

SHAUN

Peer Researcher



Shaun is a peer researcher working with Freedom Foundation in Nottingham. His team of peer researchers are working with the Peer Action Collective (PAC), designing and conducting research about young people's experiences of violence.

During his childhood in South Africa, Shaun experienced serious gang violence. He said:

"I am determined to mitigate the cycle of crime and anti-social behaviour that was perpetuated during my upbringing. Anecdotally, I saw the chain reaction of an abusive childhood and how that began to influence adolescents. My uncles were taught to seek power and to be domineering, so they fulfilled the prophecy in an extreme fashion, committing armed robbery to bask in the superficial riches they were taught to retrieve at whatever cost. That same ideology, adopted by many others, led to the eventual armed robbery and murder of those dearest to me; I am not going to continue in their stead, because I will not take another person's grandmother, cousin, uncle or grandfather away from them."

Shaun plays a leadership role within the group and has gained the respect and trust from his fellow peer researchers. He is often seen as a role model to the others as well as the young people he works with. Shaun meets with his colleagues and wider staff team once a week to plan and discuss methods of engagement for their research. Then, following extensive planning, Shaun and his team attend local colleges and youth groups to meet new young people and discuss their experiences of youth crime and violence.

Shaun is very knowledgeable of the issues that young people face and is able to support these young people through their journey. Shaun believes his ability to maintain composure and be proper amongst chaos, to an extent, is a proactive and valuable characteristic. However, he says

"I tend to repress my emotions and opinions when in a team which is especially a negative when the keystone is teamwork, thankfully though I am amongst a team that are receptive and relatable and it is gradually becoming easier to share my input"

In the future Shaun hopes to join the Police Force.

"I often contemplate the 'what if'; what if I could be the helping hand I never had, to transmute the cardinal ill-teachings such as greed and vanity, to the virtues of compassion and discipline. Hence why I am interested in law enforcement, because I want to help preserve the sanctity of this generation, the last and the next"

Simon, his employer at Freedom Foundation said:

"I always speak of the phrase "never judge a book by its cover", and that phrase has never been more apparent than in regards to Shaun. I still remember the day I interviewed Shaun, he came dressed in a suit and really tried. As we were looking for PR's who had experiences of gang violence and crime, I thought to myself "he does not fit the bill" so to speak. How wrong I was"



After all, a world without smiles and laughter, can never guarantee a brighter future.



Proudly supporting youth social action



Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport



COMMUNITY FUND

