

GIVING THE YOUNG A VOICE FOR JIMMY



Why Safety Conferences?

If we want to make communities the safest spaces for young people to grow up in, we need to hear from young people how they think this should happen, and what safety means to them.

So the main aim is to create a space where young people's voices are heard.

Secondly, we want to see action – there are lots of adults in the community who also want to make our community safer. After hearing from young people in the room, these adults are asked to set clear actions that we will check back on throughout the year.

Lastly, when young people share with each other across different schools and age groups, they are often inspired to take action themselves – whether it's writing to their MP as a group, or designing a poster, or setting a date for cleaning up litter around their school.

Who is normally invited to a Safety Conference?

Most importantly the young people themselves, from both primary and secondary schools in the local area; then also school staff; parents; local business owners; police officers and safer school officers; the MP, local councillors and other politicians; members of the local authority; and any other guests who can and should be taking action to make the community safer.

How many people?

We usually invite somewhere between 100–150 so that we hear lots of different perspectives. We like to make sure that at least 75% of the participants are young people from at least 6 different local schools.

What usually happens?

We mix up all the school groups and adults across different tables so that everyone gets a chance to hear from each other.

One or two young people from each school present their school's thoughts on safety, either through a safety map or through an art project they had prepared earlier.

We also want to hear from all the adults what their jobs are, what they are already doing to make the community safer, and what makes it easy or difficult to do their jobs. They can either rotate around tables, or share from the front.

There are lots of different ways for young people and adults to discuss safety together, but the most important is that it ends with agreed action points. We usually ask a few of the adults to share with the whole room what they have learned from the young people and what they are going to focus on in terms of safety over the next year.

Since we also believe that young people can take more responsibility than just raising their voices, we run an activity where each group thinks about a safety issue that they can do something about themselves.

We always finish with food! It is great to get to know other people across the local area, and we believe that sharing food is a good way to do this.

How do I get involved? Do you do Safety Conferences outside of Lewisham?

We run Safety Conferences in Lewisham because we live and work and study here; we have lots of great relationships with people we can invite; and we know we're going to stick around to see things through over the next year.

Wherever you live, you are the ones who have local relationships; you know your area; and you are the ones who can make sure the conference produces action!

In 2020 we will have resources running through step by step how to set up and run a safety conference in your area. For now, please feel free to get in touch so we can run through it on the phone instead...or just go for it! We can't wait to hear from you.

We have the power to build the types of communities we all want to live in.



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