



Constitution, Policy & Purpose Document  
2020

## 1. Introduction

- a. This is the formal constitution of the Cambs Youth Panel for the year 2020, and will be live and valid until January 2021, at which time it will be subject to review and amendment if required.
- b. This document intends to lay out in the clearest terms the purpose of our group, and the intended aims and objectives of membership.
- c. This document contains the rules of membership and the consequences of breaching rules and agreed policies.
- d. This document also contains our policy on Child Protection and Safeguarding, Diversity and Inclusion.
- e. A spoken word copy of this document can be provided upon request.

## 2. A Brief History of the Group

- a. The Cambs Youth Panel was set up Sergeant Phil Priestley of the Cambridgeshire Constabulary in June 2016.
- b. Key funding was provided by the Cambridgeshire Community Foundation who granted the group the sum of £1600 to constitute themselves and fund key pieces of technology.
- c. At that time the group consisted of roughly twenty panel members and was based entirely in the East Cambs region.
- d. The Cambs Youth Panel was originally constituted as 'The East Cambs Youth Consultation Panel'.
- e. The original purpose of the panel was to advise the police on engagement strategies with young people.
- f. It was subsequently adopted as a source of advice and guidance for other local bodies and individuals, including District and City councils, and the office of local Members of Parliament.
- g. The ECYCP continued under the name until 2018 when a restructure of the Constabulary forced the panel to consider either broadening its geographic remit or passing the group to a different lead facilitator.
- h. The group then broadened to cover the areas contained within Cambridgeshire South and was subject to a relevant name change.
- i. At the time of writing the group consists of 16 members and three adult facilitators.

## 3. Constitution

- a. We are the Cambs Youth Panel<sup>1</sup>. Our members are young people aged between 11 and 18 years of age, who reside in or who are educated in Cambridgeshire South.
- b. Cambridgeshire South is a term used to describe the local district areas of East Cambridgeshire, South Cambridgeshire, Cambridge City and Huntingdonshire.
- c. All young people are welcome – irrespective of their defining characteristics.

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<sup>1</sup> Formally known as the East Cambs Youth Consultation Panel.

- d. Cambs Youth Panel welcomes people of all nationalities and ethnicities, religions, genders, sexualities, disabilities, and no favour will be shown to any member on the basis of their age.
- e. The Cambs Youth Panel does not tolerate discriminatory practises or parties or individuals who encourage hatred towards groups of defining characteristics.
- f. The purpose of the Cambs Youth Panel is to offer young people of secondary education ages and above an insight into the workings of significant local decision making bodies and authorities. This include County and District councils, the Police, the Office of the Police & Crime Commissioner, and the work of local Members of Parliament.
- g. By creating a link between such individuals and functions we seek to increase accountability at all levels of public service provision to young people. We seek to empower young people to take involvement in the use of resources and how they effect quality of life for young people.
- h. In addition we seek to give a voice to young people and provide adult decision makers with a reliable and objective consultation panel that can help them to understand the world from the perspective of younger people.
- i. The Cambs Youth Panel is apolitical and works with all political parties in seeking to improve the quality of life for young people in our region. We do not hold affiliation with any political entity and protect our independence and our right to give objective and reliable advice and guidance on a basis that is both free and fair.
- j. We do not accept payment for our time or contribution, and all of our members are volunteers.
- k. We only accept sponsorship from ethical sources on the clear understanding that we retain the right to sever such ties at any time and under any circumstances. Where we do accept sponsorship or donations we do not accept any conditions that alter our constitutional basis or purpose.
- l. We serve to uphold good environmental practices that will protect the living world and help to fight climate change. We believe in the value of renewable energy and reusable materials.
- m. The Cambs Youth Panel serves to promote and protect the welfare of all young people.
- n. The Cambs Youth Panel serves to build bridges between the young and the old – promoting mutual understanding, empathy and acceptance.
- o. The Cambs Youth Panel will create initiatives that help our communities to cope with or resolve problems that predominantly affect young people, or are of such a nature that young people are also subject to detriment or harm.
- p. The Cambs Youth Panel will support good causes, ideas and opportunities on a case by case basis, subject to majority support of the Panel itself.
- q. We will harness the natural knowledge and aptitude of our group, and of young people broadly to, improve our communities. For example, this might include helping older generations to have a better understanding of technology and the potential for social media, mass communications and consumer electronics.
- r. Above all the Cambs Youth Panel serves to protect the reputation of young people and stands against any negative characterisation of youth that might appear in the mainstream media or prejudiced attitudes.

## 4. Orders of Business

- a. The Panel will meet at least once per month, in a location that is accessible to all of the members, and at such a time as is decided to be appropriate at the previous meeting.
- b. Usual venues for the group include Ely Police Station and Parkside Police Station.
- c. Meetings will be facilitated by one of the adult group organisers and minutes/records will be kept from the meeting to schedule decisions that have been made, proposals that have been offered, and the result of any votes taken.
- d. Every panel member will be offered the opportunity to table any business for discussion at that session – and may table such business without prior notice.
- e. The panel retains the discretion to vote to defer such business to the next session if it requires research or consideration before it be handled in a meaningful way.
- f. Decisions will be taken on a simple majority vote, but not without at least seven members present in total.
- g. Decisions cannot be made / policy cannot be passed outside of the formal panel meetings (members of the panel cannot meet in the name of the group outside of session without formally inviting all members to attend).
- h. Changes to the formal constitution require a 2/3 majority vote and all members have to be consulted and offered reasonable opportunity to vote for or against the change. Abstaining from the vote counts as having been consulted.

## 5. Legally Recognised Status

- a. The group is currently not structured in a legally recognised format.
- b. An objective of the group for 2020 is to achieve registered charitable status with the Charities Commission.

## 6. Financial Responsibility

- a. The group has a bank account with Lloyds Bank.
- b. The two signatories on the account are Phil Priestley and Paul Rogerson.
- c. No transactions can be made withdrawing monies from that account without both signatures.
- d. No monies will be spent or committed by the group without consultation to the panel as per 12F (majority decisions).
- e. All funds raised by the group, serving the interests of the group, and controlled by the group will be stored in this account and not in private accounts or alternative locations.

## 7. Code of Conduct

- a. Members will conduct themselves at all time with full regard to the following conduct:
  - i. Honesty and integrity – I will be honest and act with integrity at all times and will not compromise or abuse my position
  - ii. Respect and courtesy – I will act with self control and tolerance, treating people with respect and courtesy.
  - iii. Equality and diversity – I will act with fairness and impartiality. I will not discriminate unlawfully or unfairly.

- iv. Diligence and responsibility – I will be diligent in the exercise of my responsibilities.
- v. Confidentiality – I will treat information with respect and uphold our requirements towards data protection.
- vi. Conduct – I will behave in a manner both in session and outside of meetings, which does not discredit or bring the Cambs Youth Panel into disrepute. I am mindful of how my behaviour reflects upon my peers.
- vii. Challenging improper behaviour – where I see and recognise improper behaviour I will challenge it and highlight what I feel to be correct.
- b. Where a panel member is deemed to have committed a serious breach of the code of conduct – that being one which is thought to be more than trivial or minor – the group will listen to representations from the panel member before a vote is taken as to the consequence of that breach.
- c. The consequences can be as follows:
  - i. Words of advice
  - ii. A written warning
  - iii. A finite suspension from group membership and group activities
  - iv. Being expelled from the group permanently

## 8. Child Protection and the Safety of Young People

- a. Children and young people have the right to be protected from harm. This section of policy gives proper regard to how The Cambs Youth Panel will keep our young people safe, and respond to any concerns towards the protection of children.
- b. The Cambs Youth Panel is committed to protecting all children and not just the members of our panel. Where any member of the panel – whether an adult facilitator or a youth member – will have a clear opportunity to report any issues of a child protection nature.
- c. This opportunity will be supportive and private, and does not need to be brought to the knowledge of other members of the panel.
- d. The designated lead of child safety is Phil Priestley.
- e. Any member of the panel – adult or juvenile – can make a report of concern in confidentiality and it will be handled with such due regard that protects their identity and the nature of the disclosure.
- f. Such confidentiality does not prohibit the adult members of the group from sharing such information with each other, or taking such action as they feel to be appropriate – which is likely to include sharing information with the Multiagency Services Hub or making a child protection referral to the police or social services if the severity and gravity of the disclosure is appropriate.
- g. A log of disclosures and concerns will be kept, and any disclosures will be recorded in writing.
- h. Every adult who is brought into contact with the panel will be subject to a Disclosure and Barring Services (DBS) background check before they will be allowed to have unsupervised contact with any member of the panel.
- i. Members of the panel may work one to one with the DBS cleared adult facilitators – but do not have to feel compelled to do so. At no stage will any child work with any child or adult they do not feel safe or comfortable with.

- j. Where a concern is registered regarding the context of any adult facilitator of the group that individual will be suspended pending an appropriate investigation of the circumstances. Where relevant an appropriate external authorities will be notified.
- k. Where any adult receives a disclosure which gives rise to concern for the welfare of a child, a written record will be made as soon as practicable, and that written record will be passed to the safeguarding lead.
- l. If any disclosures are made that give rise to suspicion or belief that the safeguarding lead has acted improperly the other adult facilitators will intervene, a lead will be designated and the safeguarding lead will step down until such suspicions have been subject to an appropriate conclusion.
- m. All disclosures will be treated as if they are true and reliable until they are otherwise proven. Every young person will be treated as an honest and credible individual – unless their honesty and credibility has been unavoidably undermined and needs to be challenged in the most appropriate way.
- n. Any activities involving the panel will be subject to a thorough risk assessment before commencement of the event and this will give full and due consideration to the safety of all involved on a physical, emotional, sexual level.
- o. No content or activity of the group should compromise the wellbeing of any member of any child or young person irrespective of whether they are a group member or not.
- p. The Cambs Youth Panel has a prominent media present and all young people/members are asked to seek the permission of a parent, or appropriate adult who has parental responsibility for their welfare, to participate in media activity.
- q. All youth panel members will be asked if they have any relevant medical history – such as allergies, disabilities, or previous emotional events, that are likely to be triggered, exacerbated, or made worse by the nature of the work undertaken, discussion or activity in hand.
- r. Every member has the right to excuse themselves from any activity where they feel it is appropriate, and must not feel obliged to explain their rationale.
- s. Extra support will be supplied to any member who cannot otherwise participate.
- t. Emergency contact information for every member will be stored confidentially in accordance with GDPR.
- u. Any records kept pertaining to each member will be held in accordance with GDPR and every member has a right to look at their own record.
- v. The Cambs Youth Panel may organise overnight visits – and these may include international travel. Such events will be independently risk assessed and full consultation will be taken with parents to ensure that all persons involved are confident that due care has been provided to cater for each participant on an individualised basis.

## 9. Adult Facilitators

- a. The listed adult facilitators for the Cambs Youth Panel are:
  - i. Phil Priestley
  - ii. Paul Rogerson
  - iii. Zayla Hoskins

- b. All of the facilitators have been subject to a DBS background check and have no declarations of concern to make.

## 10. Diversity and Inclusivity

- a. The purpose of the Cambs Youth Panel, as stipulated at 3C, 3D and 3E is to welcome all young people irrespective of their background or 'walk of life'.
- b. We adhere to a belief that we cannot represent the young people of Cambridgeshire properly if we cannot see things from their perspective.
- c. To this end we do strive to actively encourage different types of young people to join us.
- d. Our group is made stronger through diversity and inclusion. Our legitimacy is built of a foundation of personal experience and knowledge.
- e. The Cambs Youth Panel today includes male and female members who have different religious beliefs, different ethnic backgrounds – mixed ethnicity – and a range of financial circumstances. Our members live in different parts of the region and attend a number of our local schools and sixth-form colleges.
- f. Our aim is to encourage growth that represents and reflects the rich diversity and breadth of Cambridgeshire life.
- g. Further to this, a key part of our constitution is to promote an inclusive peaceful coexistence between different communities, to help the authorities to deal with issues of hate crime through participation in hate crime strategies, and to reject the work of groups and organisations who promote prejudice and fear.
- h. The key strands of diversity and inclusivity that we recognise specifically include:
  - i. Gender – including concepts of transgender and gender fluidity
  - j. Ethnicity and nationality
  - k. Disability – both visible and invisible
  - l. Age discrimination (both discrimination against teenagers and any prejudice shown towards the elderly)
- m. Sexuality – people are welcomed and appreciated by the group irrespective of their sexuality
- n. Religion and belief – this includes the entitlement to follow any religion or indeed not to believe in a religious movement at all.
- o. The Cambs Youth Panel does not aim to 'convert' or change young people who hold contrary views towards a mainstream attitude. This group is built on compromise, positive conversation, and seeing the world from other people's perspectives.
- p. We gain strength from co-existing, and working towards shared goals, while we retain the facts in our life that make us individuals. We demonstrate to society that this can work and succeed in the actions that we take, and the things we achieve together.
- q. This is our constitution and our purpose, and it is accurate for the year 2020.
- r. This document will be reviewed in January 2021.

11. Signed on behalf of The Cambs Youth Panel:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Phil Priestley', written in a cursive style.

Phil Priestley

Lead adult facilitator