Keynote Speaker - Gavin McKenna

Gavin has established himself as a key figure in combating societies ills such as serious violence, knife crime, youth imprisonment and marginalised youth.

Working in Basildon, Essex in 2013 as a family support worker Gavin found County Lines was a major issue and young children being exploited to sell drugs was prominent, Gavin learned that there was lack of awareness and resource at the time and decided to leave and pursue a career with Reach Every Generation, setting up his own company that would have the freedom to address and highlight the vulnerabilities and social conditions that create the hostile environment in which children are drawn into gangs and exploitation.

Gavin lived through Domestic Violence and women’s refuges as a child, living in some of the poorest parts of East London, Newham he fell victim to the reality of many others like him. Witnessing extreme violence from such a young age led Gavin to feel afraid and vulnerable, with a social condition geared towards failure he merely became a product of his environment.

It is with personal and professional experience that Gavin has become the success he is today, establishing himself as a nationally recognised trainer, he has delivered training in every part of the country to over 100,000 professionals. He also runs mentoring and coaching projects with National lottery funding, as well as a provision for young men who are at risk of drug running, exclusion from school and gangs, they will learn a trade in self-contained cubicles and be supported into work or education.

Keynote Presentation: Title TBC

Gavin will be discussing his personal journey from childhood, exploring witnessing extreme domestic violence from his father on his mother, the trauma of living with this as a child in some of the poorest parts of East London and how he fell into a life of crime and violence.

It has become a common theme that we utilise ‘lived experience’ but it is much deeper than that, what comes with lived experiences is understanding. We often use stories to thrill and motivate but this has lasting implications on the individual, despite being with good intention.

During the keynote Gavin will explore exactly what is lived experience, beyond the word itself. Looking at the role of professionals in a child/young person’s life, living with trauma as a professional adult and success against all the odds.

Gavin will explore the social condition and environment he experienced growing up and how this impacted on his choices then and now, with the hope of deepening the understanding of those listening and those who play key roles in vulnerable childrens lives from a child’s perspective.

Finally, the keynote will share some of the successes of Gavin and his dedicated teams work and look at how we can all offer HOPE and OPPORTUNITY to those with few.