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safety police and youth

Thursday 4th August 2005

Report

CONTENTS

-  Introduction
-  Stop and Search
-  Knives and Guns
-  Safety and Youth
-  Taking it forward

Introduction

The Members of Youth Parliament (MYPs) in the London Region felt that as representatives of young people in the London area they needed to work with the Metropolitan Police Service to build relations between young people and the Police.

In order to do this the young people felt that they needed to find out how young people felt about the Police and therefore decided to work with the Police to hold a conference.

The aim of the conference from the MYPs perspective was:

'To hold a conference on youth culture in conjunction with the Metropolitan Police Service, to ensure that a wide cross-section of young people from London are able to attend and discuss issues of concern to them with the Police and to enable the Police to be more aware of youth culture, ideally to break down barriers between young people and the Police.'

The aim of the conference for the Met was:

'To get an understanding of the following issues: where they feel safe, understanding youth culture, why young people carry knives and guns.'

Issues raised from the conference will lead to further work with the Police to move forward with providing a resolution to these issues. This report outlines what the young people that attended the conference said about the Police and the interactions that they have with members of the Police, where they feel safe and why they do certain things.

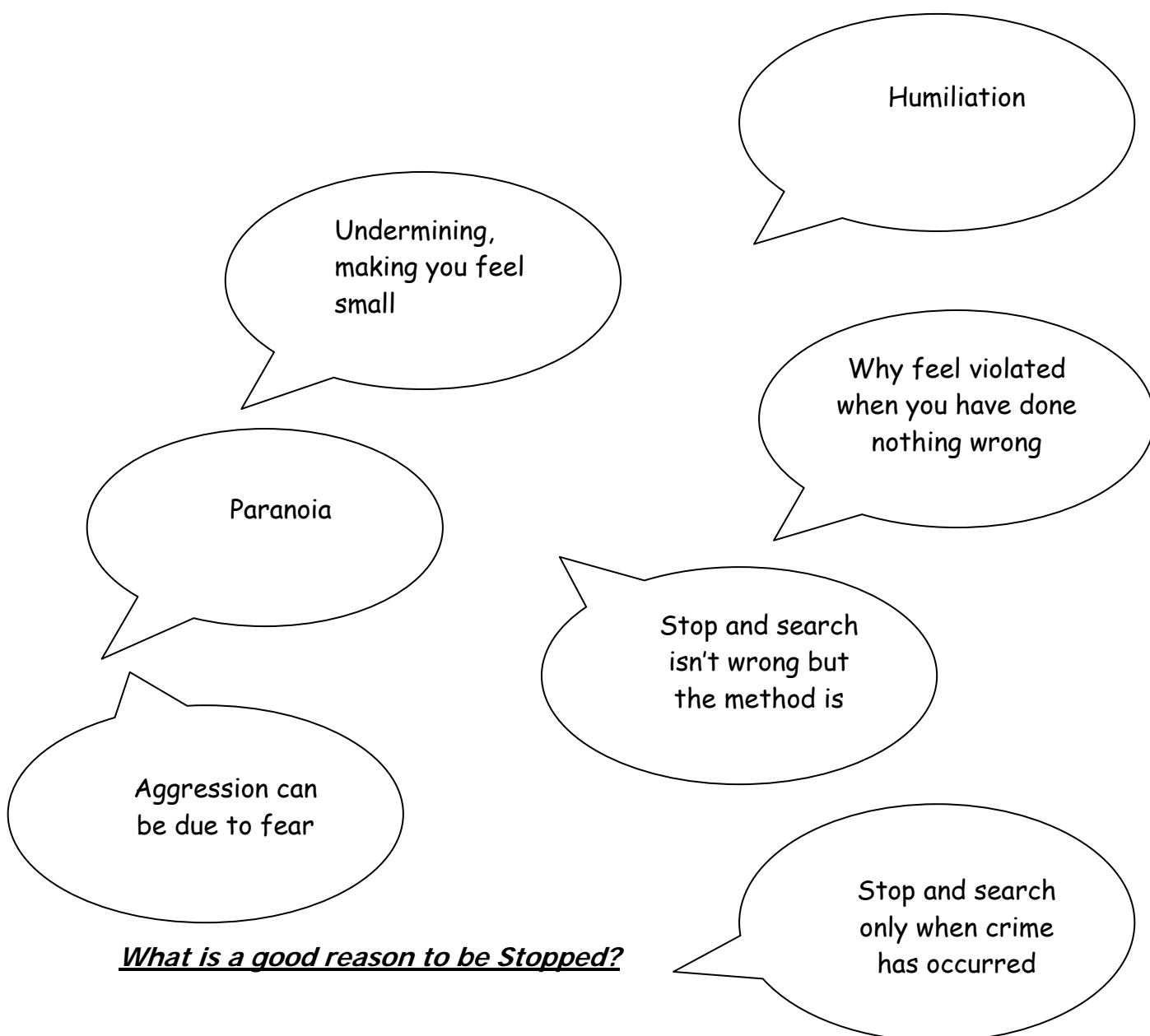
Stop and Search Workshop

This workshop was based around the police policy of Stop and Search and its affects on young people. The session was titled Stop and Search as when we were organising it we realised that for many young people, any kind of encounter with the Police is considered a Stop and Search.

The session began with the group watching the Stop and Search section of the Vox Pox video that had been recorded before the conference.

The facilitators spent the remainder of the session talking to the groups about their views and experiences with Stop and Search, while guiding the discussion into answering these questions:

How do you feel when you're Stopped?



What is a good reason to be Stopped?

Based on
intelligence

Concrete
evidence

What is the encounter like for you?

Invasion of privacy

Can make you feel
safe

Can be improved

Abuse of power

Fires violence

No systematic
approach

What do you do if you want to complain?

Better dialogue

Consult and talk

Feedback cards
on S&S

What are your responsibilities when being Stopped?

Responsibility on both sides

Discretion

Respect,
communication
education

How could the encounter be made better?

Attack the root of the problem,
better training

Better explanations

Friendly introduction

Inform public of purpose and intention

If mistakes are made (apologies should be made)

More respect either end

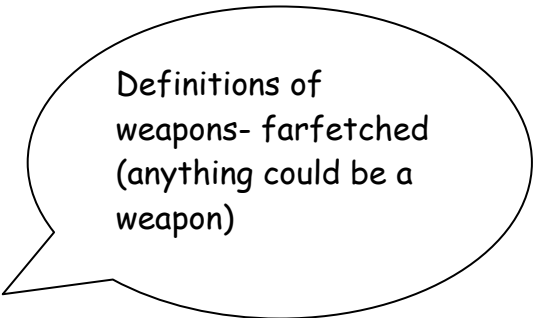
Knives and Guns Workshop

This workshop was based around the use of knives and guns on the streets of London their connection to 'youth culture'.

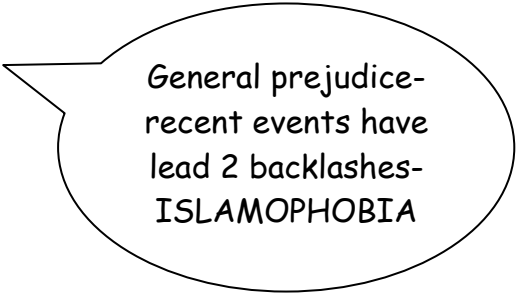
The session began with the group watching the Knives and Guns section of the Vox Pox video that had been recorded before the conference.

The facilitators spent the remainder of the session talking to the groups about their views and reactions to the opinions on the video, while guiding the discussion into answering these questions:

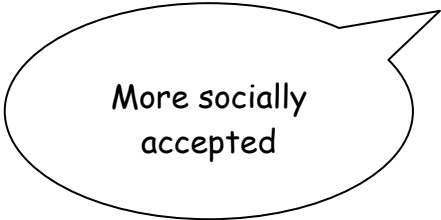
What are people's reactions to Vox Pox?




Definitions of weapons- farfetched (anything could be a weapon)



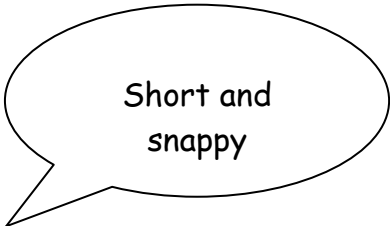
General prejudice- recent events have lead 2 backlashes- ISLAMOPHOBIA



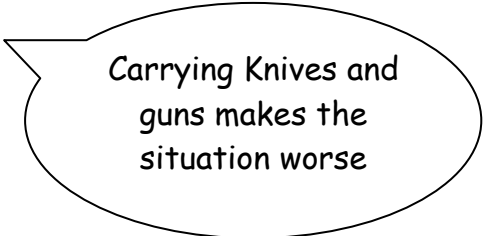
More socially accepted



Start motivating and influencing young people at a young age



Short and snappy



Carrying Knives and guns makes the situation worse

Do they agree with the opinions voiced?

Disagree with more police, maybe more youth clubs/maybe more police rounds (schools etc.)

Young people need more info on their rights

Better training for police officers (SMARTT catch phrase)

Influence of violence is starting at a younger age- to prevent, tackle violence from the roots

Points raised in video are contradictory

Why do young people carry knives and guns?

Contrast between safety and hard image for carrying knives and guns

Knives/guns used more for killing or harming rather than self protection

Media encouraging in a fear of public-negative views

Protection- feel
there is no one else
to protect

Power and status

Curiosity

Peer pressure
influences violence
and guns crime

What would stop you from carrying them?

More education

Video consultations
with young
offenders

Media showing
consequences

Police forces work
differently

Create the view/image
that there are
opportunities for young
offenders to step out

Get young offenders to talk
to perpetrators in order to
step out of new violence
zone/guns/knives/crime to
stop future offences

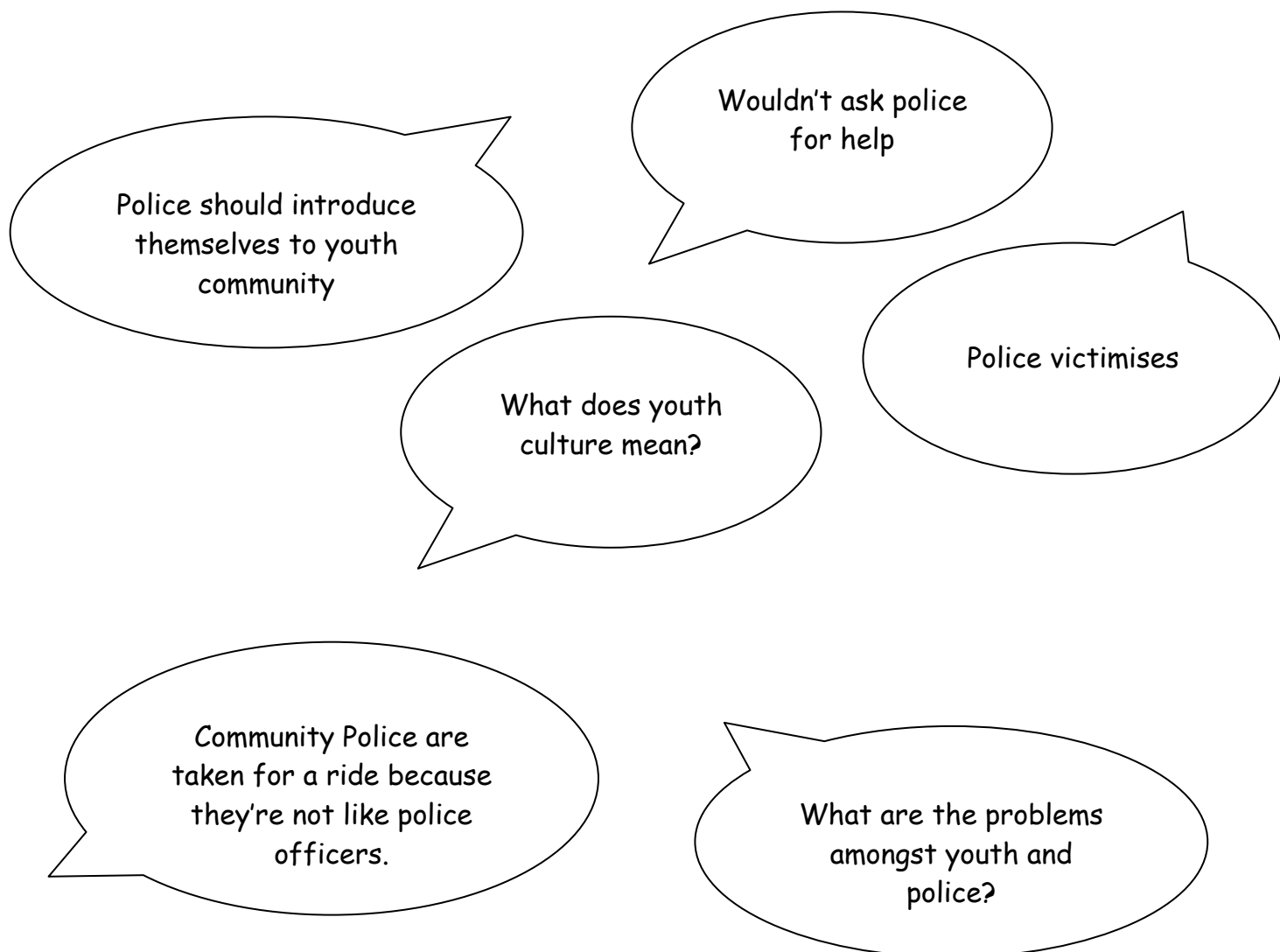
Safety and Youth Workshop

This workshop focused on gaining an insight into how young people feel on the streets of London. It also touched on the term 'youth culture' and what it means to young people.

The session began with the group watching the Safety and Youth section of the Vox Pox video that had been recorded before the conference.

The group spent the remainder of the session feeding back to the facilitators about their views on the opinions voiced, while guiding the discussion into answering these questions:

What are people's reactions to Vox Pox?



Do they agree with the opinions voiced?

Not safer if more
police, trouble will move
somewhere else

The wrong youth
activities

The youth need to get
out of the hype and get
to know about each other

The police are there
to keep divisions

Should set example
to youth

Youth cultures are
different

Why do young people hang around in groups?

More activities

The wrong youth
activities

There should be
more youth clubs

Division
(stereotype)
amongst youth

Compromising among
different youth groups,
give youths their own
space, to chill, graffiti

Youth targeted by
police

Where do people feel safe?

Police, community officers
are there to promote
community Safety

Police around makes
some feel safer

Youth centres
should be run by
youths (trained)

There should be
more youth clubs

Youth clubs

Youth clubs open till
later 10:30 am -
11:00 pm

Why do you wear hoodies?

Clothes, religions
don't represent the
youth

Division
(stereotype)
amongst youth

Stereotypes -
hoodies don't mean
robbing

Urban

Youth cultures are
different

Media should
promote more youth
appropriately.

Taking it forward

Young people's involvement in knife crime is an increasing worry. High statistics for use of knives in criminal activity, coupled with the high-profile cases of young victims of knife crime, highlight the need for further educational work in this area to spell out the consequences of knife crime and offer young people at risk of offending potential exit routes.

The UKYP Anti-Knife Crime Video Project will support young people to produce and showcase a video talking to young offenders and victims, tackling how young people can come to carry and use knives, and highlighting potential exit points to avoid criminality.

The video, produced by young people themselves with appropriate professional technical support, will track the stories of one or a number of young offenders (through direct interviews and/or dramatic techniques). At each key point, the audience should be asked to consider their own lives, e.g.:

- Do they feel they are falling in with the 'wrong' crowd?
- Do any of their friends carry knives?
- Do they feel unsafe and think they need a knife for protection?
- Do they regularly carry a knife?
- Have they ever brandished a knife in a fight?

At each of these points, clear ways out of their predicament will be suggested, with links to local services or central help-lines already in existence.

The finished video will be shown in selected community settings, ensuring maximum exposure by projecting it onto prominent buildings.

Local youth providers and other agencies will be in attendance to offer on-the spot support, and the event can also be used to collect further youth views on the issue as both evaluation and further guidance on the issue.

High profile media coverage will also be arranged to publicise the community events.

The project will begin in October 2005 and end in March 2006, but will provide a resource that can be rolled out into other boroughs and settings if further resources can be secured.