

Youth Board Meeting Report

Focus on Safety



Save the Dates

Thursday 10th October
Sutton Youth Summit
More details coming soon.

Thursday 5th December
Next Sutton Youth Board
Meeting
Focus topic: Equalities

About Sutton Youth Board meetings

Sutton Youth Board Meetings take place four times every 12 months and are facilitated by Volunteer Centre Sutton and the Young Commissioners. The aim of the sessions is to explore and address challenges facing young people of Sutton. All young people in Sutton are welcome to attend these meetings.

If you would like to attend, or have young representatives who can attend in future, please email NatashaBlok@vcsutton.org.uk.

July 2024 – Meeting format:

The Sutton Youth Board meeting was led by the young people who created an ice breaker and took roles of timekeeper and facilitator. The young people also gave two presentations. Three professional organisations were allocated time to present their work related to community safety and answer questions too. This created an interactive and informative discussion on safety initiatives in Sutton.



Updates from Young People

NEW: Celebrating Sutton's Diversity Project

Young people presented the new **Celebrating Sutton's Diversity project** which aims to highlight and celebrate the rich diversity within the borough's community. The summer project seeks to understand more about what communities make up Sutton's diversity and how we can better bring people together, promote inclusivity, and create a deeper understanding of different people and groups in Sutton. **For more information, please visit [the Volunteer Centre Sutton website](#).**



Sutton Safety Survey Update

The Sutton Safety Survey, led by Sutton Grammar School's Student Voice, and one of the Young Commissioners, Joseph Dean, was conducted earlier this year in response to growing concerns about safety, particularly following recent incidents of knife violence. The survey aimed to understand students' perceptions of safety within the borough. Below are some of the initial key findings from the survey:

47%

of young people are concerned that knife violence might directly affect them.

Nearly

50%

of all respondents have witnessed unsafe situations on social media, suggesting a link between online content and local violence.

400+

students are unsure how to stay safe, and 80% believe more safety measures are needed in Sutton.

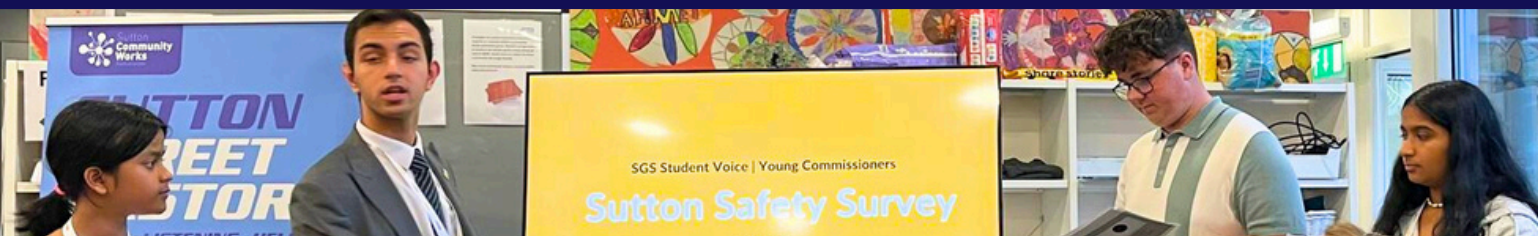
82%

of students are aware of safety-disrupting incidents, yet many still rate Sutton 7/8 out of 10 for safety.

16%

of respondents have witnessed or been victims of incidents in Sutton, with nearly 250 experiencing serious crime more than five times.

*Key findings are based on survey results from 1,508 students across various schools in Sutton.



Introductions: Key Organisations Supporting Safety in Sutton

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Organisation 1:

Patricia and her team

Successful Sutton: Enhancing Town Centre Safety



Patricia Park, Chief Executive of Successful Sutton, provided a detailed overview of the organisation's role as a Business Improvement District (BID). With 487 member businesses ranging from high street retailers to commercial companies, Successful Sutton collaborates with local authorities and the police to enhance safety in the town centre.

Key Initiatives Discussed:

- **BID Radio Scheme:** A communication network connecting 87 businesses with Sutton Police, Sutton Street Pastors, and key shopping centers like St Nicholas and Times Square. The scheme is vital for addressing issues such as pickpocketing, shoplifting, and anti-social behavior in real-time.
- **Patrolling and Security:** BID support officers, patrol the high street from Monday to Saturday, providing an on-the-ground presence to deter crime and assist in reporting incidents and accessing CCTV footage.
- **Collaboration with Safety Organisations:** Successful Sutton works closely with organisations like Sutton Women's Centre and Reclaim the Streets to gather data on areas where individuals feel unsafe. This information is used to improve lighting, address poorly lit alleys, and enhance overall safety.
- **Community Perception:** Patricia emphasised that while Sutton remains a low-crime area, the visibility of the high street means that incidents are highly noticeable. The collaboration with various stakeholders ensures a coordinated approach to safety, benefiting businesses, residents, and visitors alike.

Q: Has Sutton become more unsafe?



A: Patricia clarified that the perceived increase in incidents is due to population growth and greater public transport links bringing more people into the area. However, Sutton remains a safe borough.

Q: Has petty crime increased?



A: Patricia acknowledged an increase in shoplifting, linked to the cost of living crisis, with many incidents involving theft of necessities like food and nappies. Businesses are experiencing higher overhead costs, leading to reduced staffing and increased vulnerability to theft. Successful Sutton works with the Council to provide support and referrals for those in need.



Introductions: Key Organisations Supporting Safety in Sutton

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Organisation 2: Mark and Caroline Street Pastors: Community-Based Safety Support



Mark and Caroline, representing Sutton Street Pastors, shared insights into their role in providing both practical and emotional support to the community. As part of Sutton Community Works, Street Pastors operate as volunteers from 20 local churches, offering a visible presence and support to vulnerable individuals.

Key Responsibilities:

- **Patrol Operations:** Street Pastors patrol Sutton and Wallington during weekend afternoons and evenings, providing a reassuring presence, particularly for young people. Their work includes offering water, flip-flops, first aid, safety alarms, and even arranging safe transportation for those in need.
- **Safety Advice:** The team provides practical safety tips, such as staying in pairs, avoiding distractions from phones, and having an exit strategy when in potentially unsafe situations.
- **Partnerships:** Street Pastors partner with the police, the council, and the Sutton Safer Partnership, ensuring a coordinated approach to safety and community support.

Q: How do you support the homeless?



A: The Street Pastors' approach to homelessness involves signposting individuals to support services rather than giving money directly, though they do provide snacks and hot drinks.

Q: How does your volunteer recruitment work?



A: The team recruits volunteers from church congregations, with a preference for younger individuals, though they have noted challenges in attracting this demographic. Being Christian is a prerequisite for joining.



Introductions: Key Organisations Supporting Safety in Sutton

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Organisation 3:

Metropolitan Police Youth Engagement & Diversion Team Sutton: Youth Engagement and Safety



PC 3182 Hamilton SN BCU, Youth Engagement Officer, alongside his colleague PC 2591 Cunningham SN BCU, discussed the police's efforts to maintain safety in Sutton, particularly among young people. The officers emphasized the importance of early intervention and youth engagement to prevent crime.

- Key Points:
- Youth Engagement Initiatives: The police are involved in various programs targeting vulnerable young people, including sports activities and workshops aimed at diverting them from crime and exploitation. They highlighted the recent success in securing funding for a knife crime project, which uses Virtual Reality experiences to educate children as young as 10 years old about the dangers of gang culture.
- Police Presence: He encouraged young people to approach the police with any concerns when they see officers patrolling the high street. He also promoted the Streetsafe app, which allows residents to report areas where they feel unsafe, with the data being monitored by the police.
- Crime Levels in Sutton: Sutton continues to be one of the safest boroughs in London, with significantly lower crime rates compared to neighbouring areas like Croydon. However, the police are facing challenges in recruitment, with more officers leaving than being recruited.

Q: What measures are you taking to try and prevent knife crime?

A: They stressed the need to start educating children at a younger age, as current initiatives often target individuals too late. The new approach, focusing on early intervention, aims to have a long-term impact on reducing knife crime.



Q: How are you promoting Police work?

A: They acknowledged the need to better communicate the positive work being done by the police in Sutton, particularly in youth engagement and crime prevention. Also the collaboration with the police and Young Commissioners creating a newsletter.



Summary and more

Meeting Output:

Conclusion and Upcoming Events to get involved in:

The meeting concluded with a reaffirmation of Sutton's commitment to maintaining a safe environment for all. The discussions highlighted the importance of collaboration between businesses, community organisations, and the police in achieving this goal.



Sutton Youth Newsletter on safety:

Latest Summer edition out now

Summer

Sutton Edition July 2024



Sutton Youth Newsletter

In partnership with Sutton Police, Sutton Local Authority - Cognus and Sutton Young Commissioners (Volunteer Centre Sutton).

SEASONAL EDITION



METROPOLITAN
POLICE

PC 3182 Hamilton recently learned that not every young person in the borough has seen the feedback and responses from the New Met for London Youth meeting held earlier this year. To address this, here is a summary of the three key subjects discussed, the Q&A session and proposed solutions. Additionally, be on the lookout for upcoming videos on the Sutton Police Instagram and Facebook pages that will cover each of these subjects in more detail.

As part of the Young Commissioners' work with the Metropolitan Police, they co-produce a Sutton Youth Newsletter on safety at key points of the year. The July one was discussed at the Youth Board meeting and published shortly after.

The latest edition, and previous ones, along with further resources, can be accessed here:

<https://vcsutton.org.uk/young-commissioners/safety/>

