

PRESS RELEASE
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For immediate release

Southend singer's dream turns to reality with a national audience

A young Southend singer played the biggest gig of his life tonight (Weds) when he performed at a major showcase gig streamed live on itv.com.

Kyle Simmons, age 21, performed his song Keep Dreaming at *The Big Fix Live!* (7.30pm-9pm, Wednesday 21 July), a unique event which, like ITV Fixers the award-winning campaign behind it, doesn't fit neatly into any handy pigeonhole or charitable cliché. Nevertheless, celebrities who lent their support to the Fix included Stephen Fry, Alan Carr, John Barrowman and Brooke Kinsella.

The live artists appearing in *The Big Fix Live!* were all unsigned, up and coming performers who use dance, drama and music to raise awareness of issues that affect them and their lives. As ITV Fixers they have been given a platform and an audience of primetime ITV viewers for their message.

Produced to celebrate the second anniversary of ITV Fixers, the 90-minute live show was presented by Donal MacIntyre and Natalie Pinkham. A lively mixture of chat, video, and live performances, *The Big Fix Live!* gave the spotlight to some of the toughest issues affecting young Britons today, including knife crime, abuse and homophobia.

Kyle said: "It's been an amazing day, really exciting. I was nervous at the start, but then just wanted to get out there and smash it on stage. I didn't know what to expect with the set and I was like 'oh my God! It looks so expensive!' It's an honour, to be able to perform on that stage."

Kyle's Fix is about installing belief and inspiration into young people, particularly those in care. Kyle himself was in care for 15 years: "Somehow I was lucky and managed to find the inspiration and go for my dreams, but others aren't so lucky, so I want to give them a kind of role model and something to believe in - that anyone, no matter what your background, you can make something of your life."

The support of ITV Fixers has meant a lot, he added: "It's been immense - I wrote the song and I wasn't sure what the response was going to be, especially when I approached itv fixers. And everything's started taking off, my song is actually being called the national anthem for care leavers and for

national care leavers week in October, the slogan "Keep Dreaming" is what it's called."

Presenter Donal MacIntyre, who like most of the professionals working on the Big Fix Live has given his time freely to the event, says:

"Big Fix Live! is a crazy mix of the glossy and the gritty, and a creative collision between showbiz and grassroots action. We really pulled it off on the night and really celebrated the work of ITV Fixers all over the country.

"Entertainment these days is so often about competition and pitching one young person against another. What we have done here is the polar opposite of that - there's no auditioning, no hype. Yet the talent is there in abundance. Everyone working together helped out to make the whole event a big success."

Margo Horsley, chief executive of the Public Service Broadcasting Trust, which created ITV Fixers, says the event is the culmination of two years hard work getting the Fixers campaign established throughout the country.

"It started as a simple idea in 2008 when we offered young people in the ITV Meridian and West regions the opportunity to have their voices heard on the issues they felt strongly about. We now have some 3000 young Fixers and over 400 projects nationwide, and it's still growing. The opportunity to have a prime time news platform on ITV Regional News for their concerns has given these young people such a boost. Young people having a voice in over 12 hours of airtime not only changes perceptions of young people but also open doors; suddenly their opinions are valued and they discover they have the power to change things for the better. With some 150,000 hours of effort already put into their projects Fixers are fast becoming a force for change.

"Our Fixers have won awards and recognition for their work all over the country. It seems to me that ITV Fixers are showing how the big society works; young lives are being transformed because they have the chance to do something meaningful with the added bonus is that it changes things for lots of other people too. One young woman who suffered from mental health problems was too scared to leave the house when she became a Fixer. Now she's about to start a medical degree. In the process she also changed the hearts and minds of local employers about giving people with mental health problems a job. The confidence boost that being an ITV Fixer can bestow is priceless and I hope the 'Fixers effect' will stay with these people for the rest of their lives."

Ends

Notes for Editors

- o The Big Fix Live was streamed live on www.itv.com from 7.30pm to 9pm on Wednesday 21 July and is now available on demand at www.itvfixers.com <<http://www.itvfixers.com>> .
- o ITV Fixers with vinspired.com is a major campaign created by the Public Service Broadcasting Trust, giving young people between the ages of 16-25 the opportunity to tackle any issue that they feel strongly about. What they choose to do is up to them as long as it benefits at least one other person.
- o The Fixers are given all the resources they need to make their chosen project a success, with creative help from media professionals to make their own promotional material, from DVDs to websites. Support is on hand for the duration of the project and a broadcast production team produces features about the Fixes for ITV regional news.
- o In July 2010, ITV Fixers was named “Best TV portrayal of young people” in the Positive Image Awards. More info at www.positiveimagesawards.tv <<http://www.positiveimagesawards.tv/>> .
- o The Public Service Broadcasting Trust is a charity that brings together mainstream broadcasters, public and voluntary sector services, and viewers.
- o v, The National Young Volunteers' Service aims to inspire a new generation of volunteers (aged 16-25) across England. It does this by creating a diverse range of volunteering opportunities to help young people take action to improve lives, communities and the planet.

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