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**YOUTH ORGANISATIONS IN UNIFORM WEST MIDLANDS– ‘YOU WM’**

**SUMMARY**

YOU WM is a new collaboration of the 11 Youth Organisations in Uniform in the urban West Midlands. (*Army Cadets, Boys’ Brigade & Girls’ Association, Combined Cadet Forces, Fire Cadets, Girlguiding, Girls’ Brigade, RAF Air Cadets, Sea Cadets, Scouts, St John Ambulance and the Volunteer Police Cadets ).*

There is considerable evidence that participation by a young person in a uniformed youth organisation can play a major, and sometimes a life-changing, part in the development of the skills and confidence needed to fulfil their potential and to enable them to play an active role as a citizen in our communities. Currently some 20,000 youngsters are involved in the urban WM. Many more could benefit, particularly from the more deprived communities, if they knew the benefits and what was available local to them and if there were sufficient adult volunteers to achieve expansion.

YOU WM will support the eleven organisations by adding value in four ways :

* By Providing a **high quality web portal** providing easily accessible information to young people, their parents and carers on what is available to them locally.
* By Helping to **build capacity** through advice to **attract and develop adult volunteers** so the eleven organisations can grow and help even more youngsters
* **By Supporting collaboration** between the eleven for mutual benefit – including sharing of ideas, facilities, competitions, training and promotional events
* **By advocacy to raise awareness** with our civic, business and community leaders of the **benefit** of membership of uniformed youth organisations to **the youngster and the community**.

The development of YOU WM has been led by the WM Lieutenancy with support from the West Midlands Reserve Forces’ and Cadets’ Association and leaders of the eleven organisations, and is based on the successful YOU London which has been running for some years.

The current status is that a part-time co-ordinator is in place (Gareth Hughes), initial activity is underway with the draft website imminent. A successful (limited numbers) launch event with the Earl of Wessex was held in September 21 and the first area launch in the Black Country in November 21.

Area launches being planned for Coventry/Solihull in March and Birmingham in April 2022

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