

**WEST MIDLANDS POLICE  
AND CRIME  
COMMISSIONER**

**NON-CONFIDENTIAL  
NOTICE OF DECISION  
025/2014**

---

Contact Officer: Alethea Fuller

Telephone Number: 0121 626 5366

Email: a.fuller@west-midlands.ppn.police.uk

Title: Safeguarding Young Peoples Application

---

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Responsible agencies ( Local safe guarding boards, police, fire service, councils, schools etc ) have a duty to give current relevant and accurate safeguarding information to all young people. This is challenging for them when it comes to the 11-18 year old demographic as these young people are not typically receptive to information that “teaches” them to be safe in their world. Mobile devices are the single most used platform for young people to socialize and access information on a daily basis. Many of the issues that affect young people are co-related and therefore if you want to talk to teenagers about mental health you might also be able to address other related issues such as drug and alcohol use, bullying and depression.

The Young Peoples Application will address many of the issues in one place, in an interactive, local and responsive way.

**DECISION**

I have considered the funding request for the Young Peoples App as set out at Appendix A and approve the allocation of £5,000.

**West Midlands Police and Crime Commissioner**

I confirm that I do not have any disclosable pecuniary interests in this decision and take the decision in compliance with the Code of Conduct for the West Midlands Office for Policing and Crime. Any interests are indicated below.

**Signature.....Yvonne Mosquito.....**

**Date..... 22 July 2014.....**

# **NON - CONFIDENTIAL FACTS AND ADVICE TO THE POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER**

## **INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND**

### **Safeguarding Young People App**

#### **Problem scope**

Responsible agencies ( Local safe guarding boards, police, fire service, councils, schools etc ) have a duty to give current relevant and accurate safeguarding information to all young people. This is challenging for them when it comes to the 11-18 year old demographic as these young people are not typically receptive to information that “teaches” them to be safe in their world. Currently whilst there are examples of good practice, there is nothing that facilitates pulling together best practice, and presents it in a way that is accessible and engaging to young people and reflects relevant, real-time, local issues.

Mobile devices are the single most used platform for young people to socialize and access information on a daily basis. Current research shows that around 93% of teens currently use smartphones or tablets and this is set to rise to 96% by 2017. [ Source: emarketer research: <http://www.emarketer.com/Article/UK-Teens-Far-Outshine-US-Counterparts-Smartphone-Usage/1009837> ] There are websites and applications that deliver specific safeguarding information; however, it is unlikely that young people will sustain their engagement of the many different resources on a daily basis unless it is one, easy to access place and has a positive social image ( is cool ).

It is also important to note that many of the issues that affect young people are co-related and so it makes sense that if you want to talk to teenagers about mental health, you might also be able to address other related issues such as drug and alcohol use, bullying and depression. This application will address many issues that responsible agencies have.

#### **Proposed solution**

The young peoples app will deliver a safe application for mobile phones and tablets that young people will use on a daily basis because it has features and functionality that are relevant to their needs and delivers rewards and incentives that they value, whilst sensitively delivering context-based safeguarding advice and content that they may access on a just-in-time basis if they feel worried or unsafe; or as part of other activities within the application – i.e. subliminally through competitions, quizzes etc. The content will be continually refreshed to ensure relevance and sustainability of use.

In addition; the app can be localized to include local information and give access to local events and rewards.

#### **Target demographic and contributors**

The app is for young people 13 -18 (although it will be borne in mind that a wider age group may access it). The benefits to young people are:

- Safety advice as and when you need it, delivered in an engaging format
- Just-in-time advice and help if you are in trouble
- News and advice that is relevant to you in your area; news of local events and offers
- Money off music events; food; music and sports
- Help with things that are important to you – finding a summer job, finding cheap car insurance etc.

The initial app development will be paid for by collaborative funding from the organisations with the responsibility for delivering safeguarding information. It will bring about further benefits for these organisations:

- It will be valuable to the various agencies who may want to track and monitor the issues that are important to young people and deliver useful content to them.
- It can assist emergency services in reducing crimes rates, tracking missing persons and improve health outcomes through useful messages and alerts
- It can improve business and community involvement through their engagement with young people; offering rewards and information that will be of interest to them.
- It will provide signposting to local and national initiatives

In addition to the low cost contribution to the project, early adopters will be encouraged to form a community of best practice to work collaboratively and sustain the relevance of the content.

Following the initial seed funding, it is envisaged that the tool will attract further funding from local businesses either through the added value of the offers and discounts or the CSR action of major brands. This will ensure that the tool is sustainable and will provide a useful platform for continual delivery of safeguarding advice and guidance long after the initial seed funding.

## **Competitive environment**

There has been a small but significant growth in the number of socially responsible apps which deliver various messages to this target audience either directly or indirectly. These apps are often topic specific and so don't address the complete safeguarding agenda in one platform. Examples of these include:

- Barnardos – recently released sexual exploitation app. This app is more for use in conjunction with professionals i.e. in classroom scenarios
- Vodafone – Guardian App that allows parents to monitor and facilitate safety on their mobile devices

The new app; “PINGR” will act as a hub for legitimate content and resources through context-based signposting and embedding of key content. This will be beneficial to the selected organisations as it will enhance their reach and use.

The PINGR app will also link local information on events and services for young people and give added value to the young people themselves through features and rewards /discounts offered by both local businesses and major brands.

The app will initially offer safeguarding information on the following:-

- online safety including sexting, cyberbullying etc
- sexual exploitation
- mental, sexual and physical health including depression and suicide etc
- relationships and domestic violence
- drug & alcohol use
- driving safety
- 

Issues may differ from one geographical area to another and is expected to change and expand as required.

Later development will include alerts regarding missing persons, emergency contact for the user when at risk, location recording and crime and health alerts in real time. For the young

people; later development will include social networking features, podcasts, agony aunt and priority access to desired events and offers. Organisations purchasing the first phase are not obliged to buy in to the phase 2 elements.

The app's content and the author's IPR will be protected, as will the technology and design.

### **Costs**

West Midlands will be one of the 5 early adopters and the cost is £5k which will give 5 years free access from launch. The early adopters will collaborate in development of the base content and ideas in exchange for the reduced contribution to the seed funding.

Late adopters can purchase a localized version of the app for £10K. It is envisaged that once the app is successful we will be able to attract further funding to ensure that it is self-sustaining.

### **Core technology and experience**

Virtual College has experience over 10 years of design & delivery of successful of line vocational training, particularly in the health and social care sector. We are experienced in successful delivery of massive open online content (MOOCs) and free-at-point-of-delivery applications. Our experience in this field will ensure active take-up and engagement, thus sustaining and maximizing ROI.

The app will be developed as a cloud application and as such will be platform agnostic to ensure maximum reach of users.

Development will be seed funded jointly by the early adopters and Virtual College via its charity contributions and sustained through further investment of later adopters and sponsorship.

### **Timescales**

The initial 5+ early adopters will be signed up by the end of June; initial content development meetings will need to be coordinated to ensure that the correct teams are consulted and content is supplied to Virtual College ready for storyboarding. Additional partners to help with the project will be approached by July to coordinate various best practice to be included in the tool. Initial approaches have been made to Childnet, Kooth and CEOP as well as some senior PCC members. It is envisaged that the product development will commence in September 2014 with launch in early January. Individual areas can launch sooner if content is received by no later than July. Phase 2 of the app will commence in Jan 2015; this phase is optional and milestones and outcomes are to be confirmed once the initial scoping is complete. This information will be available by end of July 2014.