

positivefutures >>

Do it our way:

Six steps to a safer Britain



catch
22
helping young
people out >



‘My project worker is now like a second Mum to me. From day one she believed in me and cared about my future.’

Kara Hitchin

Foreword

By Kara Hitchin
Chair of the Youth Advisory Board
Positive Futures

Young people today are seen as a nuisance and up to no good, but people forget they are the next generation of Britain. Young people should be nurtured and encouraged in life. If we don't believe in them to achieve, then who will?

This action plan was created by a group of young people who represent the national community-based inclusion programme, Positive Futures. This programme aims to make sure young people are given the best chance possible to lead safe and fulfilling lives.

I personally know only too well how important it is to be given the right opportunities and support. I struggled at school and had a difficult home life. I started on the programme at 15 years old with a simple dance class but to me it was more than that, it was a chance to forget all of my worries and be me. My project worker is now like a second Mum to me. From day one she believed in me and cared about my future. Dance led to volunteering, an apprenticeship, and now I am working as the administrator for the programme at young people's charity, Catch22.

I have also seen and felt the frustration of young people who haven't been as lucky as me. Young people who end up in the criminal justice system often doomed to be labeled by their earlier mistakes in life. If they had only been referred onto the programme, things could have been very different for them.

I, along with the other 22 members of the Youth Advisory Board, have a passion for helping other young people go down the right path. To help the many young people who do not feel safe, who are worried about their future and rising crime in their communities and do not have the faith that something is going to be done about it.

We thank you for this opportunity to express our views and actively contribute to help make Britain safer, and the future brighter for all young people.

Introduction

The 23 young advisors who represent Positive Futures, say that **employment, drug-related crime and violence, and negative perceptions of young people** are the biggest problems facing young people in deprived communities today.

They believe that if Positive Futures responds to their **Six step call to action**, it can make Britain a safer and more prosperous place to grow up in.

What is Positive Futures and the Youth Advisory Board?

Positive Futures is the national community-based inclusion programme for young people. Funded by the Home Office, the programme gives young people the chance to develop the skills needed to get on a positive career path and take on roles as active and responsible citizens. Managed by young people's charity Catch22, the programme is delivered through 91 projects in some of the most deprived communities across England and Wales.

The Positive Futures Youth Advisory Board was set up to put young people at the heart of the programme and give them a positive voice in policy and in their community. The board consists of 23 young participants, known as young advisors, drawn from all parts of the country. Each person helps to shape the future direction of the programme by highlighting issues and concerns that affect both the young people in their project and themselves directly.



Art work from young people at darts (Doncaster Community Arts) Positive Futures.



'We want more contact with the police, more power to make change happen, more reward, more positive activities at times when we feel most unsafe. Work with us from a younger age, and don't cut off support when we are older.'

Young advisor

Six step call to action

We, the Youth Advisory Board
believe Positive Futures should



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Start at six years old

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Step one

Start at six



'Positive Futures should work with younger people, before they get pulled into gangs and drugs.'

Start at six, not ten. Varied, fun, arts and media taster sessions in schools will attract this younger age group.'

Young advisor

Call to action

- Connect Positive Futures to local schools in project areas – there are already 91 Positive Futures projects in deprived communities across the country.
- Bring Positive Futures into schools to host a range of taster sessions. We know fun and creative sessions work well with this age group, such as circus skills, trampolining, cooking, family sessions and face painting.
- Employ an arts worker for each Positive Futures project.

My start at six story

by Ezekiel Belgrave, young advisor from Coventry Positive Futures



At six years old I was experiencing problems at school for my challenging behaviour. I was lucky to get involved with Positive Futures at this early age as it turned my life around and now I am helping other young people do the same.

Positive Futures believed in me from day one, even though everyone else didn't. They listened and gave me things to do that interested me and things to work for, like a mechanics course, and volunteering leading to qualifications. Instead of my Mum being annoyed at me, I made her feel proud.

Nine years later, I am still with Positive Futures and helping other young people get on the right path. I like to help young people, they can talk to me and I can relate to them. My dream is to be the best youth worker I can.

Step two

Help us build better relationships with the police



'We want more opportunity to talk to the police and show them our positive work through project visits and events. We don't just want to talk to police locally, we want to represent young people at ACPO on a strategic level.'

Young advisor

Call to action

- Give clear guidance to the police to refer at risk young people to Positive Futures to divert them away from the criminal justice system.
- Youth Advisory Board members to meet key ACPO members by October 2010, with an ongoing commitment of six monthly meetings.
- Hold friendly sports or arts events involving local police and young people in projects across all regions, supported by sponsorship from local businesses or private sector companies. Diageo GB have offered their support for this initiative.



My story about working with the police

By Chyna Pryce, young person from Southwark Positive Futures

'Them, Myself and Us' is a project which brings young people from my estate and the police closer together so we understand each other better and it does this through drama. I got involved in the writing of the script and played a main role in the final production which was performed to an audience of local people and the police. On the night we also performed a stop and search role play directly involving the police and then took questions from the audience.

It really made everyone think. We were able to show what it is like for girls growing up our age and the peer pressure to join gangs and fit in. We were also able to see why the police have to do what they do, and that they are not as threatening as all that after all. They are there for our safety and we can sometimes come across as threatening too.

We enjoyed it so much that we decided to apply for £5,000 from the Youth Opportunity Fund so we can run the project again. The application has been shortlisted and we are awaiting the interview.

Other good examples of Positive Futures' projects working with the police across the country

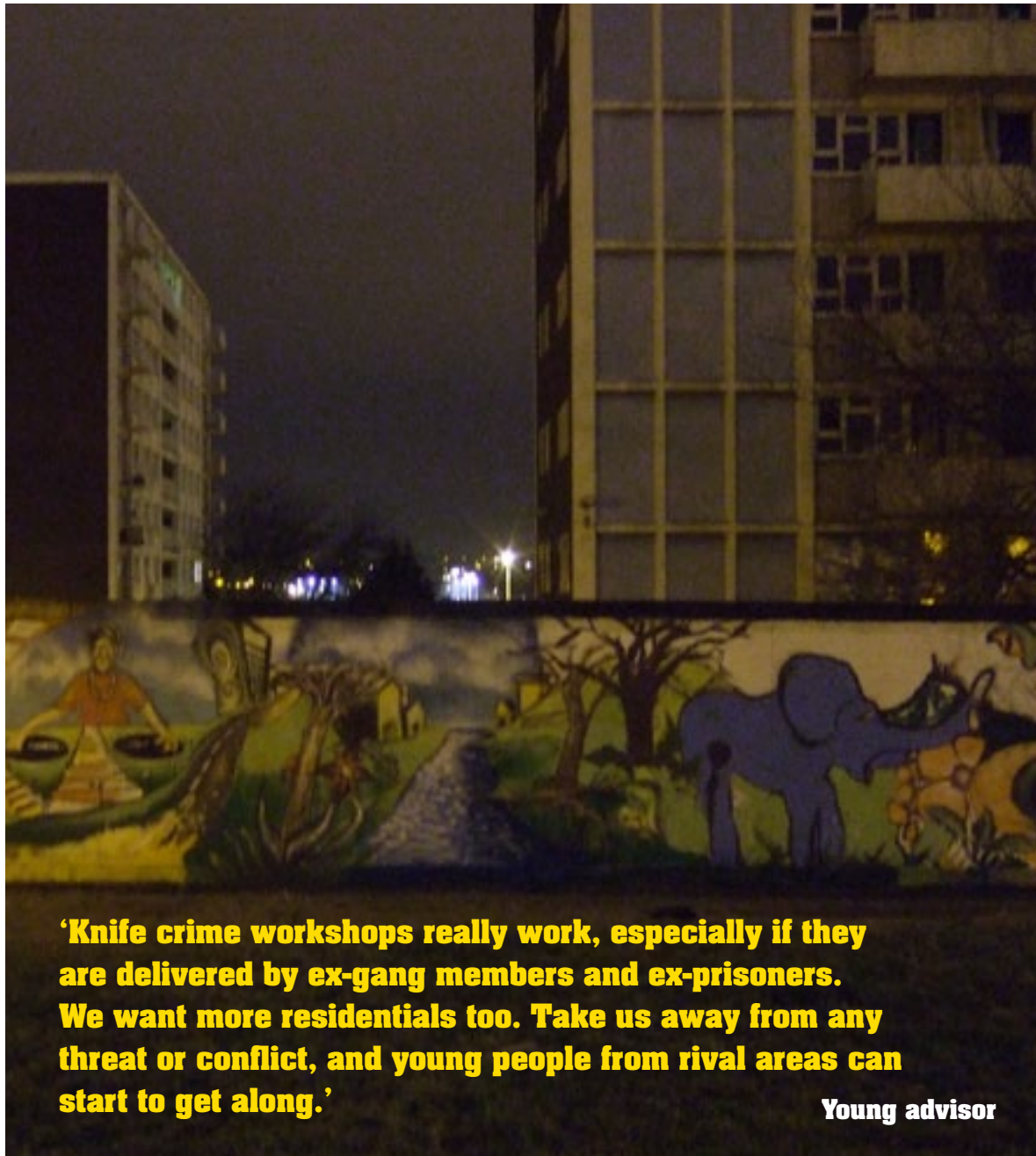
- **Morph4Us project** – Young people creating a public art piece capturing the history of Burntwood using photographs and images donated by the community. The project has been so successful that the group are now working on an art installation in their local police station.
- **Pizza and police night** – young people sharing pizza and DJ skills with local police in Bristol.
- **Police holiday fun** – local police organising community activities, workshops and litter clean-ups for young people in their holidays in Ashington.
- **Skate park** – police organising a skate park for young people in Kegworth.



Art work from young people at Burntwood Positive Futures for their local police station.

Step three

Tackle gang culture and postcode rivalry



Call to action

- Focus on areas where gang culture is a real problem. Some communities may need more help than others. We can tell you where. For example we know Liverpool needs help, Sutton does not.
- In these areas, establish projects which take young people away from conflict and help them understand the nature of conflict and value of team work. For example visits to prisons and mission-led adventures.
- Positive Futures young people who used to be gang members to lead 'real life' workshops.
- Increase the number of Positive Futures projects by ten every year in those areas that suffer most from gangs, violence and drug dealing.

My story about living in an area where gangs are a problem

By Darren Viney, young advisor from Liverpool North Positive Futures



I used to be in and out of trouble with the police. If it wasn't for Positive Futures I would be in prison. Feeling unsafe and getting pulled into gangs and drug dealing where I live is everywhere. I myself have had my house raided for drugs several times.

When I was approached by Positive Futures, I was mucking around on the estate with my mates. Clare, my project worker asked if I wanted to join a football tournament. I went along and loved it, and now I am involved in loads of stuff. They worked with my school to enroll me on courses, and introduce a fishing course. I go on loads of residential and tournaments. I love every day with Positive Futures.

Positive Futures is there for you, it feels like they have been there for me all my life, and now I am proud to be there for other young people.

Step four

Give us activities at times when we most need them



'Some Positive Futures projects are providing young people with weekend night time activities, and having great success in cutting down crime and making young people safer. We would like help to get more venues and licences to hold community events.'

Places to go for weekend activities like barbeques, discos, family events, knock-out tournaments and street parties.'

Young advisor

Call to action

- We would like the Home Office to provide a standardised letter inviting businesses to help young people keep safe by providing venues at weekends.
- Home Office to provide these businesses insurance against damaged goods to reflect trust in young people involved in Positive Futures.
- A licence for a street party for every Positive Futures project each year, to start with a ten year anniversary celebration street party event for each project at the end of 2010.

My story about Friday nights

Sue, a young person from darts (Doncaster Community Arts) Positive Futures

Typical Friday night for me was drinking with mates, on the streets, sometimes in disused houses. When I met Positive Futures I was doing just that, but on my own drinking a bottle of vodka my Mum had given me earlier that evening.

I watched a session happening on the streets, using graffiti art to decorate the Every Child Matters outcomes on a large disused container. I kept my distance cause I knew I would be too drunk to be allowed to get involved, but the next week I was determined to join in.

I turned up and was able to explain to the project workers what the five outcomes meant, and they were impressed. From then on that was my Friday night sorted. I attended every session that followed and I am now a different person. I have interests, and feel much more positive about my life.

Step five

Improve access to employment



'Positive Futures is great if you want to work in sport or as a youth worker but it could do more to offer ways into business and creative industries – technology, music, manufacturing, beauty or retail. We want to know what's out there and what to do to achieve a fulfilling career and we don't want university to be the only way.'

Young advisor

Call to action

- A coalition of 200 employers to advise Positive Futures' young people on careers, to be established by December 2010.
- Each member of the coalition to commit to at least four Positive Futures apprenticeships or work placements per year. Diageo GB have committed to be the first member of the coalition and to host a roundtable for other potential members to share learning and find out more.
- Business mentors from a range of employment sectors for every Positive Futures project.
- Payment by results for those Jobcentre Plus's which help a young person to secure progression from Positive Futures into a sustainable job.
- Ensure all young people are guaranteed access to work or training.



My story about gaining employment

By Andrew Bontiff, young advisor from Leyton Orient Positive Futures

At our first Youth Advisory Board meeting, employment came up over and over again as the biggest worry for all of us.

The problem is that there are too few jobs available, leaving many young people, even those with qualifications, unemployed.

It is even harder for young people who have had a bad start at school. When you grow up watching drug dealers driving round in expensive cars, it's easy to want a piece of the action and staying on the right path is difficult. I see many young people where I live in flash clothes: it's obvious they haven't got those things legally.

So how is Positive Futures working to tackle this issue? It gives young people positive role models and raises your aspirations. It put me in the right place at the right time, and gave me the skills to make the most of these opportunities.

I have gained valuable experience including working at the BBC, Channel 4, the Football Association and also writing for the Voice newspaper. I am now at the University of East London (UEL) studying a sports journalism degree. Whilst I didn't have all the qualifications, my professional experience enabled me to go on the course.

Six step call to action

Step six

Make the most out of the Youth Advisory Board

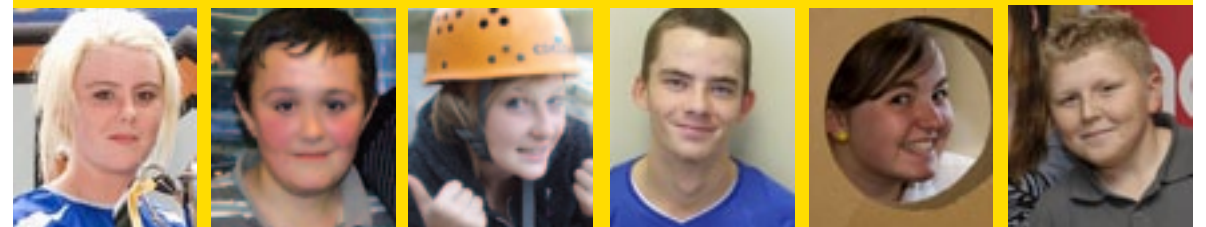
'We represent young people from tough backgrounds. We want to help young people from our communities and we know the best way to make change happen. Let us represent young people's views, fears and ideas at a strategic and ministerial level. Reward and highlight our achievements to the public.'

Young advisor

Call to action

- Every six months Youth Advisory Board members to present young people's issues at ministerial level.
- An award scheme to be led and judged by the Youth Advisory Board to reward young people who contribute to their community in a positive way, and to help change negative perceptions of young people.
- Corporate sponsorship and a media strategy to back the Youth Advisory Board Awards and to gain positive coverage of young people's achievements. Diageo GB have offered support to this.

Some Youth Advisory Board Members



Demi

Ryan

Zoe

Jack

Dorothy

Troy

Youth Advisory Board member, Keeley Wilcox judging at Diageo GB's 'Diageo's got talent' event at Shepherd Bush Empire in May 2010.



'Keeley helped us understand what young people are capable of with the support of an organisation like Positive Futures. She got deep into our hearts and left us determined to help her, and the amazing people she works with, in making a positive difference for our communities.'

**Simon Litherland,
Managing Director,
Diageo GB**

Our story of working with the Youth Advisory Board

Diageo GB

Last July Keeley Wilcox, who has been through the Positive Futures programme and is a member of the Youth Advisory Board, came and talked at a conference for all 680 Diageo GB employees. She shared her experience of growing up in the UK and the impact that Positive Futures has made in giving her the skills and confidence to help her enjoy a full and happy life.

A partnership was formed between Diageo and Positive Futures which currently gives our employees the opportunity to help in two ways:

- Volunteering on a Positive Futures project – such as providing manual skills to improve physical amenities.
- Fundraising - through internally organised fundraising events and the opportunity to sponsor a project via monthly payroll giving.

When the Youth Advisory Board asked if we'd volunteer a couple of days of our time to enhance their ideas for this proposal, we were delighted. What happened is that we've learned ourselves – about what matters to these young people, the insight they have into what works and what doesn't. We've been inspired by their commitment to making a difference for a safer Britain.

Diageo GB has a stake in the goals they want to achieve - as a successful business in the UK with an interest in the country's future and as an employer in need of talented employees. We have set up a Positive Futures steering group with representatives from all our departments and functions and we're actively planning to create a work placement scheme for our financial year beginning July.

We are committed to make a positive and lasting difference for Positive Futures and look forward to a rewarding and fruitful partnership.

To find out more about Diageo please visit: www.diageo.com.

Diversity

If you're young and you do booze
Diversity is the thing to choose
Communities know you'll be drunk by eight
Being sick over their garden gate
Some will have passed out by ten
And be in accident and emergency then

You can change your life if you choose
And learn to stay off that horrible booze
Diversity is the way you can
Then you won't end up in a police van
Football, Boxing, Mc-ing and Dance
We young people deserve a chance

We young people are very bright
Some people think we are not right
All we want is something to do
And we won't act like we are in a zoo
Sit us down and have a chat
And we will never act like that

Engagement, education, volunteering and
Employment
Sets you up for deployment
Stick with diversity it becomes addictive
This will make our community predictive
Communication is great in our community
group
It keeps everybody in the loop

Diversity poem is by a young person at Manchester Positive Futures.
Cover image is by a young person from Halton Positive Futures.

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people out