

Written by
young
people, to
improve
the lives of
young
people.



SOS

The Sound of Silence:
Recommendations for
police

What can the police do better?

- Carry out research on the barriers to the police engaging with and understanding young people, focusing on cultural beliefs, how much training they get on working with young people and the quality of current training. ***this one is a priority***
- Create an app or website where young people can find out information about their rights as a victim of domestic abuse before reporting. This should cover information on their rights under the Victims Charter, easy to understand information on the laws around domestic abuse and what processes are followed when a crime is reported. This resource should be widely publicized on social media to raise awareness of this information.
- Strengthen relationships with charities, schools and other organisations working with young people by having police officers visit schools, engaging with young people using a non-threatening approach. The focus of their work should be building trust and raising awareness, not policing behaviour. They should come on the visits out of uniform, use first names rather than titles and meet the young people as equals for discussions.

- Strengthen referral processes from charities, schools and other organisations by making sure teachers and youth workers are informed about how referrals work, what will happen if a young person reports to the police and what support they will be able to get throughout the process.
- Ensure training on working with young people is made compulsory and delivered using practical methods, not just delivering report findings. It should be delivered by someone external who makes the group feel comfortable and include the voice of young people as a minimum, and a young person co-facilitating as best practice. Learning aims should focus on building empathy, understanding, recognising the unique needs of young people and communication approaches which de-escalate conflict through empathetic tone and body language.

What might help that isn't to do with the police?

- Provide independent support and advocacy services for all young people who think they might be experiencing abuse. Ensure that support and advocacy meets the needs of the young person as a whole person, so they don't have to re-tell their stories to several different agencies, and that it is in place before a young person knows if they want to report or not, during the criminal justice process and in the aftermath of the criminal justice process.



What might help that isn't to do with the police continued...

- Build relationships between schools, charities and other organisations so they can effectively refer directly into these support and advocacy services without a young person having to talk to several different agencies.
- Increase youth work services in areas with high rates of domestic abuse and high rates of deprivation. Ensure that this includes both specialist counselling services for young people affected by domestic abuse and general services open to everyone delivering information sessions and running open discussions where people can talk about what a toxic relationship could look like and where to go for help.
- Educate teachers and other professionals working with young people on the fact that domestic abuse exists on a spectrum of gender based violence, and how to spot early signs that someone is being harmed.

For more information about the
SOS project please visit:
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