



**Youth Parliament**  
MAKING OUR MARK



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# UKYP Regional Meeting & Safer Communities Debate

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**Thursday 1st June 2006,  
at BIBIC, Bridgwater, Somerset  
12.30 – 3.00 pm**



# 1 Introduction

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Julie Spencer- Cingoz welcomed UKYP and all the invited guests to BIBIC

They were delighted to be hosting the debate today. She passed on apologies from local MP, Ian Liddell-Grainger, who was glad to hear UKYP were discussing this important issue and wanted to hear about the outcomes from the day.

# 2 Guest Panel

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The Chair, Lydia Cheyne welcomed the following to the debate:

Sergeant Ian Baird - Avon & Somerset Police	Group B
Steve Brewer - Community Safety Coordinator, S Somerset District Council	Group B
Cheryl Carpenter - Marketing and Communications Co-ordinator, BIBIC	Group A
Marie Edmonds – Operational Manager, Somerset Youth Offending Team	Group C
Ben Pike – Reporter, Bridgwater Mercury	Group A
Darren Hall – Government Office South West	Group B
Julie Spencer-Cingoz - Chief Executive of BIBIC (British Institute for Brain Injured Children)	Group C
Chief Superintendent John Snell - District Commander, Somerset West	Group C
Ben Walker – Deputy News Editor, Regeneration & Renewal Magazine	Group A
Cheri Wright – Anti-Social Behaviour Manager, Swindon Borough Council	Group C

# 3 Focus for the day

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Participants then split into 3 groups to look at different aspects of anti-social behaviour, safer communities and a positive image for young people in the media. Each group had key questions to explore.

## **Group A : How can we promote a positive image of young people?**

Facilitated by Holli Baker & Ross Brownell

- How can young people promote a positive image in the media?
- Produce a press release about the debate today – how young people are helping to promote safer communities.



## **Group B : Safer communities**

Facilitated by Kieran Crawford & Felix Yoosefinejad

- How can the police gain the trust and confidence of young people?

- How can MYPs work in their local communities to promote a safe environment for all? What examples of joint campaigns are there & could UKYP promote these / get involved?
- What one thing could reduce youth offending?
- How can community groups ie Parish Councils, Community Safety Groups engage with young people?

### **Group C : Anti social behaviour**

Facilitated by Josh McTaggart & Kirstie Parsons

- What is anti-social behaviour?
- Is the decision-making process for allocating ASBOs and curfew orders fair and open?
- What are young people's rights when they gather as a group?
- Is an ASBO the right way to tackle anti-social behaviour? Why are so many ASBOs given to young people with special needs?
- What are Anti-Social Contracts, are they a good idea?



# 4 Feedback

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Each group then gave feedback on the 3 key points they had discussed. (Notes from all the group discussions are in section 7).

Group A : How can we promote a positive image of young people?

Unfortunately job culture & behaviour is more newsworthy. However the following was suggested:

Offer good pictures – newspapers are always looking for good pictures and you are more likely to get the front page.

MYPS could offer to be guest editors / journalists on local papers – this could be done for work experience.

Make contact with your local paper – offer to give quotes on articles about young people.

Group B : Safer communities

UKYP need to think of ways to tackle stereotyping & act as ambassadors.

UKYP needs to get involved with & help organise local consultations with the police, local communities, young people & adults.

Better funding for youth groups is needed.

## Group C : Anti social behaviour

ASBOs are not a criminal offence, but they could lead to a conviction.

1/3rd of young people with ASBOs have a learning difficulty

ABCs (Acceptable Behaviour Contracts) can be successful in stopping young people from getting an ASBO – but they are not well known.



# 5 Q & A Session

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An opportunity for questions to be put to the panel.

Q - Jenny raised the issue of 'naming & shaming' of young people with ASBOs.

- Marie said that there should be a distinction between the behaviour and the person, the person should be made to take responsibility and change their behaviour. Labelling is dangerous and this is why youth courts are often closed.
- Cheri – MYPs could be used as a conduit for information. Young people don't know about the system & MYPs could help with sharing that knowledge.
- John – Young people shouldn't fall into the trap of stereotyping - don't put all the effort into thinking young people cause anti social behaviour when the key issue is that young people are more likely to be victims, The police here in this District do not name & shame.
- Darren – I see UKYP as an opportunity for further consultation and young people need to be involved in Local Area Agreements. MYPs should go back to their areas and ask about this and how they can get involved.

Q - Lizzie, Felix & Holli raised their concerns about young people feeling safer when they are in groups and how dispersal orders could force young people to walk alone.

- Cheri – dispersal orders are there to challenge bad behaviour and not to punish you for being social. There will be clear evidence for a dispersal order; young people won't be at risk. It would only last for 6 months; during which time we would hope the problem would be resolved.

- John – make contact with your local beat managers – they are trying to set up youth groups and spaces to congregate eg youth shelters. I don't feel dispersal orders work – so it's better to get young people, the police & the community working together to look at facilities for young people.



Q - Kieran suggested that ASBOs are not working, so why bother with them?

- John – so give us alternatives! We want your ideas and we do want behaviour to change.
- Ben – The majority of ASBOs are not breached – so they DO work. It's important to look at the statistics and not just personal experience.
- Darren – The Government responds to what it thinks is 'public perception'. The majority of voters are 50 + who are worried about certain issues like crime. UKYP should therefore talk to these voters and rebalance the equation.

Q - Kingston highlighted the advert from the MET police showing young people on a park bench & how the advert portrayed those young people in the park as a 'bad thing'.

- John said that newspapers 100 years ago were probably discussing the same thing – anti social behaviour wasn't a new problem.
- Ben – felt that young people were better behaved today. Some parts of the media were guilty by presenting anti social behaviour as a new problem.
- Marie raised that ASBOs were more effective on adults than young people. An ASBO lasted 2 years - 2 years in a young person's life was quite different to 2 years for an adult. **She felt a good area UKYP might campaign on is to reduce the time period for ASBOs eg to 6 months**
- Cheri pointed out that an ASBO could be discharged if there was a change in behaviour. Also the Government's 'Respect' action plan said that ASBOs on young people should be reviewed yearly.

Q - Hamish raised that the young people here today were probably not those most likely to offend. What was being done to work with & consult young people who were likely to offend?

- Marie agreed that more needed to be done to talk to these young people
- Darren felt that UKYP could act as a conduit to help reach other young people. Young people are labelled a 'hard to reach' group – they are not hard to reach, just hard to find. Peer to peer education was a good idea. MYPs could act as champions and ambassadors for consulting & informing other young people on this issue.

Finally, the Chair thanked all the guests for giving up their time today and participating in the discussion. She asked if they would share one thing they would take away as a result of today's meeting?

# 6 Panel Feedback

- ★ Cheri – I would now like to engage with UKYP in Swindon & Wiltshire on this issue. I will give you the contacts for local co-ordinators so you can get involved in local strategies.
- ★ John – I think we need to get better on participation. Anti social behaviour is just a small piece of police business. Don't be victims of the stereotyped image of young people – you are more likely to be a victim than you are to offend.
- ★ Steve – I will take away a better knowledge & understanding of UKYP and want to work with you in the future.
- ★ Marie – I hadn't heard of UKYP and have welcomed this opportunity to talk with young people and hear your views.
- ★ Julie – BIBIC has been pleased to host this debate and talk about the problems of ASBOs on young people with learning difficulties. BIBIC would like to engage with UKYP in the future in a dialogue about the services we provide for young people. I will also take feedback from today back to the Children & Young People's Commissioner Al Aynsley-Green
- ★ Darren – we need more young people involved in their communities eg on parish councils. I will take away several ideas from today, the main one is to challenge the meetings I attend on this issue and ask why are there no young people here?
- ★ Ian – The MET advert is interesting and I think the perception of young people is important – we can't move forward if there is that mistrust.
- ★ Ben (Walker) - I have been struck with the level of dismay by young people with the media – particularly the tabloids. I think you should fight back with the real facts & figures and repeat that young people are not 'yobs' and actually behave better than for example young people in the 80s.

The Chair thanked BIBIC for hosting the debate today and all the speakers for coming and working with UKYP. She wished everyone a safe journey home.

# 7 Appendices

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## GROUP A - HOW CAN YP PROMOTE A POSITIVE IMAGE?

### **WHY OUR IMAGE IS POOR -**

- A MORE INTERESTING STORY
- YOB CULTURE + YOB BEHAVIOUR IS MORE NEWS WORTHY
- STEREOTYPES
- NATIONAL PAPERS ONLY CONCENTRATE ON YOB IMAGE – NOT ON POSITIVE
- EVEN IF WE DO SOMETHING POSITIVE, PAPER CAN BE TOLD TO CONCENTRATE ON VANDALS ETC
- JOURNALISTS HAVE A DUTY TO REPORT DISPERSAL ORDERS ETC
- DISPERSAL ORDER NOTICES MAKE YP SEEM LIKE COCKROACHES OR ANTS
- VANDALISM DOES MAKE A BETTER STORY – BUT PAPER DOES COVER UKYP ELECTIONS ETC
- COULD NEWSPAPERS CHANGE EMPHASIS?
- YP ARE OFTEN MORE VISIBLE AS TROUBLE MAKERS

### **HOW CAN YP GET BETTER COVERAGE?**

- NEED MORE COVERAGE OF GOOD THINGS & MEDIA NEED TO SERVE THE COMMUNITY BY REPORTING POSITIVES. WHAT ABOUT VANDALISM BY OAPs?
- MEDIA COULD CONSULT YP ABOUT ARTICLES & GET QUOTES.

- NEED TO PRIORITISE YP – ON FRONT PAGE.
- WE NEED TO OFFER GOOD IMAGES – NEWSPAPERS ARE ALWAYS LOOKING FOR GOOD PICTURES – THEN WE WOULD MORE LIKELY GET FRONT PAGE

TRY TO ACHIEVE BALANCE

NEWSPAPERS SHOULD CONCENTRATE ON TALENTS OF YP

COULD HAVE A PAGE ABOUT YP IN NEWSPAPER

NEED FABULOUS PHOTOS OR MAKE A GOOD STORY

NEED COVERAGE IN NATIONAL NEWSPAPERS AS WELL

PAPERS SHOULD DO FEATURES ON YOUTH ACTIVITIES

- THREE Ws – WHO, WHERE & WHEN
- BIG OPENING – HAVE AN EYE CATCHING FIRST LINE
- “FIGHTING THE YOB CULTURE STEREOTYPE”
- BIG/BRIGHT/COLOURFUL
- PICTURE OPS
- DIFFERENT AWARD SCHEME
- DON'T STEREOTYPE US
- IRONIC
- REACTION
- CENTRE OF LONDON? - ARTS FESTIVAL – YOUNG PERSONS BALL
- PHOTO WITH CAPTION – NAME, PHONE NO, E-MAIL

DRAMATIC (YOUNG HERO – COULD BE SAVING A LIFE)

AUDIENCE NEEDS TO RELATE

EMOTIVE

SPORTING ACHIEVEMENT

HOW TO ACCESS

PICTURES

- WE NEED ILLUMINATION UPON THE FACT THAT WE ARE NOT 'YOBS' AND THAT WE CONTRIBUTE POSITIVELY TO OUR COMMUNITIES.
- HEADLINE
- PICTURE
- COLOUR ARTICLE
- POSSITIVE + NEGATIVES = BALANCES
- BACKGROUND – EXPLANATION
- STATISTICS
- WELL WRITTEN, SIMPLE/STANDARD LANGUAGE- GOOD QUALITY
- ISSUE THAT APPEAL TO ALL

## **SUGGESTIONS**

MYPS COULD BECOME GUEST EDITORS/JOURNALISTS FOR LOCAL PAPERS – WORK EXPERIENCE

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## GROUP B – SAFER COMMUNITIES

### **Q1 - How can the police gain the trust & confidence of yp?**

- POLICE HAVE LIVES SAME AS US
- TRUST
- STEREOTYPES – IMAGE OF YOUNG PEOPLE
- POLICE WEARING HOODIES
- YOUTH WATCH – POLICE HELP YP ACHIEVE THINGS THROUGH PROJECTS TOGETHER
- LINK WITH LOCAL ACTION TEAMS (MAYBE-SUGGESTION)
- SEE CRIME BEING PUNISHED
- POLICE BEHAVING BADLY?
- ENGAGE POLICE IN CONVERSATION
- COMMUNITY SPIRIT
- CONSULTATION WITH YOUNG PEOPLE
- THE BILL – NEGATIVE MEDIA

### **Q2 - How can MYPs work in their local communities to promote a safe environment for all?**

- ANTI-STEREOTYPING CAMPAIGN (THE ASC)
- RELEASE POLICE SIDE OF THE STORY
- POLICE AND YOUTH WORK TOGETHER (UKYP)
- POLICE GO TO SCHOOLS
- MORE DAYS – CONFRONTATIONS – NOT IN SCHOOL TIME!

### **Q3 - What one thing could reduce youth offending?**

- TEAM TALKS IN PSHE ABOUT WHAT HAPPENS IF YOU BREAK THE LAW
- AGE – MORE MATURE
- LOCALISATION OF ISSUES AND ACTION GROUPS
- COMMUNITY COME TOGETHER – INCLUDING POLICE

### **Q4 - How can community groups engage with young people?**

- ASK THE YOUTH OF THE SURROUNDING AREA OF THEIR VIEWS
- MIX GROUPS – KIDS/ADULTS/UKYP

### **KEY POINTS**

UKYP NEED TO THINK OF WAYS TO TACKLE STEREOTYPING (AMBASSADORS)

POSITIVE IMAGE IN THE MEDIA

CONSULTATIONS – POLICE, LOCAL COMMUNITIES, UKYP, YP, ADULTS

BETTER FUNDING FOR YOUTH GROUPS

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## **GROUP C – ANTI SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR**

### **Q1 - What is anti-social behaviour?**

- BEHAVIOUR WHICH CAUSES OR IS LIKELY TO CAUSE HARRASMENT OR DISTRESS
- ASB OCCURS OUTSIDE OF HOUSEHOLDS
- DEFINITION DOESN'T INCLUDE ANYTHING TO DO WITH INTENT

- BEATING UP PEOPLE
- VANDALISM
- RACISM
- LOUD MUSIC
- THEFT

### **IS DEFINITION TOO BROAD?**

- THERE IS PRESSURE TO INCREASE NOs OF ASBOs
- AVON & SOMERSET POLICE DON'T WANT TO GIVE OUT ASBOs. SHOULD BE USED AS LAST RESORT
- YOUTH INCLUSION SUPPORT PANELS (8-13)
- CONNEXIONS & YOUTH SERVICE (13-19) – GLOS HAS YOUTH WORKER TO WORK WITH POLICE
- 2 OR MORE PEOPLE WHO ARE LIKELY TO CAUSE ASB
- DISPERSAL ORDER USED ONCE IN AVON & SOMERSET

### **Q2 - Is the decision making process for allocating ASBOs and curfews fair and open?**

- IT'S FAIR FROM OUR VISITORS POINT OF VIEW BUT NOT FROM EVERYBODY ELSEs
- INFORMATION ISN'T OPEN ENOUGH
- LEAFLETING ON ASBO IS RARE BUT VARIES BY COUNTY. DONE TO MAKE COMMUNITY FEEL SAFER.
- YP AREN'T INVOLVED IN POLICY MAKING ENOUGH
- PRESS PORTRAY ASBOs UNFAIRLY ON YP
- FEAR OF CRIME IS OFTEN WORSE THAN ACTUAL CRIME RATES
- 2 TYPES OF ASBO CRIMINAL (QUICKER & LESS EXPENSIVE – REPEAT OFFENDERS) & STAND ALONE ( REQUIRES CONSULTATION)

- COURTS CAN IMPOSE REPORTING RESTRICTIONS
- ASB IS A TOP CONCERN FOR YP ACCORDING TO POLICE SURVEY IN WELLINGTON
- YP WITH ASBOS ARE PUBLISHED MORE THAN PAEDOPHILES

### **Q3 - Is an ASBO the right way to tackle anti-social behaviour?**

- ASBOs ARE NOT CRIMINAL OFFENCES
- YES, BUT ONLY AS A LAST RESORT AND WITH SUPPORT
- LOOK FOR ROOT CAUSES OF ASB

### **Q4 - Why are so many ASBOs given to young people with special needs?**

- THIRD OF YP WITH ASBOs HAVE KNOWN LEARNING DIFFICULTY
- MORE SHOULD BE DONE TO SUPPORT YP WITH LEARNING DIFFICULTIES AND ASBOs

### **Q5 - What are anti-social contracts? Are they a good idea?**

- PENALTY IS POTENTIAL OF ASBO
- NOT ENOUGH KNOWN ABOUT ACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOUR CONTRACTS BUT THEY ARE VERY EFFECTIVE
- CAN BE POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE – VOLUNTARY