

Police Scotland Youth Volunteers to double in size



Police Scotland Youth Volunteers is the fastest-growing youth volunteer programme in the UK and is so popular that by April this year it is expected to be more than double the size than at the start of 2016.

There are currently 750 volunteers – up by 300 at the start of 2016 – and by April new groups coming on stream will see the number of young people aged between 13 and 18 participating in the programme rise to 1,100.

Over the last year the youth and adult volunteers made a significant contribution to their communities across all of Police Scotland's 13 divisions, and have participated at events such as the Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo; T in the Park; both the British and Scottish Golf Opens as well as a wide variety of local community events.

In each group there are 24 youths aged 13-18 years old who are from all backgrounds. A founding principle of the PSYV is to offer a unique volunteering opportunity to young people from all sectors of Scotland's communities.

Aiming for a complement of 25% of young people from more challenging backgrounds, PSYV strives to be as inclusive as possible, and in 2015-2016 achieved well over this target with 32% of new recruits having experienced challenges that distract them on their life journey, with some experiencing more complex issues.

A snapshot survey carried out by an independent evaluator, showed that the young people were more confident at school; more respectful at home; it made them think of the challenges

that they might have to face in the future; and applying the life skills learnt through PSYV to be a responsible mature adult.

PSYV Dundee member Jade Heron, said: "Since joining I have become more confident. Before PSYV I could never do public speaking or anything like that. In PSYV you're encouraged / supported to interact with people. Maybe that talent has always been there but PSYV has created the opportunities for that to come out."

Assistant Chief Constable Andy Cowie, National PSYV lead, said: "The volunteering experience offered by the PSYV programme can only be of massive benefit to our young people in whatever their chosen career path may be in later life.

"The level of effort, enthusiasm and hard work demonstrated by these young people is outstanding and their commitment to helping others in their community is remarkable.

"PSYV is undoubtedly a great way for a young person to spend their time and I look forward to the programme continuing to develop and going from strength to strength."

The PSYV programme has established groups in the following areas:

Dundee; Aberdeen; Perth; Fraserburgh; Arbroath; Inverness; Shetland; Orkney; Dundee East; Stornoway; Edinburgh South; Edinburgh North; Alloa; Dunfermline; Levenmouth; Bathgate; East Lothian; Glasgow North; Glasgow East; Paisley; Dumbarton; Cumbernauld; Stranraer; Cumnock and Govanhill.

New PSYV programmes are due to be set up in the following areas in Jan-March 2017:

Moray East; Caithness; Midlothian; Scottish Borders; Falkirk; Kirkintilloch; Campbeltown; Clydebank; Dunoon; Oban; Helensburgh; Hamilton; Shotts; Glasgow South West.