



## Sound of success

### Dylan Beckford, 15 says hard work is music to his ears



I'm a teenager. I have had family issues throughout my life. When I was a small child my mum was a victim of domestic violence. My dad was sent to prison for it. As I grew up not being able to contact my dad really hurt. I never really understood the full details of why he went to prison. I missed him, but I bottled it up. I never spoke to my mum about it.

life for me was easier at home when he was alive.

Soon after his passing I started having problems at school. I got in trouble, arguing with teachers, I became defiant, and eventually I stopped going to school altogether. It just seemed easier not to attend. I would spend my days doing very little. And the more school I missed the less I wanted to go back.

After the shock of losing granddad, my relationship with my mum completely deteriorated. Everything was more difficult to handle than it probably should

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My granddad – mum's dad – died from cancer in 2010. We had a great relationship, but since we lived in Edmonton, north London and he lived in Norwood, south London we rarely saw each other. You never realise what you have until it's gone... I guess my mum would talk to my granddad about her problems, because

have been. We could never speak about anything. We couldn't even say, "how was your day?" without getting into an argument. That was the worst time in my life. I had no one in my family to turn to. I stole from home, I got mixed into the wrong crowds and I'd get arrested a lot. Being bad was a distraction from reality.



Layout by **Simone Pilla**

Everytime I did something wrong the sadness on my mum's face made me instantly regretful. It wasn't long before I realised that the route I was taking was unhealthy. I knew I was destroying my future, but I was also being a bad role model to my younger sister and making my mum's life worse. I started to wish I was still in school and doing my GCSEs but I felt I'd done too much, gone too far to get back to where I was. I stopped going

out. I felt depressed all the time.

I've always written music, ever since I can remember. And it was at this time that I realised I could find answers to my problems through writing. Instead of lying in bed doing nothing I would be putting down lyrics and studying the music I was listening to. I also did a lot of thinking about where I was then and where I would end up. That's why music is now my life. It's what I want to do.

Despite all the time I was out of school, the teachers didn't give up on me. They knew that I was interested in music, and they enrolled me on a media course that gave me confidence in myself.

After that they paid for me to join a course called RAISE, where I get to learn core subjects – the first time since I started truanting. All the other students were in a similar situation to me so I didn't stand out.

My mum and I get on much better. We can speak without any sort of problems. We have left the past behind us. There are no issues. There may be a few differences of opinion but nothing more.

My social life and self-confidence are much healthier and my self-belief has increased. I'm determined to succeed now... finally.

### Duggan Inquest: Our Reaction

By **Chris Cooper**



Since the Duggan verdict there's been a lot of talk from politicians and the police about rebuilding trust with the community. Unfortunately the issues with police and young people do not go away now the verdict has been made, if anything they are intensified.

There are so many unanswered questions surrounding the Duggan Inquiry, which make it impossible for young people to relax. It's impossible

not to be compelled to ask questions of the police. If there is to be a trust rebuilt it needs to be done so on foundations of solid honesty. Is this likely to happen? We're doubtful.

But staying angry isn't constructive. By being calm we can be composed, and when we're composed we can make better decisions. Another riot isn't helpful to anyone, because the whole of society suffers. During the commotion in 2011 innocent people's properties were attacked, families and their children scared, and the point of the protests diluted. The news coverage became less about Mark Duggan and more about looters and burning buildings.

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honesty but nor should we blindly forget and forgive either. We need to work with the police to educate them. They need to be open to working with youth media in order to learn how to build relationships with young people. The riots were not only about Mark Duggan. Youth services had been decimated, youth unemployment was at a record high and we were in the middle of the worst recession in memory. Tottenham, and places with similar levels of poverty, were hit hard.

Youth media organisations like Exposure should be utilised by the police and government. Young people have the answers that are needed to mend and repair the community and the police's relationship with it. Use us.

