



**Ethnic Minorities
& Youth Support
Team Wales**

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Police and Young People – Resilience Project Youth Forum

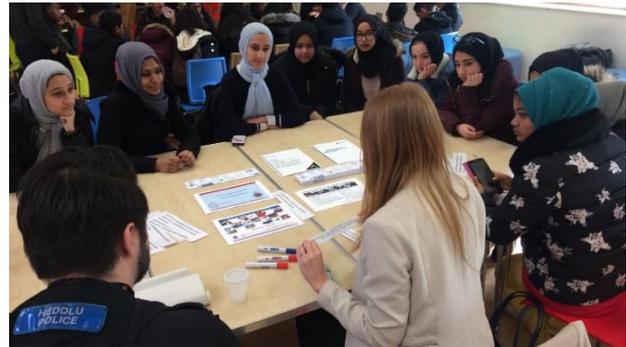
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The Resilience Project: The Resilience project is a 3-year project funded by Big Lottery Fund Wales to support young people at risk of religious extremism, far-right extremism and sexual exploitation – aiming to increase young people’s resilience to these issues. It operates across South Wales and has a team of four specialist youth workers.

As part of the project, quarterly youth forums to bring young people together and discuss issues relevant to the Resilience Project.

Overview: The Youth Forum consisted of three workshops, led by police partners, on the topics of sexual exploitation (particularly through new technologies), the Prevent policy, and Stop and Search. These were identified by the young people themselves at the previous Resilience Youth Forum in November 2017. Each workshop lasted 20 minutes with time for questions, and all young people attended all three workshops. The day ended with evaluation forms and lunch for the attendees. The forum was held at the Butetown Youth Pavillion.



Attendees: 58 young people attended the workshop, they were mainly divided between Cardiff (33) and Swansea (22), 36 identified themselves as belonging to a minority ethnic community, whereas the remaining indicated “White”, “British”, “Welsh” or declined to answer. 34 attendees identified themselves as Muslims, whereas the remaining either identified themselves as none (18), Christian (3), Catholic (1) or declined to answer.



Workshops: Officer Akbar Ali led a session on Prevent, explaining how it fits into a wider government counter-terror strategy, and how young people might encounter it. This was followed by an opportunity to ask questions. Officer Hannah Jenkins-Jones led a session on sexual exploitation and new technologies, focusing on “sexting”, legality, and strategies for young people to stay safe online. Officers Lynwen O’Hagan and Nicholas Evans led a workshop on Stop and Search, focusing on the rights of people when they are stopped, how to record incidents and raise complaints.

Outcomes and Feedback: Attendees of all three workshops engaged positively with the police officers, which itself is a positive outcome. Below are themes arising through from the workshops, and subsequent evaluation forms and feedback on the day:



- 1) Young Muslims are significantly more aware of, and concerned by, Prevent and counter-terror policing than those from other faith backgrounds. Some attendees, as young as 12, were not only familiar with the policy, but had heard it focused predominantly on Muslims. This heightened sense of securitisation of Muslim identity by young people has long-term and unknown consequences. It may have impact upon young people's trust in authorities, their feeling of belonging in the United Kingdom, and their general mental well-being.
- 2) A large number of young people on evaluation forms indicated they had learned more about "sexting" and issues of consent. On the day, many linked this with ongoing media stories related to sexual harassment and abuse. This underlines the importance of educating young people about healthy relationships and where and how they can manifest.
- 3) From 41 feedback forms received (out of 58 attendees), 32 indicated they knew more about the topics of the workshops after the sessions than before. 6 indicated no change, and 3 indicated less knowledge.
- 4) Evaluation forms also asked for future workshops the young people would like to attend. Racism, "the media", and global issues emerged as the strongest of a wide range of disparate suggestions.
- 5) Almost all respondents to evaluation forms indicated that they felt they had an opportunity to raise their concerns during the workshop, and they feel knowledgeable about where to go for help if they wished to discuss the topics raised in the workshop further.

**Some comments
from young people
attending**

*"I've learned the
law about sexting"*

*"I have learned
more about the
legislation under
stop and search"*

*"Information on
staying safe online"*

*"How to spot
grooming"*

*"I learnt about
prevent and what it
does"*

*"I learned how to
tell the difference
between radical
and extremism"*

Successes:

- 1) The forum attracted twice the number of young people than expected (58, planned for 30). This underlines the strength of relationships and engagement by the youth workers with young people across South Wales.
- 2) Feedback was positive from attendees and those delivering workshops, and engagement through the day was high.

Improvements:

- 1) The number of attendees led to a very busy, and at times loud, workshop environment. This was positive for keeping the "energy" up, but some respondents in evaluation forms felt individual rooms or a quieter location would have been preferred.
- 2) The young people in attendance largely remained in the groups of friends they arrived with. In future, mixing up groups and allowing opportunities for the attendees to meet across groups was suggested by youth workers.

For more information or to work with the Resilience Project, please contact us below.

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