' should read ''all forms of violence will not be tolerated, because boys and men can also be victims of violence and need protection too'

What are the most important issues to be addressed in 'Protect vulnerable people (including violence against women & girls) & support victims of crime' for young people?

1.) Apply for funding to improve lighting, CCTV & safety in town centres & key hotspots
2.) Work with schools to educate our children to create a culture where male violence against women is not tolerated
3.) Protect & support victims (Including their families)
4.) Male violence against women will not be tolerated
5.) Bring perpetrators to justice
6.) Support victims of human trafficking, modern slavery, & sexual exploitation

Why did young people choose these as their top answers?

'If we can improve safety in darker places and have better lighting and cameras then if crimes are committed, they could be proven easily'

'Violence should not be tolerated as our community shouldn't have to live in fear'

'Male violence against women has not seemed to be as serious as other crimes and should be taken more seriously'

'Why is this solely on protecting women and girls and not men and boys too?'

'Victims should have more support to help them get back to normal life without fear'

'I've been through this and want more support at school and from the community'

'As young people we believe that more should be done to protect those most vulnerable in our communities. It is important to provide the appropriate resources to victims of various crimes of all levels'

Any other key comments from young people about this priority?

'Places like Youth clubs are desperately needed so we can talk to people'

'Although violence against females is very important, violence from females to men should be important too and taken seriously'

'More lights, cameras and police officers please!'

'People who lie about sexual abuse or rape should be taken seriously and charged with a crime'
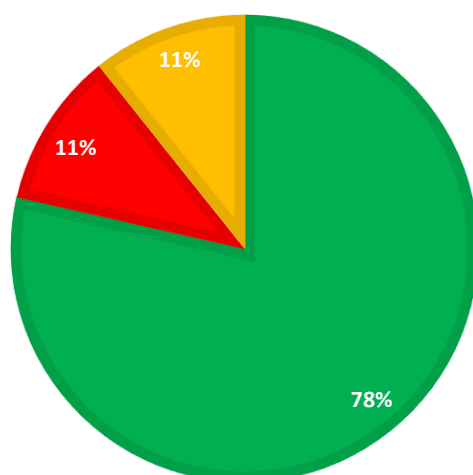
'In winter when leaving school after a club or a detention, it should be a higher priority for schools to escort children and young people to where their parents are picking them up'

5.) Young peoples feedback on 'Tackling Business Crime, Fraud, Cyber Crime & Dog theft'

Do young people think that 'Tackling Business Crime, Fraud, Cyber Crime & Dog theft' are good priorities to have?

78% of young people said **YES**

Yes:110   **Unsure:**15   **No:**15

'Online crime allows people get away with more as they hide behind screens and never face real consequences'

What are the most important issues to be addressed in 'Tackling Business Crime, Fraud, Cyber Crime & Dog theft' for young people?

1.) Run campaigns to promote awareness and ways to keep animal's safe
2.) Tighter legislation for online platforms and publishers
3.) Simplify the reporting process for animal theft
4.) Work with local businesses to help tackle crime
5.) Give confidence to those who fear crime and support to businesses who have been the victim of crime
6.) Invest in technology to track and eradicate online crime

Why did young people think that these were the most important ones?

'It's not just dogs but all pets are being taken. Dogs are getting more expensive but must be kept in a safe place to stop theft'

'Tighten the legislation limits for online platforms and publishers. Technology is the future and we can use it as a weapon to tackle any forms of online crime'

'So many people now become victims of crime via the internet and social media'

'If business's become victims of crime they pass the costs on to us the consumers so stuff costs more'

'Online crime is becoming more and more regular and the tighter the legislation, the less likely people are to commit crimes'

Any other key comments from young people about this priority?

'More security for banks. The banks should also educate customers to make sure they are using online banking correctly and safely- especially the more vulnerable like the elderly'

'We need people to be encouraged to report issues, and if it's easier then they are more likely to'

'Reduce hacking for businesses that are solely based online'

'Social media accounts should be verified with ID to show it is a legit person and one person cannot make more than one'

'Social media should take more inappropriate and offensive comments down to stop bullying'

'Puppy farming and animal cruelty should be a priority too'

How do young people think the PFCC should find out if they are making a difference or not?

1.) Surveys
2.) Speak directly with the local community
3.) Work with local organisations to hold consultations
4.) Statistics

Observations & Recommendations from the findings

All of the priorities were seen by the young people as important, but some were seen as more important than others. Some of these are to be expected i.e young people were not as passionate about protecting local businesses as they were about making sure that more money is invested into youth work. This is because youth work funding directly affects them in a way that other priorities may not.

From the feedback and comments we can learn that young people are very passionate about equality and they were quick to point out that the language you use in the plan should be as inclusive as possible. i.e all the groups picked up on the fact that it was important to protect women against violence but felt that the fact that you specifically mentioned women made it feel that you are saying that violence against other genders is not as important.

Young people also felt very strongly that online grooming of young people and sexual exploitation is a big issue that needs to be dealt with and that social media platforms and internet providers should be made to take this issue more seriously.

In all youth voices projects that I have completed around young people's safety the young people always mention poor street lighting. They want and need improved street lighting, especially in parks, sports areas and around youth centres so that they can feel safe in the areas they chose to be.
Young people do not like being in the dark outside at night, but it is a place they chose to be because many venues are not accepting of groups of young people 'hanging around'. They would like more youth/ activity/ interest based groups that are affordable and have adults that they can trust and places that they can belong to.

Young people care about social issues and they are passionate about protecting their pets. This would be a great campaign to get young people actively involved in and they would be great ambassadors for change and the educating of others.

Young people would like to spend more time with police officers and get to know the local officers better. They would love to see more officers out and about and even to invite officers to their youth clubs to visit so that they can get to know each other, break down any stereotypes and build up a level of trust for when young people need the police for more serious matters.

Young people feel that a year should be long enough to start to see results in statistics and also see a positive behavioural change in people as the priorities area implemented.

Many of the issues discussed in the youth groups are ones that young people have direct experience or knowledge of. This means that we should listen to these views carefully, take all their points on board and discuss them seriously in order to improve the safety of our young people in Essex, Southend and Thurrock. It would also be a good exercise to think about the things the young people haven't mentioned at all. Compare their feedback to the Crime plan and ask why they may not have mentioned it and what significance that may have in terms of the plan and any future actions or developments of the plan.

Overall the groups enjoyed taking part and would now love to meet Roger and Jane face to face to hear about what they are going to do with this feedback. The young people feel that it is great that they have been listened to, but they want to know what is going to happen next with this feedback and to know that they have helped impact change.

Thank you for working with ECVYS on this listening project. It has been really informative and the young people have enjoyed being able to be a part of the new PFCC Crime plan. I do hope that the report is useful and will enable you to incorporate the views of young people into your future plans.

There are a few key recommendations that I would specifically like to highlight-

- Go out and speak with groups that took part to thank them and let them know what will happen next as a result of their feedback, and how they can help.

- Inform people of the changes you have made one year on, and then annually. Use statistics but don't rely on them as your only source. Peoples stories are powerful learning tools and testimonies will help people relate to any changes that have been made.

- Enforce tighter regulations on internet providers and social media platforms to help protect young people from abuse and keep them safe.

- With the growing concerns of sexual harassment of young people in schools, make plans and schemes to educate people on how to identify and report sexual harassment need to be implemented. Teachers and youth workers need to be offered training to help create an environment where young people feel confident in reporting sexual harassment.

- Consider a change in language so that 'all forms of violence against others is not tolerated' rather than a specific focus in the main priority heading on women.

- Improve street lighting for young people's areas and get them involved in the process of where lights should be placed. They deserve to feel safe in places that are designed for them to belong.

- Spend time with young people in person in each district so that you can get to know the local issues from the young people that live there. They will appreciate that you took the time to meet them and will feel honoured that they can help you to make a difference.

- Spend funds on more youth and community officers that can engage with young people in positive circumstances so that young people can build up trust for when they need the police the most.

- Stay strong on your promise about making sure the government invest more money in youth work and early intervention. It is desperately needed and now more than ever.

- Promote, encourage and enable ways for young people to positively engage in their own communities. Young people want to get involved and help if they can, but often feel that they don't know how or that opportunities are limited.

Thank you again for this opportunity to help the PFCC with their crime plan
- Rachel Brett (ECVYS CEO) and the 9 youth groups that took part