

**FORum**  
**for**  
**YOUTH**

Forest Youth Forum

# **Youth Crime and Policing Survey 2006**

December 2006

Report prepared by  
The Forest Youth Forum

For

Forest of Dean Community Safety Partnership  
Gloucestershire Police Authority  
Gloucestershire Constabulary  
Forest of Dean District Council

## **Acknowledgements**

This report has been prepared on behalf of the Forest Youth Forum. It is based upon a survey of 741 young people during summer 2006 across the Forest of Dean.

The survey sought to examine experience and fear of crime amongst young people, and their perceptions and experience of the Police and policing issues locally.

The Youth Forum would wish to thank the following for their advice and support:

Jane Jarman	Forest of Dean District Council / Forest Youth Forum
Yvonne West	Forest of Dean Youth Workers' Network / Forest Youth Forum
Insp Carole Ajinkya	Gloucestershire Constabulary
Dr Mandy Nelson	Gloucestershire Police Authority

In addition, we would like to thank all those who contributed to writing and distributing the questionnaire, and the 741 young people from the Forest of Dean who completed the questionnaire.

This report is being shared with the various local stakeholders involved in community safety, crime and policing, to include the Forest of Dean District Council, Gloucestershire Police Authority, Gloucestershire Constabulary and the Forest of Dean Community Safety Partnership.

Thanks to everybody who has helped in this project.

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**Forest Youth Forum  
Crime and Policing Survey (2006)**

**Introduction**

- 1 During March 2006, the Forest Youth Forum undertook a survey of young people from across the Forest area in order to find out more about young peoples views on crime and policing. Inspector Ajinkya, from the Constabulary and Mandy Nelson, from the Police Authority supported the Forum in the survey.
- 2 The survey aimed to examine:
  - Experience of crime and threatening behaviour
  - Worry about crime and threatening behaviour
  - Policing priorities
  - Attitudes towards the police
  - How the police should consult with young people.
- 3 Questionnaires were distributed across the Forest of Dean (to include Newent) by the young people on the Youth Forum. It is not known how many individual questionnaires were disseminated. In total, 741 completed questionnaires were returned were returned from young people who live within the Forest of Dean.
- 4 This report provides a brief overview of the findings derived from an analysis of the questionnaire. Members of the Youth Forum have been given a copy of the initial analysis, but have not yet responded. This report, therefore, should be considered as an draft report, and not circulated further until the Youth Forum have had the opportunity to comment.

**Profile of respondents**

- 5 In terms of **gender**, of the 741 respondents to the survey, 44% of respondents were male (327) and 56% were female (414).
- 6 In terms of **age**, 10% of respondents were aged 11 years or younger, 71 % were aged 12 to16 years and a further 19% were aged 17 years or over (Figure 1).

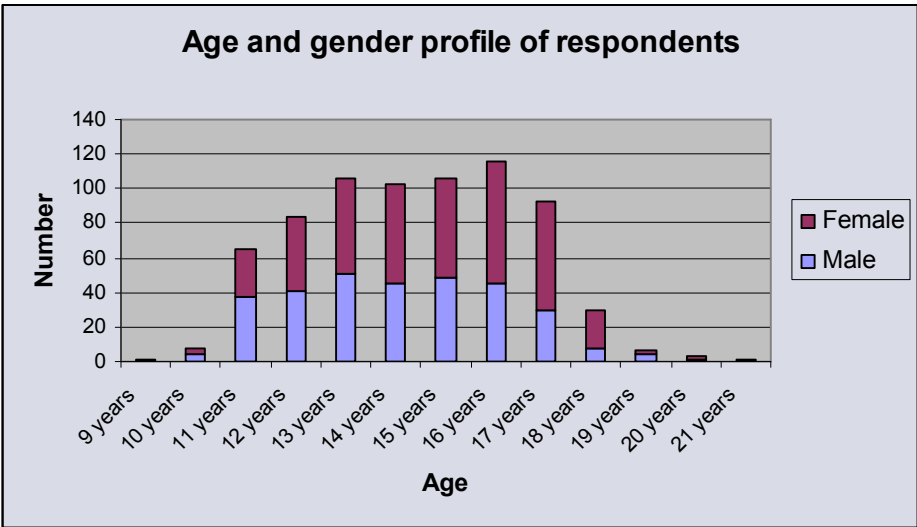


Figure 1

7 Respondents were asked to indicate which **town they lived closest to**. Just over one fifth of respondents lived closest to Coleford (21%) and a further fifth stated that they lived closest to Cinderford (22%). A further 16% of respondents lived outside of the immediate Forest area, living closest to Newent (16%) and 15% lived closest to Lydney (Figure 2).

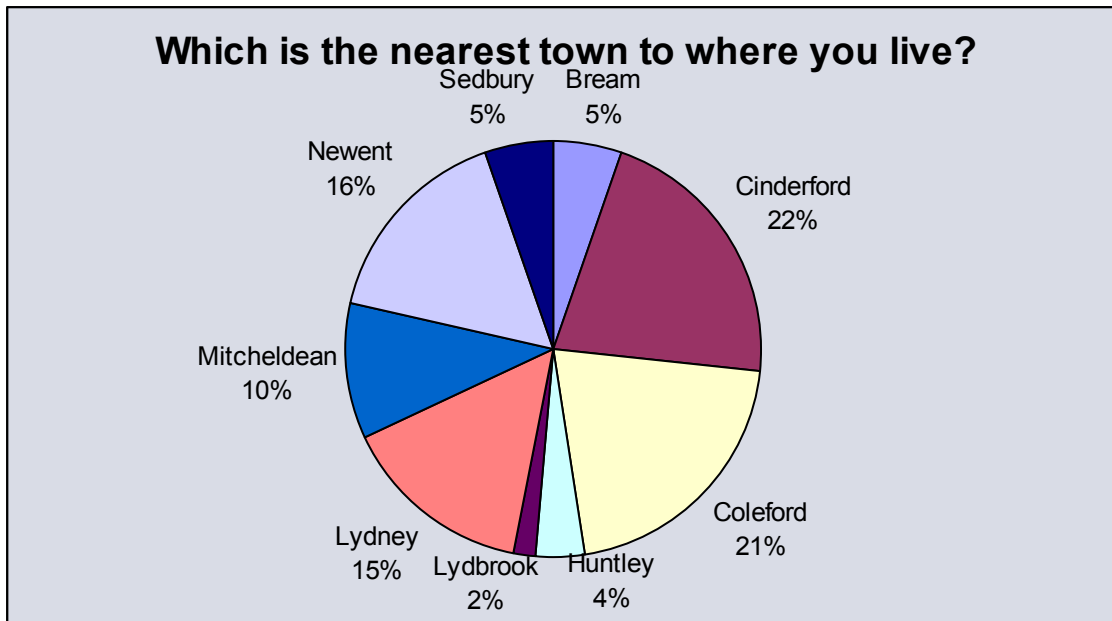


Figure 2a

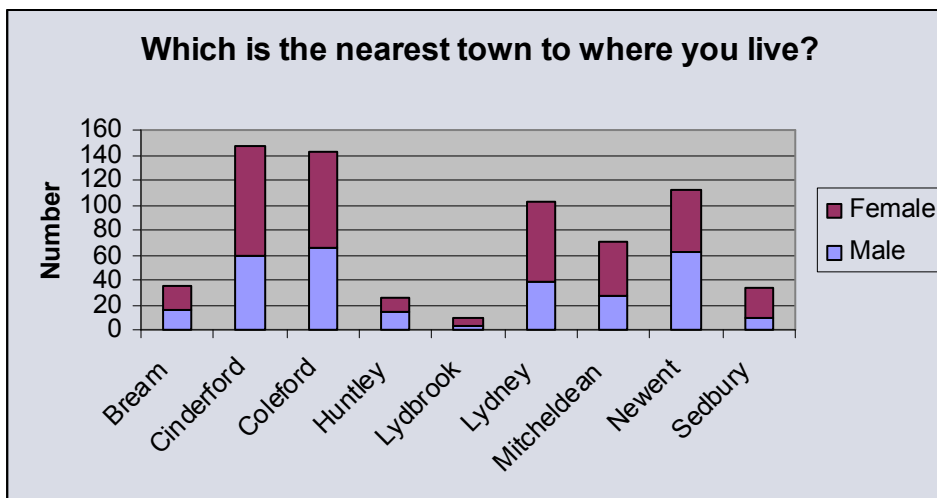


Figure 2b

### Experience of Crime and threat

8 **37%** of respondents stated that they had been a **victim of crime or threatening behaviour** (Table 1). Of these, bullying was the most common problem, with just over one fifth of all respondents stating that they had been bullied (21%).

Experience	Percent respondents
Bullying	21%
Threatened	14%
Assaulted	11%
Theft	9%
House burglary	4%

Table 1 Experience of crime and threat (n=714)



Figure 3

9 16 and 17 year olds were most likely to have been a **victim of crime or threat**, with around half of them reporting that they had been (Figure 3).



Figure 4

10 There was no real difference to emerge in relation to the proportion of males and females who reported that they had been a victim of crime or threatening behaviour (Figure 4).

- 38% of males reported that they had been a victim.
- 37% of females reported that they had been a victim.

11 There was no real difference to emerge in relation to experience of crime or threatening behaviour on the basis of where people lived. However, differences emerged on the basis of gender in relation to experience of crime and threat. Males were more likely to be a victim of assault or theft, whereas females were more likely to be a victim of bullying or threatening behaviour (Figure 5).

- 24% of all females had been a victim of bullying, compared to 17% of males.
- 15% of all females had been a victim of threatening behaviour, compared to 12% males.
- 13% of all males had been a victim of assault, compared to 8% females.
- 12% of all males had been a victim of theft, compared to 7% of females.

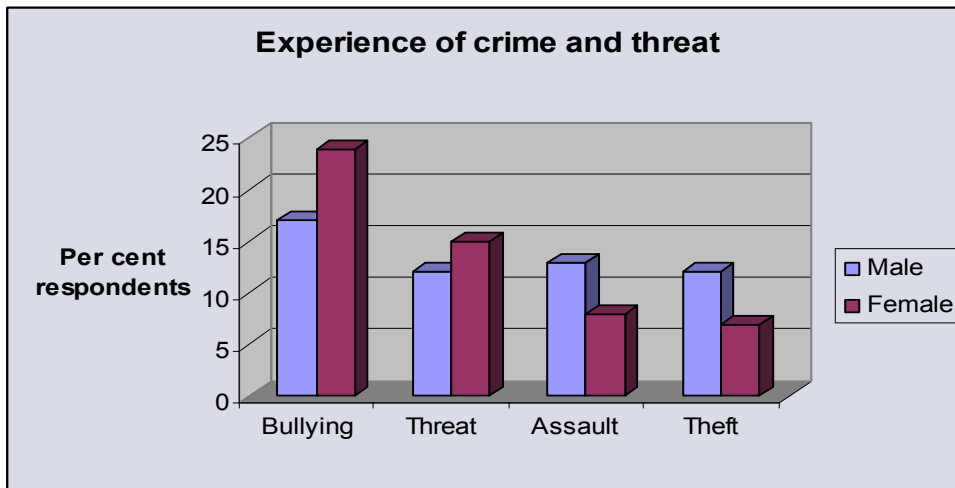


Figure 5

### Worry

12 Two fifths of all respondents reported that they were worried about becoming a victim of crime or threatening behaviour (40%). There was a slight difference in worry on the basis of gender, with slightly more females than males reporting that they were worried about becoming a victim of crime or threatening behaviour.

- 48% of females worried about becoming a victim of crime or threatening behaviour.
- 32% males worried about becoming a victim of crime or threatening behaviour.

13 In terms of what people worried about the most (Figure 6):

- 39% worried about dangerous drivers
- 38% worried about drug dealers
- 37% worried about gangs of young people
- 30% worried about drunks in the street
- 20% worried about burglars
- 19% worried about bullying.

14 In terms of what respondents worried about the most, there was a difference on the basis of gender. Females were slightly more worried than males about becoming a victim of all types of crime and threatening behaviour.

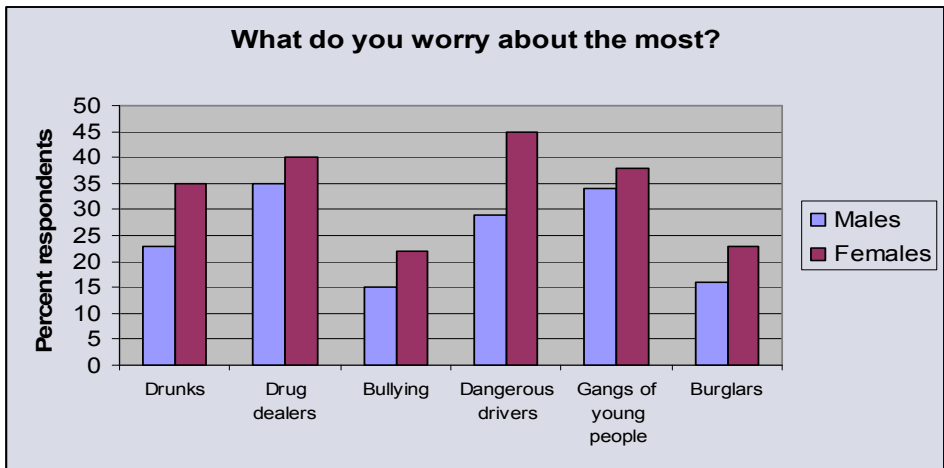


Figure 6

15 Other things mentioned by young people as things they worry about or worried about happening to them included:

- Drug dealers
- Drunks
- Drink drivers
- Rape / sexual assaults and drink spiking (females only).

### Previous experience

16 55% of all respondents who reported that they had previously been a victim of crime or threat stated that they were worried about becoming a victim, compared to 32% of those who had never been a victim of crime or threat. This shows that previous experience of victimisation increases people fear of crime.

17 It is worth noting that those who reported that they had been a victim of house burglary or bullying were more worried about becoming a victim of crime than those who had been a victim of any other type of crime or threatening behaviour. Two thirds (64%) of those people who stated that they had been a victim of bullying reported that they worried about becoming a victim of crime or threat. In particular, groups of young people who had been bullied were most worried about gangs of young people (54%).

### Avoidance behaviour

18 The young people were asked whether they avoided places at different times throughout the day because they were worried that they might become a victim of crime or threatening behaviour. 43% of respondents said that they did avoid places at night. Only 14% of respondents said that they avoided places during the day due to fear of crime. Although females reported that they were more likely than males to avoid places at night due to fear of crime, there was little difference in avoidance behaviour during the day (Figure 7).

- 48% of women avoided places at night, 39% of males
- 13% of women avoided places during the day, 14% of males

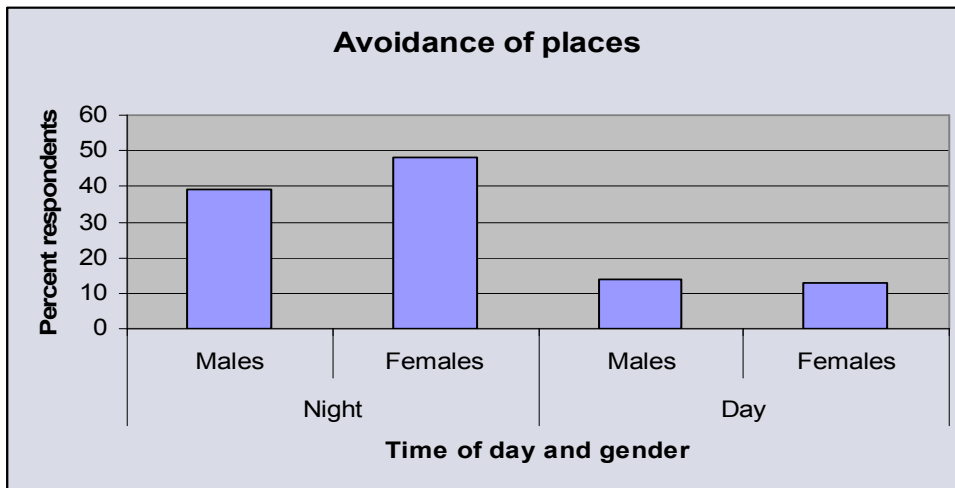


Figure 7

19 In terms of the types of places that people avoided especially at night:

- Alleyways
- Dark places
- Cinderford town centre
- Places where groups of youths hang out
- Car parks

### Experience of the Police

20 23% of respondents said that they had been in trouble with the Police. In the main, males were more likely to have been in trouble with the police, than females. 29% of all male respondents said that they had been in trouble with the police, compared to 19% of females.

21 Over a third of respondents said that they had been in contact with the police in some other way (34%).

22 Only 25% of respondents said that they knew their local police officer of police and community support officer. When asked where they knew this person from, most knew them from contact through school or on the street.

23 Two thirds of respondents (67%) considered that the police target young people. There was no difference in perception on the basis of gender, with both males and females considering that young people are targeted by the police.

24 It was suggested that the police should:

‘Help young people, not target them’.

‘Not treating us as jobs by generalising us to be the same’.

25 Over 90% of all respondents (91%) completed the question that asked them to describe their perceptions of the police. Respondents were asked to indicate three terms which they considered best described the police. In total 1,480 responses were made to the question (Figure 8 and Figure 9).

26 Of the 1,480 responses, just over one fifth described the police as 'helpful' (22%). However, in total, 44% of all respondents described the police as helpful (Figure 9).

27 However, 16% of responses suggested that the police were difficult to relate to (33% of all respondents), 12% described them as intimidating and a further 12% as stand-off-ish (24% of all respondents).

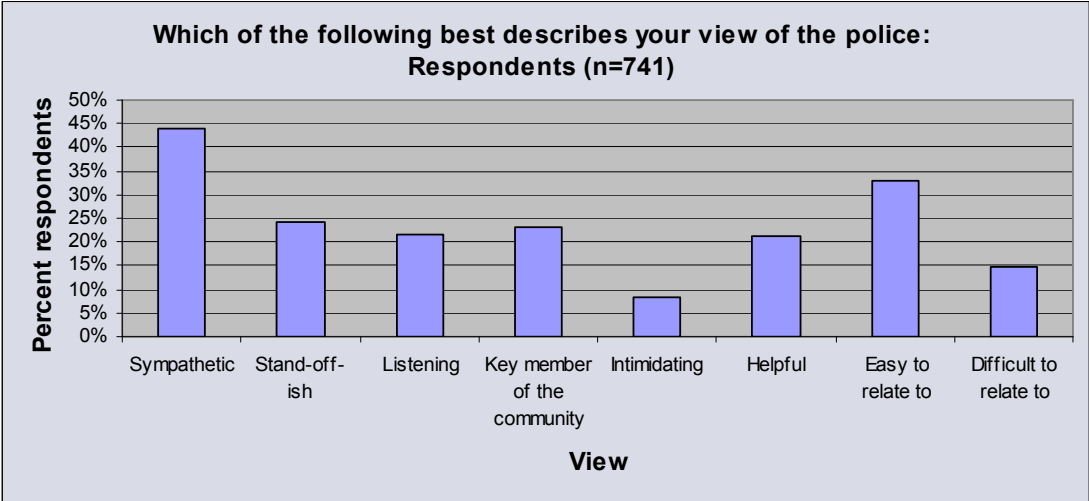


Figure 8 Respondents (n=741)

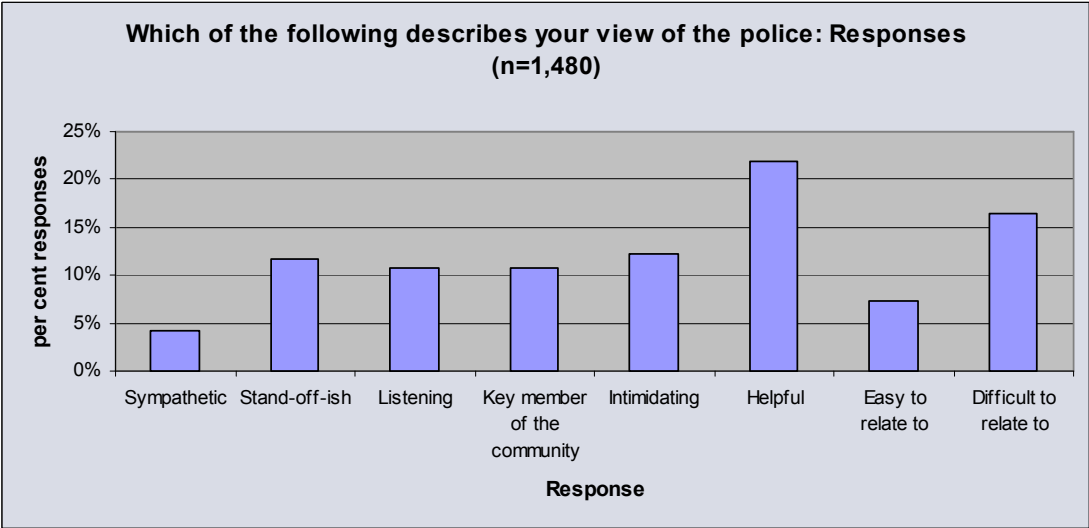


Figure 9 Responses (n=1,480)

28 Of those who reported that they had been in trouble with the police, 36% described the police as intimidating. Those who had been in trouble with the police saw the police quite differently to those who had not, and those who had been a victim of crime.

- 36% described them as intimidating
- 29% described them as difficult to relate to
- 28% described them as a key member of the community
- 26% described them as standoffish
- 23% described them as helpful
- 14% described them as listening
- 7% described them as sympathetic.

- 29 Of those who had not been in trouble with the police:
- 21% described them as intimidating
  - 31% described them as difficult to relate to
  - 24% described them as a key member of the community
  - 23% described them as standoffish
  - 51% described them as helpful
  - 25% described them as listening
  - 9% described them as sympathetic
  - 16% easy to relate to.

- 30 Of those who stated that they had been a victim of crime:
- 34% described them as intimidating
  - 40% described them as difficult to relate to
  - 21% described them as a key member of the community
  - 26% described them as standoffish
  - 40% described them as helpful
  - 19% described them as listening
  - 9% described them as sympathetic
  - 13% easy to relate to.

**Communication with the police**

- 31 Through the questionnaire, respondents were asked to indicate how they would like the police to communicate / consult with them in the future (Figure 10). The most popular means was through the schools (58%).
- 32 The least favoured option for communication with the police was through the police station, web and Bobby Bus. Young people additionally suggested that they would like the police to communicate with them in their home.

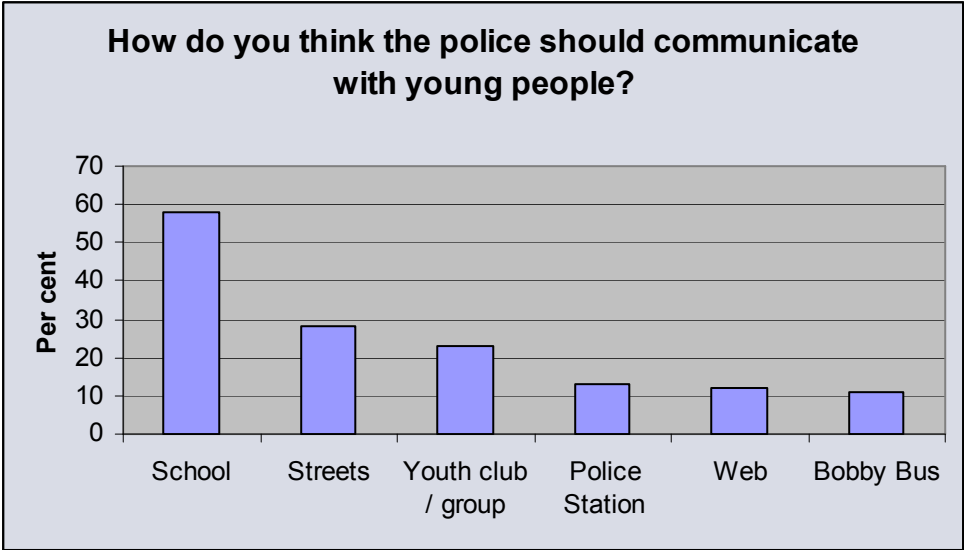


Figure 10

- 33 Young people were asked what they considered that the police could do to help them and make them feel safer. Out of the 573 suggestions made by the young people,

around 230 responses (40%) directly related to increasing the visible police presence on the street and / or undertaking targeted patrols in particular problem areas.

34 Comments included:

‘More patrols in the area to make people feel safer’.

‘Have a greater presence in small towns/villages’.

‘More police on the streets’.

35 Other things that the young people considered would help and make them feel safer included:

- Targeting drug dealers / drug users (35 comments)
- Communicating with young people, either through schools or through listening to what they have to say. It was also noted that the police should talk to young people on their own level. (35 comments)
- Target drivers – either speeding or drunk drivers (18 comments)
- Improve response times (18 comments).

36 It was also suggested that the police could give young people information on what the crime situation was really like and provide advice on how to improve personal safety – to include the provision of rape alarms and advice on what to do in a potential threatening situation.

37 As respondents commented:

‘Get in contact with younger people in school so they'd know what to do in an emergency’.

‘Tell you what its like and explain to us how we should react when we feel danger’.

38 It was also suggested that the police should be more approachable to young people, and be less intimidating.

39 On communication:

‘Have more interaction with the younger generations, build up trust with them’.

‘Think police should build relationships with young people’.

‘Give discussion in schools to help children know how to protect their selves’.

## Summary

40 In general, young people had varied experiences of crime, fear of crime and perceptions of the police.

- Females typically had higher levels of fear of crime / threat than males.
- Worry about becoming a victim of crime or threatening behaviour intensified at night.

- Over a third (37%) of respondents had been a victim of crime or threatening behaviour.
- A fifth of respondents (21%) reported that they had been bullied.
- The things young people worried about most included:
  - Dangerous drivers
  - Drug dealers
  - Gangs of young people.
- Half of those people who reported previously being a victim of crime or threatening behaviour were worried about future victimisation.
- Around a quarter of respondents had been in trouble with the police.
- Two thirds of respondents felt that the police target young people.
- Typically descriptions of the police included:
  - Helpful
  - Intimidating
  - Difficult to relate to.
- Young people suggested that they would feel safer if there was a greater visible police presence on the street.
- Young people suggested that the police should consult / communicate with them through schools.
- Young people suggested that they would like more information about the risks of victimisation (ie. what's actually going on) and the steps that they can take to protect themselves / increase their personal safety.