

Youth PACTs

What are Youth PACTs?

PACT stands for Police and Community Together. So, Youth PACT is where young people come together to discuss things that matter to them in their community with the Police and other relevant organisations. These meetings will take place in areas children feel safe to speak freely including, schools, youth groups and community spaces.

At these meetings, young people will bring their issues and ideas, and talk about them openly with police and practitioners, and then agreeing a plan of action. The police and other practitioners will usually give an update on what they have been doing in the local area. These meetings will occur several times, and at each meeting the police and practitioners are expected to update the group on what they have been doing as a result of previous discussions and enacting the plan of action.

Why Youth PACTs matter?

Youth PACTs give young people a meaningful voice and allow them to co-create solutions alongside professionals. Offering a sense of empowerment to young people to make a difference in their communities. In addition, Youth PACTs promote multi-agency working and problem solving. Meaning issues are being tackled collectively.

Many Youth PACTs struggle to engage children who are actively involved in offending, due to reasons such as stigma and lack of trust. Youth PACTs can be a useful relational practice for working with these children by helping professionals understand them in their own context and building trusted relationships. This can be seen in our training films.

Background

We created two films to support professionals in understanding the importance of Youth PACTs and relational practice.

Film 1

Created with an established youth group in Portsmouth, this film involved a group of young people with lived experience of offending. With their agreement, we brought together the local Chief Inspector and local Bobby from the Police, and the Director of Children’s Services for several Youth PACT sessions. The film captures the journey of how this was created and why it is important.

Film 2

This film captures the voice of two young people with lived experience of offending and service involvements, alongside various professionals. Having these young people on this film allowed us to convey their authentic opinions and ensuring the message stays true to the experiences of young people. This film was designed to relay the importance of ensuring the child’s voice is at the heart of the work we do.

Both films were produced by Neck of the Woods, a film company who specialise in creating films and stories with positive social impact. Their experience and sensitive approach meant we were able to create two impactful that stay true to the experiences of young people.



A Child-first way of working

Youth PACTs are a child-first way of working. The child-first approach means putting children at the heart of what we do. It is evidence-based and views the child as a whole, recognising their strengths, needs and lived experiences. The approach follows the ABCD principles.

As Children

Recognise how children are developmentally different from adults and require different support.

Building pro-social identity

Promote children’s individual strengths and capacities to develop a pro-social identity, focusing on positive child outcomes rather than just trying to manage offending.

Collaborating with children

Involve children meaningfully to encourage their investment, engagement, and social inclusion.

Diverting from stigma

Promote supportive diversion from the criminal justice system where possible, or minimising stigma within it, as we know that stigma causes further offending.

Youth PACTs reflect this approach as they primarily shift the focus away from enforcement and towards support. They allow services to understand the child within their own context and see them as a whole.

It also allows for multi-agency responses that don’t rely solely on the police. Instead, bringing together all relevant services who can offer holistic support and solutions. Importantly, the process is led by young people, they identify what would make their life better, and the role of services is to act on those priorities.

