Youth Violence Commission Final Report

Other

Youth Violence Commission Final Report

July 2020

"Young people have potential, no matter who they are, what they do or what they look like. We are bright young people."
Safer Lives Survey Respondent

YOUTH VIOLENCE COMMISSION

WARWICK
THE UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK

The Open University

UK YOUTH

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COVID-19

Implications for the findings and recommendations in this report

Since the production of this report in March 2020, the world has faced the unprecedented threat of COVID-19. In light of this unique situation, we felt it was important to add an addendum to our original report addressing the impact of COVID-19 and implications for our findings and recommendations.

The rapid spread of COVID-19 has exposed the fragility of societies and economic systems around the world, causing severe disruption to the global economy and adversely affecting the lives of billions. The estimated total number of people across the world who have lost their lives to the virus as of 9 June 2020 is 404,396.

In the UK, millions of people are now facing extended periods of heightened insecurity and financial hardship. Despite Government aid packages, there is significant potential for various social ills such as unemployment, homelessness, domestic violence and abuse, depression, anxiety and trauma to intensify in the coming months and years.

It should be remembered, however, that many people in the UK experienced these social ills acutely even before the onset of COVID-19. Tens of thousands of children and young people in the UK already grow up in poverty, live in insecure and unsafe housing, witness or experience domestic violence and abuse on a daily basis, and face serious mistreatment at the hands of many of the adults and institutions in their lives.

With the final report of the cross-party Youth Violence Commission laying bare this reality, the Commission's central findings and recommendations should be considered all the more crucial and pressing.

Designed to ameliorate the worst effects of the pandemic in the immediate future, the scale of the Government's aid package is likely to generate strong pressure for a further period of austerity in public services. The Commission has serious concerns about what this could mean for the quality and level of care and support provided to the most vulnerable young people in society, and in turn, the impact that this is likely to have on levels of serious violence.

The Commission's report explains why poverty and inequality are fundamental drivers of serious violence, both causing and intensifying many of the problems faced by children and young people. With COVID-19 expected to produce a rapid (albeit short-term) increase in unemployment that disproportionately affects young people, tackling rates of child poverty, family insecurity, and the growing chasm of inequality must be a central priority if we are to begin reducing current levels of serious violence.

Also at the forefront of our concerns are the potential implications of COVID-19 for the work of the 18 recently established Violence Reduction Units (VRUs) across England and Wales. As explained in the report, these VRUs are set to play a pivotal role in the reduction of serious violence across the UK. Given the potential for the impact of COVID-19 to create the types of social conditions in which one might reasonably expect to see increased rates of serious violence, it is imperative that support for these units is not only maintained, but increased.

The Commission recognises the potential for the Government to reduce public spending as a result of the impact of COVID-19. As this report shows, however, the proposed long-term funding of the 18 VRUs would be trivial compared to the savings generated by the VRUs were they to achieve even minor reductions in rates of serious violence.

Based on current funding levels, the cost of running the 18 regional VRUs for 10 years is £350 million. The costs associated with serious violence between young people are of an entirely different magnitude: £10 billion over the coming 10 years assuming rates of violence continue at their current levels. The VRUs would need to reduce serious violence between young people by a mere 3% to be cost effective, and serious violence more generally by less than 1%.

Given the potential for the VRUs to bring together a wide range of stakeholders to improve the content and delivery of support to young people at a local level, and to inform crucial policy change at a national level, we are confident that they will generate reductions in rates of violence that go far beyond those needed to justify the resources invested in these units.

Among the Commission's other serious concerns – not all of which can be addressed in this short addendum – is the extent to which schools will be able to effectively support and care for children and young people returning to education after an extended period of confinement in their homes. The full extent of the lockdown's effects on young people's mental health, educational attainment, attitudes and behaviour will not be known for many years, but it is highly likely that schools will face severe challenges in the short to medium term.

If schools are unable to adapt and cope with these challenges, then there are serious risks of an additional spike in school exclusions, and a further widening of the attainment gap. This report highlights the immense damage that school exclusions inflict on young people's life prospects, including the close connection that exclusions have to increased rates of serious violence between children and young people. Swift measures must be put in place to ensure that schools (including

Alternative Provision and Pupil Referral Units) are adequately resourced and prepared for the challenges ahead.

Another key issue concerns the glaring lack of trust between the police and those children and young people most at-risk of serious violence. More than ever, it is imperative to avoid any short-sighted criminal justice-based 'crackdowns' that are likely to prove counter-productive in the long-term. Ramping up stop and search practices and removing the requirement for these to be intelligence-led, for example, would severely undermine evidence-based prevention strategies that centre on building trust and confidence in the police.

Driven in part by new initiatives such as the £200 million Youth Endowment Fund and the regional Violence Reduction Units, third sector organisations working to support young people are only now beginning to recover from over a decade of severe cuts to public spending. With the most vulnerable children and young people benefitting from the work of these organisations, it is vital that investment in youth services continues to increase in the coming years, especially given the damage that has been done by the COVID-19 crisis to many youth organisations' finances.

It is impossible to ignore the disproportionate effect that the virus has had on people from black Asian and minority ethnic backgrounds and those living in socioeconomically deprived communities, a reality that mirrors the wider inequalities and injustices referred to in this report. Tackling these inequalities and injustices, therefore, is all the more important when seen in the context of the impact of COVID-19.

While it is important not to downplay the enormous human tragedy that the COVID-19 crisis constitutes, it is possible to take hope from some of the effects it may have on society moving forwards. The lives of our most vulnerable young people are often in the hands of people who have been deemed throughout the crisis to be 'keyworkers'. The Commission hopes that the esteem afforded to keyworkers and those in caring professions throughout this pandemic will extend long into the coming years and decades, accompanied by improvements in pay and conditions which will underpin an enhanced quality of care for all children and young people in society.

Whatever the 'new normal' looks like, it must include a relentless drive to reduce poverty and inequality and ensure that all children and young people are given the best possible opportunities to cultivate and pursue their hopes and dreams for a better future. To reiterate, the costs associated with the recommendations in the Commission's final report are dwarfed by the cost-savings associated with even minor reductions in serious violence.

The Commission makes clear in its report that progressive steps have made in recent years to understand and respond to serious violence, and we remain confident that reductions in violence are possible in the coming months and years. For this to happen, however, we must not allow the impact of COVID-19 to take us back to square one.

Youth Violence Commission, 9 June 2020

Foreword from Vicky Foxcroft, Chair of the Youth Violence Commission and Member of Parliament for Lewisham Deptford

Serious violence between young people has devastating and far-reaching consequences, not only for individuals and their families, but also for communities and society as a whole. It is clear that urgent action must be taken across a range of policy areas to protect young people up and down the country and across all sections of society.

I established the Youth Violence Commission in 2016 after seeing several young people from my Lewisham Deptford constituency lose their lives to youth violence in my first few months as an MP. By bringing together Members of Parliament from across the political spectrum, academics and sector experts (see Appendix A), we have been able to identify the root causes and propose how policymakers should move forward. This report marks the culmination of more than three years of extensive evidence gathering and research and I am very proud of what we have achieved.

Throughout this process, the overwhelming verdict from victims, youth workers, community leaders and other stakeholders has been that short-term solutions are not sufficient to effect long-term change. Following the publication of our interim report in 2018, we have welcomed the establishment of regional Violence Reduction Units (VRUs) and the adoption of a public health approach by regional and national government, both of which were recommended by the Commission. However, young people continue to lose their lives and the real work is yet to be done.

To that end, this final report sets out a list of recommendations for ensuring that VRUs are successful. First and foremost, they need long-term funding commitments and to adopt expansive and ambitious roles at both the local and national levels, which will require them to collaborate effectively as a network.

The report also makes the social case for change – which is clearly compelling – and introduces a similarly powerful economic rationale for immediate action. The combined economic and social cost of youth violence has been huge over the last decade (totalling at least £780 million per year) and our hope is that our analysis will act as a powerful call to action.

As chair of the Commission since its inception, I would like to take this opportunity to thank every single person who has been involved in this process and supported our work over the last three years. The Commission has always sought to involve the widest possible range of stakeholders, from young people and those engaged in frontline practice and grassroots charities, to academics, researchers and senior professionals and policymakers. Without their insight, constructive criticism, passion and support, we would never have been able to achieve such a thorough piece of research.

In particular, I would like to highlight the young people who have contributed to this piece of work and provided their feedback. From the very start, we recognised the importance of including them in our conversations. Over 2,200 young people completed our 'Safer Lives Survey' and shared their experiences of how youth violence impacts their day-to-day lives. We also met a huge number of remarkable young people at our regional visits and evidence sessions. I know that it took you a great deal of courage to open up about your fears and I am immensely grateful that you did.

It is no coincidence that the UK Youth Parliament chose knife crime as one of the topics for its annual Commons debate in both 2018 and 2019, as well as recently launching a campaign on the issue. These decisions were based on ballots of hundreds of thousands of young people, demonstrating the strength of their desire to see change.

I want to end this foreword to our final report by stressing that youth violence must not be allowed to become a party-political issue. It is vital that policymakers from across the political spectrum continue to work together to ensure that our young people experience the hope and optimism they deserve. As chair of the Commission I will continue to push for this in Parliament, alongside my colleagues on the APPG on Knife Crime and the many individual MPs who have brought their own experiences to the Commons.

Executive Summary

Executive Summary

Serious violence has a devastating impact on the lives of countless young people across the UK, leaving deep and enduring scars on the families, friends and communities affected. While the magnitude of the effort needed to protect young people from serious violence cannot be underestimated, we believe there is cause for cautious optimism.

In recent years, among the vast majority of the individuals and groups with whom the Youth Violence Commission (YVC) has had the privilege of engaging, there has been nothing short of a sea-change in the way serious violence is being understood and talked about.

Many readers will be all too familiar with the narrative that has increasingly dominated discussions among those working to reduce serious violence: the 'public health approach'. For the YVC, these are not empty words. This shift in understanding opens up huge potential for fundamental change in the way we understand and respond to serious violence.

The evidence provided to the Commission over the last three years has often forced us to switch our focus, from the violence perpetrated by young people, to the shocking levels of serious violence and mistreatment inflicted on these same young people throughout their lives.

Far too many young people have seen their own friends stabbed to death. Others have had to endure the crushing experience of seeing their own mothers being brutally and repeatedly attacked in their homes or have been the victims of domestic violence themselves. In addition, many grow up surrounded by stark levels of deprivation, insecurity and adverse early-life experiences that have left them suffering from severe trauma, which too often goes overlooked and unaddressed.

Many young people are also subject to failure at the level of policy and institutions, for example, attending schools that off-roll and exclude pupils at increasingly high rates, being faced with employment markets that offer little other than insecure, fixed-term and badly paid jobs, and living in communities in which flawed drug policies facilitate thriving illicit drug markets, leaving young people vulnerable to coercion and exploitation.

Based on a compelling social and economic case for action, the Commission's main findings and recommendations are designed to help us to better understand and reduce the shocking levels of serious violence that saturate many young people's lives, while also seeking to prevent the traumatic experiences that drain away too many young people's opportunities, hopes and dreams for a better future.

The Commission fully supports the recent establishment of regional Violence Reduction Units. Several of our key recommendations are designed to ensure that these units are given the best possible opportunity to succeed in driving forward genuine public health approaches to reducing serious violence.

1.1. The causes of serious violence between young people

While the precise causes of any two incidents of serious violence are never exactly the same, the evidence provided to the Commission highlighted a number of particularly significant factors that increased the likelihood of young people committing or being subjected to serious violence.

Beginning with the **early years** of a young person's life, the Commission found that those who committed serious acts of violence had often been subjected to or witnessed domestic violence as children. For reasons including drug and alcohol addiction, or being forced to work multiple low-paying jobs that involved long and unpredictable hours, many of the same young people had parents who struggled to provide them with the levels of care and attention that were desperately needed. These situations were frequently exacerbated by the influence of older siblings who were already involved in crime including theft, drug distribution and violence.

A remarkably high proportion of young people committing serious acts of violence had been excluded from mainstream **education** – a process that they invariably told the Commission further damaged their self-esteem and identity, while simultaneously closing off avenues for them to pursue healthy and prosocial lives. Schools should act as centres of care and inclusion, but to do so, they must be provided with sufficient funding to support struggling pupils and they need inspection frameworks and league tables that strongly discourage pupil off-rolling and exclusion.

The Commission found serious problems with the provision of **youth services**. An extraordinary number of third sector organisations are being forced to compete for small pots of short-term project funding, leading to the closure of many organisations and a toxic climate of inadequate and ineffective services. The sector requires wholesale change that will facilitate the development of long-term strategies, sufficient and stable funding arrangements, and high-quality services on which young people can rely.

Cuts to **police** officer numbers have led to a sharp decline in neighbourhood policing, eroding trust between communities and the police and severely undermining the police's capacity to gather intelligence and develop effective, long-term solutions to violence. While the Commission recognises the importance of intelligence-led stop and search, it is also concerned by unduly high rates of stop and search imposed disproportionately on young people from black and minority ethnic backgrounds. This has served to undermine many young people's trust and confidence in the police, further eroding the police's ability to effectively tackle violent crime.

The prospects of decent and well-paid **employment** are bleak for many young people. The increasing prevalence of low-paid, insecure and fixed-term employment has served to demoralise and alienate a large section of the population, leaving young people vulnerable to exploitation by adults through the illicit drug markets.

Many young people are growing up in unsafe and squalid **housing**. Those living in large cities such as London are often acutely aware of the fact that they are unlikely to be in a position to afford housing in the area in which they grew up, and as a consequence will either be forced to remain living with their parents or move away from their families and friends when they enter early adulthood. In these circumstances, young people from the most socioeconomically deprived communities are becoming further demoralised and alienated from society, generating feelings of shame, anger and resentment that lie at the core of many instances of violence.

Increasing rates of **child poverty** and growing levels of **inequality** are fundamental drivers of serious violence, both causing and intensifying many of the problems referred to above and driving a wedge between the wealthiest, who enjoy high levels of security and material luxury, and the poorest, whose lives are characterised by frustration, alienation and insecurity.

1.2. The economic and social cost of serious violence between young people

Public resources are scarce relative to the demands on them and so it is imperative that appropriate decisions are made concerning their optimum allocation. Our analysis has revealed that **in 2018/19, serious youth violence across England and Wales generated a total economic and social cost of £1.3 billion**. This constituted a rise of over 50% on the total economic and social cost of serious youth violence across England and Wales since 2014/15. This significant increase in costs reflects the recent increase in levels of serious violence between young people.

Over the **past eleven years**, **serious youth violence across England and Wales had a total economic and social cost of £11 billion.** These are staggering numbers, which reflect the devastating impact of serious youth violence. More specifically, our calculations include the following costs: i) police costs; ii) wider criminal justice system costs; iii) health service costs; iv) costs associated with physical and emotional harm; v) victim services costs; and vi) costs from lost economic output.

There are two fundamental messages that emerge from our analysis:

Firstly, **in each of the past eleven years, the economic and social costs of serious youth violence across England and Wales have been huge**. In each year, the total cost has been at least £780 million, and in some years, it has been far higher. This finding – particularly given these economic costs sit on top of devastating personal and social costs to so many individuals and communities – should act as a powerful call for action and investment of new and additional resource to help reduce levels of serious youth violence.

Secondly, the **costs have increased significantly in each and every region of England and Wales over the past four years,** with some regions experiencing an increase in excess of 50%.

In short, the findings from our cost analysis compound the call for action and investment to help reduce levels of violence. Investment in appropriate policies – as discussed elsewhere in this report – would serve to reduce levels of serious violence, which would ultimately lead to financial savings, freeing up resources in the long term.

1.3. The Public Health Approach and Violence Reduction Units

The publication of the Commission's interim report in July 2018 called for the adoption of a public health approach to violence reduction, overseen and coordinated by regional Violence Reduction Units (VRUs). Following the report, both the (then) Home Secretary, Sajid Javid, and the Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan, endorsed such an approach, leading to the establishment of regional VRUs.

The Commission welcomes the Government's commitment of further support and resources to these VRUs. This is a progressive step in securing reductions in violence, and mirrors the positive work carried out by the Scottish Violence Reduction Unit (SVRU) that was established back in 2005. Pivotal to the success of the SVRU was its long-term vision of tackling the root causes of serious violence through the adoption of a public health approach to violence reduction.

To be clear, the Commission's perspective on the public health approach is that it should involve three main stages:

1) **Understanding the nature of the problem** by gathering and analysing sufficient data;

2) **Doing what works** by developing and implementing policies and interventions informed by the best available theory, data (interpreted broadly to include, for example, the experiences and views of young people and frontline practitioners), and analysis;

3) **Learning from experience** by robustly evaluating and subsequently improving these policies and interventions.

While the cyclical nature of democratic elections exerts pressure on those in positions of power and responsibility to chase short-term results, based on the evidence provided to the Commission, a strong case exists for the adoption of long-term strategies that entail substantial investment in upstream prevention.

As the positive outcomes associated with these strategies are unlikely to accrue during the tenures of those pursuing farsighted violence-reduction strategies, it is particularly important that credit is given to those principled enough to prioritise the long-term safety of young people over the pursuit of short-term political gain.

The YVC's vision is that the regional VRUs should be empowered to act as the vehicles that coordinate public health approaches at a local level, while also – as a network – promoting evidence-informed policies nationally. Adopting these ambitious and expansive roles will give the VRUs the best possible opportunity to secure long-term, coherent, evidence-informed approaches to reducing serious violence.

Based on recent developments, however, the Commission is concerned that at least two key changes are needed if the recently established regional VRUs are to fulfil their potential:

1) **Long-term funding commitments**
   - regional VRUs have been given insufficient, short-term funding. Furthermore, the Commission has been alerted to the fact that too many of the regional VRUs have already been pressured to spend money in haste, resulting in short-sighted attempts to achieve immediate (yet inevitably elusive) results. This is antithetical to an evidence-informed, public health approach to reducing violence and sets the VRUs up to fail.

2) **A more ambitious and expansive role**
   early work by the regional VRUs indicates that many may be adopting a relatively narrow vision of their potential role, acting primarily as commissioning bodies for local level violence-reduction initiatives. This is one important strand of a VRU's local level work. It must be accompanied, however, by the regional VRUs coming together as a combined network in order to identify and promote the national level policy changes that are equally crucial in securing lasting reductions in serious violence.

1.4. Key Recommendations

The Commission welcomes the Government's decision to support and invest in regional Violence Reduction Units (VRUs). Our utmost concern is that the recently established VRUs are given the best possible opportunity to succeed in bringing together and implementing genuine, holistic, public health approaches to reducing serious violence. To this end, the Commission's central recommendations are as follows:

Violence Reduction Units

1) **VRUs must receive enhanced funding immediately, accompanied by funding projections for a minimum of ten years.** This will enable each unit to plan how best to deploy its resources strategically, while also ensuring those working within these units have the confidence to promote long-term, evidence-informed policies and initiatives.

2) **The VRUs should have a threefold purpose**:

   i) **to lead on the development, implementation and commissioning of local level initiatives to reduce violence,** helping to rationalise the many disparate funding streams available, while bringing together and coordinating relevant stakeholders;

   ii) **to feed the learning generated by each VRU's local level work into relevant evidence bases,** such as the 'what works' initiative currently being led by the Youth Endowment Fund;

   iii) as a combined VRU network, **to identify and promote the national level policy changes that are beyond each regional VRU's scope and control, but are nevertheless crucial to securing reductions in serious violence**.

3) In their capacity as local level coordinators of holistic public health approaches to reducing serious violence, **VRUs should actively seek to engage all relevant stakeholders to feed into their short-term priorities and long-term planning**. In addition, VRUs should provide regular feedback mechanisms to these same stakeholders to explain how their input has informed the VRU's work and priorities.

We expand on the rationale underpinning these recommendations later in the report.

These VRU-related recommendations aside, we are delighted to note the support structures put in place by the Home Office to enable the regional network of VRUs to meet and communicate regularly, both online through the initiative 'Basecamp', and through face-to-face events. Such communication is vital for ensuring that the VRUs – as a network – are able to come together to discuss and identify the national level policy changes that the VRU network should champion.

Furthermore, the processes put in place to evaluate the work of the VRUs appear to be entirely appropriate and constructive, providing both continuous feedback as the VRUs evolve, as well as an important degree of oversight and scrutiny of their work.

The YVC would highlight the importance of these evaluations adopting a long-term lens on what 'success' ought to look like from the perspective of the VRUs. It is vital that the evaluations consider, for example, any changes facilitated by the VRUs in relation to local level partnership working that may prove pivotal in the long-term but may not generate immediate reductions in levels of serious violence.

A full list of the YVC's recommendations across a broad range of policy areas can be found in Part 3.

As communication between the regional VRUs and Central Government should be a two-way dialogue, based on the evidence gathered by the Commission, we suggest that in first instance the collective network of VRUs should support and promote the following recommendations for reducing serious violence between young people, which will require action at a national policy level:

4) **The planned increase in police recruitment should be used to underpin significant reinvestment in local neighbourhood policing.** The YVC recognises the fundamental importance of effective community policing in the development of long-term, problem-solving approaches to reducing serious youth violence. It is the basis on which policing capacity, and public trust and confidence in policing, is built and sustained.

5) **Central Government should provide significant and immediate increased funding to enable schools to put in place the enhanced support necessary to avoid off-rolling and pursue an *aspiration* of zero exclusions.** The Commission accepts that exclusion will be the only feasible option in some cases. Given the numerous causal links between excluding and off-rolling pupils and the likelihood of these same young people being involved in serious violence, however, it is imperative that schools are provided with sufficient investment to help keep pupils in mainstream education.

6) High quality youth services can transform the lives of young people. **Central Government should provide Local Authorities with statutory funding and a clear statutory duty for providing youth services, the levels of which should be determined by the number of young people living in each Local Authority area**.

Civil society organisations should be central to designing, delivering and leading youth services, working in partnership with Local Authorities and other key stakeholders.

7) **A collaboration of funders – including, but not limited to, Central, Regional and Local Governments, Arm's Length Bodies, Trusts, Foundations and Corporates - should invest in programmes that help to prepare parents for parenthood and provide support in the early years of parenting**.

8) **Central Government should commit to providing enhanced funding to support the full range of the Commission's recommendations that cross multiple policy areas.** While the social case for such investment is compelling, it is also economically prudent. Current levels of serious violence cost the taxpayer hundreds of millions of pounds every year – even minor reductions in these levels of violence will generate significant cost savings.

We expand on the rationale underpinning these key recommendations and provide a full list of policy recommendations in the following sections.

We hope that the YVC's findings and recommendations will provide welcome support to each of the regional VRUs in their task of driving forward genuine public health approaches to reducing serious violence. While the size of this task should not be underestimated, it is one we are confident can be met, provided that the political will exists to drive forward the Commission's recommendations.

1.4. About the Youth Violence Commission

The Youth Violence Commission is chaired by MP Vicky Foxcroft and supported by a cross-party group of MPs. Its final report is the result of a joint collaboration between academics from the University of Warwick and The Open University. The Secretariat for the Commission is UK Youth. Many other groups and individuals have supported the Commission, details of whom can be found in Appendix A and B to the full report.

Introduction

Introduction

The cross-party Youth Violence Commission (YVC) was established in March 2017 following a debate the previous year on serious youth violence in the House of Commons. MPs Chuka Umunna, Vicky Foxcroft (now Chair of the Commission) and David Lammy led the debate, highlighting the devastating impact that serious violence has on many of our communities and calling for immediate action to be taken to reduce such violence.

Three years on, levels of serious violence between young people remain stubbornly high. Knife and offensive weapon offences involving those aged 10-17 and resulting in a caution or conviction have risen year on year, from 2,639 in 2013 to 4,562 in 2019.[1] Following a similar trend, the number of finished consultant episodes for assault by a sharp object involving those under the age of 18 rose from 489 in 2012/13 to 849 in 2018/19.[2] As most sources of data on serious violence distinguish between those aged below or over 18, these statistics would be significantly higher if young people aged 18-24 were included. And, of course, official statistics collected by the police or the National Health Service always represent underestimates, because they exclude the many incidents of serious violence that do not come to their attention.

While recent trends in levels of serious violence between young people are concerning, there have been some progressive policy developments since the YVC began its work in March 2017. The publication of the YVC's Interim Report in July 2018 – which called for the adoption of a public health approach to violence reduction coordinated by Violence Reduction Units (VRUs) – was followed by the establishment of a London VRU, and shortly thereafter another 17 regional VRUs across the UK.

This is a progressive step in securing reductions in violence, and mirrors the positive work carried out by the Scottish Violence Reduction Unit (SVRU) that was established back in 2005. Pivotal to the success of the SVRU was its long-term vision of tackling the root causes of serious violence through the adoption of a public health approach to violence reduction.

For readers unfamiliar with the term 'public health approach', the YVC's view is that public health approaches to reducing serious violence should involve three main stages: 1) gathering and analysing sufficient data to understand the nature of the problem; 2) doing what works by developing and implementing policies and interventions based on the best available theory, data, and analysis; and 3) learning from experience by robustly evaluating and subsequently improving these policies and interventions.

Similarly, for readers unfamiliar with VRUs, these involve newly established teams of people whose responsibility it is to increase collaboration between a range of agencies at a local level, and drive forward evidence-informed policies and practices at a local and national level to reduce serious violence. All of the recently established VRUs have openly expressed their support for the adoption of long-term, sustainable, public health approaches to violence reduction, and some excellent work is already being carried out by many of these units at a local level.

The long-term success of the VRUs, however, is far from certain. The YVC outlines its recommendations for ensuring the VRUs are given the best possible chance of success in Part 3 of this report.

At the level of national policy, progress has been slower and more disappointing since the publication of the YVC's interim report. Police forces continue to struggle under the strain of severely stretched

1 Ministry of Justice (2020) *Knife and Offensive Weapon Sentencing Statistics: July to September 2019.*
2 House of Commons Library (2019) *Knife crime in England and Wales*, Briefing Paper Number SN4304.

resources, making it harder for the police to secure the trust and confidence of the communities they are supposed to serve and protect. In education, far too many children and young people are missing out on quality schooling as rates of off-rolling and exclusion continue to rise. Youth services, also decimated by recent cuts, require a far greater injection of investment to begin what will undoubtedly be a long and difficult process of recovery.

The YVC explored these issues and many more through a series of expert evidence sessions held on the Parliamentary estate, alongside a national survey of young people and a review of the most relevant and recent research in these areas.

In short, while the magnitude of the effort needed to protect young people from serious violence cannot be underestimated, we believe there is cause for cautious optimism provided that the political will exists to drive forward the Commission's recommendations in its final report.

Roadmap to the Youth Violence Commission's Final Report

This report is divided into four main parts as follows:

Part 1, *The Causes of Serious Youth Violence*, presents the YVC's analysis of new data generated by a series of six expert evidence sessions and a national survey of over 2,000 young people, supported by some of the most recent and relevant research on serious violence.

Part 2, *The Economic and Social Cost of Serious Youth Violence,* examines the economic and social cost of serious violence between young people, taking into account a wide variety of costs including those to the health service, policing and criminal justice, victims' services and many others.

Part 3, *Looking Ahead and Recommendations,* includes the YVC's full list of policy recommendations, informed by the findings presented in the first two parts of the report.

Finally, Part 4, *Expert Reflections on the Final Report*, contains a series of short contributions from a diverse range of leading thinkers and senior professionals. These pieces include reflections on the YVC's work, but more importantly, provide a space in which these experts share their perspectives on the nature of serious violence between young people and what can and should be done about it.

In the Appendices to the report, readers will find details of the people and groups directly involved in the YVC, more information about our expert evidence sessions and further analysis of our survey data.

Part 1

The Causes of Serious Youth Violence

Part 1: The Causes of Serious Youth Violence

This section of the report provides a summary and analysis of the main issues identified through a combination of expert witness statements taken by the cross-party Youth Violence Commission (see Appendix B), a national survey of young people (see Appendix C), and consideration of some of the most relevant and recent research on the subject.
It is important to note that each sub-section contains evidence from multiple sources – a reflection of the overlapping nature of the topics being covered. Overall, the research and evidence we collected made clear that serious violence between young people is an issue that cannot be adequately understood through a narrow criminal justice lens of suppression and enforcement.

Not only would such a lens provide a distorted view of the problem, but crucially, it would also prevent the identification and development of effective solutions – solutions that are urgently needed to improve the safety, happiness and well-being of many children and young people whose lives are blighted by serious violence.

Early Years Support and Early Intervention

"We are inspired by adults, so they should set a good example" ***Safer Lives Survey Respondent***

The early years of a child's life can have significant, long-lasting effects on their life-course trajectory, affecting everything from physical and mental health to skills development.[3] Many of the witnesses to the Commission emphasised the vital importance of these years, and advocated strongly for early intervention.

Witnesses spoke at length about the links between early childhood experiences and the likelihood of being involved in serious violence later in life. They also stressed, however, that these same experiences were linked to a much wider range of outcomes and behaviours that were distinct albeit related to serious violence in later years:

> In the long term, we want to think about the early experiences of these children. By the time a child starts school, they're set on a trajectory, which for the great majority of children remains fairly constant right through adolescence…a low trajectory has a range of negative outcomes: poor educational attainment, lack of opportunities for employment, involvement in criminality, poor mental health, poor physical health often as well. And all of these things tend to cluster together amongst the same groups of disadvantaged children. One can raise children out of that trajectory, and in our research three factors which are open to policy change can improve the trajectories of children in disadvantaged circumstances…one is a good home learning environment for children. Parents who know what to do with their children can affect their child's future. We need good early education and care services for children, which provide good learning opportunities for children in places like nursery schools, children's centres and so on.
> *(Early Years, Education and Employability)*

As this witness highlights, there is strong evidence for the link between a good home learning environment in the early years and higher levels of school readiness.[4] Research has shown that parental involvement in early learning has a greater impact on children's wellbeing and achievement than any other factor, leading a 2011 Department for Education report to conclude that 'supporting parents to help them provide a positive home learning environment is a vital part of improving outcomes for children, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds.'[5]

There is also research evidence corroborating the witness's emphasis on the importance of quality early education. A large-scale study in England found that the effects of high-quality pre-school provision can last into adolescence, in terms of both higher academic attainment and better social and behavioural outcomes.[6] Relationships with staff in their first few years of school can also play an important role in children's future success.

A study undertaken in the United States found that teacher-child relationships in the early years 'are unique predictors of academic and behavioural outcomes in early elementary school, with mediated effects through eighth grade'.[7] If we can provide high

3 Campbell, F. (2014) 'Early childhood investments substantially boost adult health' *Science*, 343(6178), pp. 1478-1485; Heckman, J. J. (2006) 'Skill formation and the economics of investing in disadvantaged children' *Science*, 312(5782), pp. 1900-1902
4 Ofsted (2014) 'Are you ready? Good practice in school readiness', research report; Clarke, B. & Younas, F. (2017) 'Helping Parents to Parent', Social Mobility Commission research report
5 Hunt, S., Virgo, S., Klett-Davies, M., Page, A. & Apps, J. (2011) 'Provider influence on the early home learning environment', Department for Education research report, pp. 8
6 Taggart, B., Sylva, K., Melhuish, E., Sammons, P. & Siraj, I. (2015) 'How pre-school influences children and young people's attainment and developmental outcomes over time', Department for Education research brief
7 Hamre, B. & Pianta, R. (2001) 'Early Teacher-Child Relationships and the Trajectory of Children's School Outcomes through Eighth Grade', *Child Development*, Volume 72, Number 2, pp. 634

quality care and pedagogy to children in their early years, it can help to set them on a positive path for their entire life.

Another witness was keen to highlight the importance of communication and effective transition between pre-school and primary school services:

> The early years are so important as you've already pinpointed. The people involved in youth violence in ten years' time are being put on a trajectory for that now in the pre-school period. And I'd like to see much more integration of primary school education with pre-school services.
> *(Early Years, Education and Employability)*

Midwives, health visitors, children's centre workers and social workers can have extensive insight into a young person's family situation, but are not always able to communicate their understanding with one another or with the child's school, undermining the ability of each of these agencies to meet the child's needs.

In the worst cases, parents only access very limited provision prior to their child starting school, even if they have a high need for support. The Social Mobility Commission has stated that 'support for parents is weak and provision patchy, even though most want better advice…poorer children, who stand to gain most from high-quality childcare, are least likely to receive it.'[8]

Parents from more disadvantaged backgrounds can also lack information about the funding available to them: research has found that working-class parents of very young children are less informed about government funding for childcare than middle-class parents. In a 2016 survey, almost one in four working class parents said that they had no knowledge that there was any support available at all.[9] Inequality in knowledge and in provision can also start pre-birth: a survey by The Royal College of Midwives found that 75% of expectant mothers in low-income households receive no antenatal education.[10]

Consistent with a substantial body of research, the Commission's witnesses made clear that childhood poverty is associated with a wide range of detrimental effects on a child's life course. The Joseph Rowntree

Foundation has presented evidence from a range of sources demonstrating that income poverty can contribute to significant delays in cognitive and language development.[11] By 24 months there can be a sixth month gap between socio-economic groups in processing skills critical to language development.[12]

These inequalities create class differences in school readiness: as the Social Mobility Commission put it, 'there are stark social class differences in how ready children are for school: in the last decade [2006-2016] 500,000 poorer children were not school-ready by age five.'[13] In 2015, 51% of children eligible for free school meals achieved a good level of development at age five compared to 69% of other children.[14] Given the lasting effects of these early disparities, the case for effective early intervention to support the poorest families and to reduce inequity is strong, as stressed by our witnesses.

The early years are not only formative for children's cognitive development, but can also have a fundamental influence on social and emotional development. Studies have shown that when children are subjected to hostile, harsh or rejecting parenting styles, this can increase their propensity to become involved in serious violence in later life.[15] Similarly, being subjected to domestic violence – either as a primary victim or through witnessing violence against other family members – can have long-lasting effects on young people's predisposition to engage

8 Social Mobility Commission (2016) 'State of the Nation' research report. Available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/state-of-the-nation-2016
9 Social Mobility Commission (2016) 'The Early Years: Building the Right Foundations' research report. Available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/social-mobility-factsheets
10 Winterman, D. (2011) Antenatal classes: What do you learn from them? https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/magazine-15736415
11 Cooper, K. & Stewart, K. (2013) 'Does money affect children's outcomes? A systematic review', research report for Joseph Rowntree Foundation
12 Fernald, A., Marchman, V. A., & Weisleder, A. (2013) 'Socio-economic differences in language processing skill and vocabulary are evident at 18 months' *Developmental Science, 16*, pp. 234–248
13 Social Mobility Commission (2016) 'State of the Nation' research report. Available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/state-of-the-nation-2016
14 Social Mobility Commission (2016) 'The Early Years: Building the Right Foundations' research report. Available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/social-mobility-factsheets
15 Sitnick, S. L. ; Shaw, D. S. ; Weaver, C. M. ; Shelleby, E. C. ; Choe, D. E. ; Reuben, J. D. ; Gilliam, M. ; Winslow, E. B. ; Taraban, L. (2017) Early childhood predictors of severe youth violence in low-income male adolescents. *Child Development.* 88(1): 27-40.

in further acts of violence,[16] as many of our witnesses highlighted:

> There's secondary trauma, which is trauma that doesn't happen to you personally but you are in some way witness to it. And that would apply perhaps most strongly to the children and young people who are growing up in homes where domestic violence is perpetrated, and they pick up the secondary trauma, primarily seeing their mums battered senseless. And there is an absolute connection between that trauma experienced and witnessed in childhood and the violence perpetrated in that person's future.
> *(Public Health and Mental Health)*

> The first priority I would say is early intervention… things like being physically abused, sexually abused, emotionally abused or neglected, living in a house with an alcohol or drug problem, or someone with severe mental health problems. People who've grown up with four of more of those compared to none of those are 10 times more likely by the age of 18 to be involved in violence every year…another way of putting that would be if you could stop adverse childhood experiences in early life, you cut violence across a life course by about two thirds, so early life intervention is critical.
> *(Public Health and Mental Health)*

As the latter of these witnesses suggests, adverse childhood experiences are often interlinked, and have cumulative effects. For instance, one study of over 135,000 young people in Minnesota found that 'for each additional type of adverse event reported by youth, the risk of violence perpetration increased 35% to 144%'.[17] The kinds of high quality early childcare, support for parents, pre-school provision and early education mentioned by the previous witnesses could have life-saving effects, if they prevent the adverse childhood experiences which significantly increase the likelihood of violence perpetration.

Of course, early intervention doesn't always mean intervening early in the life-course, but can also mean providing the right support early on in the development of a problem – putting effective mentoring in place for a young person when they first seem at risk of harming themselves or others, for instance. One of our witnesses focused on this form of early intervention:

> I'm a real believer that there are opportunities to take this health model and transfer it across the UK. But not just within A&E departments and hospitals, where you could argue that by the time a young person has got stabbed it's questionably too late. Goodness knows how many times they've gone to other local A&Es, but if we're able to start there - within primary care and with the GPs, with the schools, with the communities, with the youth workers in those communities - then we can do something really amazing, really powerful and really hopeful.
> *(Public Health and Mental Health)*

As this statement makes clear, effective early intervention requires well-resourced communities and public services, to facilitate strong relationships between children, families and professionals. Early intervention is only possible if professionals have the time and capacity to develop an in-depth understanding of young people's lives, so that they can identify behaviour changes or other warning signs of risk, and intervene in a sensitive, individualised manner.

Education

> **"There needs to be more access to activities and opportunities after school, working with relatable staff and teachers who understand us"**
> ***Safer Lives Survey Respondent***

The evidence generated by the Youth Violence Commission supports an established body of research that highlights the links between young people disengaging or being excluded from school, and an increase in the likelihood of being victims or perpetrators of serious violence.[18] The reasons for these links are numerous.

Firstly, numerous witnesses provided evidence highlighting that our education system was failing many children and young people. Two of the most prominent sources of concern were: i) declining school budgets, which among other things prevented teachers and other adult professionals from forming high-quality, nurturing relationships with their pupils; and ii) rising rates of off-rolling[19], fixed-term and permanent exclusions.

A number of witnesses told us that funding cuts to education had led to reductions in pastoral support

16 Salzinger, S., Rosario, M. and Feldman, R.S. (2007) Physical child abuse and adolescent violent delinquency: The mediating and moderating roles of personal relationships. *Child Maltreatment*, 12(3), pp.208-219; Weaver, C.M., Borkowski, J.G. and Whitman, T.L., 2008. Violence breeds violence: Childhood exposure and adolescent conduct problems. *Journal of community psychology*, 36 (1) pp.96-112.

17 Duke, N., Pettingell, S., McMorris, B. & Borowsky, I. (2010) 'Adolescent Violence Perpetration: Associations With Multiple Types of Adverse Childhood Experiences', *Pediatrics*, 125, pp. 778

18 Irwin-Rogers, K. and Harding, S. (2018) Challenging the orthodoxy on pupil gang involvement: When two social fields collide. *British Educational Research Journal*. 44(3): 463-479; Joliffe, D., Farrington, D. P., Loeber, R., Pardini, D. (2016) Protective factors for violence: Results from the Pittsburgh Youth Study. *Journal of Criminal Justice*. 45: 32-40; Resnick, M. D., Bearman, P. S., Blum R. W., Bauman, K. E., Harris K. M., Jones, J., Tabor, J., Beuhring, T., Sieving R. E., Shew, M., Ireland, M., Bearinger, L. H., ad Udry, J. R. (1997) Protecting adolescents from harm. Findings from the National Longitudinal Study on Adolescent Health. *The Journal of the American Medical Association*. 278(10): 823-832.

19 Off-rolling is a term used to refer to the practice of removing a pupil from a school's roll without using formal exclusionary processes, when such a removal is primarily in the best interest of the school rather than the pupil.

services, which in turn impacted on teachers' ability to perform their roles effectively:

> All schools in this country are cutting, cutting, cutting the whole time, and having to…it's just an impossible situation. And that means…the wraparound services, the pastoral services, the soft skills are the ones that you can't afford.
> *(Housing, Communities and Faith Groups)*

> I became a learning mentor at a primary school in south-east London, and at that point there was a big push for mentors to be in primary schools. I took some of the pressure off the teachers – teachers could teach and I would deal with the behaviour of the young people. Then that was cut probably around 2006/2007, so what I'm saying is these are not new conversations…we've been here before.
> *(Housing, Communities and Faith Groups)*

> It's really hard, and the reason is because the staff there, they're scurrying around. They're like headless chickens…too busy…and that's what makes it tough.
> *(Housing, Communities and Faith Groups)*

The evidence provided to the Commission reflects what has happened to education funding in recent years. Between 2009 and 2018, the number of pupils in state funded primary and secondary schools rose by 8.4%.[20] During the same period, total school spending per pupil in England fell by 9% in real terms.[21] Such sizeable cuts to funding have led to reductions in school staffing.

Government figures show that staff numbers in secondary schools have fallen by 15,000 between 2014-15 and 2016-17, despite the increase in pupil numbers.[22] This equates to an average of 5.5 fewer members of staff in each secondary school in England and Wales. Another of our witnesses suggested that this has left teachers unable to tackle difficult behaviour:

> [Children] had said their teachers had dismissed the abusive behaviour that was happening in school between 8:30-15:00, when they are under the care of the institution…because the school just doesn't have the time to deal with it. So we're overlooking behaviours, and we're just pushing it aside, and then people are being killed at a young age.
> *(Housing, Communities and Faith Groups)*

These concerns were echoed by evidence from a witness who had been excluded from mainstream education and had a criminal record for serious violence:

> I definitely feel like if young people had a mentor to give them that consistent support, or someone they could talk to, it would prevent them from going down the path that I did. And I think that the support they need, it needs to be a specific mentor; a teaching assistant cannot provide that kind of support.
> *(Early Years, Education and Employability)*

The reality of our current educational landscape is that young people can gain access to the kind of enhanced support described above, but only after they have been excluded from mainstream education. The Department for Education provides significant sums of money to Pupil Referral Units in an attempt to salvage what are usually very difficult situations for pupils who have been excluded from mainstream schooling.

Following a written question directed to the Department for Education by the Chair of the YVC, MP Vicky Foxcroft, we found that the per pupil cost of Alternative Provision schooling[23] is estimated to be somewhere between £17,000 and £18,000 per year.[24] This is over £11,000 more than the average amount spent per pupil in mainstream secondary schools: £6,200.[25]

One of the main reasons for the higher per pupil cost in Alternative Provision (AP) is the lower student to teacher ratios in these schools. Depending on a child's precise circumstances, they will often receive one-to-one support, or at the very least be taught in small groups of around four to six pupils. Such enhanced levels of support have the

20 Department for Education (2019) Schools, pupils and their characteristics: January 2018. [Online] [Accessed on 01 June 2019] https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/schools-pupils-and-their-characteristics-january-2018
21 The Institute for Fiscal Studies (2018) 2018 Annual Report on Education Spending in England [Online] [Accessed on 01 June 2019]
22 National Education Union (2018) *Schools forced to cut teachers and teaching assistants to make ends meet*. [Online] [Accessed 2nd February 2020] https://neu.org.uk/schools-forced-cut-teachers-and-teaching-assistants-posts-make-ends-meet
23 Alternative provision is a term that refers to institutions tasked with educating young people who have been excluded from mainstream schools in England and Wales.
24 Gibb, N. (2019) Pupil Referral Units: Written question – 211308. [Online] [Accessed on 01 June 2019] https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2019-01-22/211308/
25 The Institute for Fiscal Studies (2018) 2018 Annual Report on Education Spending in England [Online] [Accessed on 01 June 2019] https://www.ifs.org.uk/uploads/publications/comms/R150.pdf

potential to enable better relationships between adult professionals and pupils, as well as reducing the propensity for children to rail against the classroom environment.[26] Yet, despite being able to provide such enhanced levels of support, outcomes for pupils in AP are poor: in 2015-16, only 18% of children who were subjected to multiple fixed term exclusions, and just 7% of children who were permanently excluded, went on to achieve good passes in English and Maths GCSEs.[27] One expert provided a particularly damning indictment of our current approach:

> Once pushed out, these young people are placed into alternative schools of varying quality. Shorter contact hours…their teachers are twice as likely to be unqualified and temporary…They are basically holding pens before [children] move onto the street. Almost none of them will gain GCSEs.
> *(Policing and Criminal Justice)*

The number of children subjected to fixed and permanent exclusions from mainstream education has been rising since 2012-2013.[28] In 2016-17, an average of 40 children were permanently excluded from school each day. This number was 50 times higher for fixed-term exclusions, with 2,000 children being subject to a fixed-term exclusion on a daily basis.[29]

One of the major problems with our current approach to exclusion is that by the time children are placed in an AP, they will have already undergone many months, or years, of feeling as though they are failing to fit into the mainstream mould. Based on previous research, this sense of failing to conform and live up to the norms and standards of one's peers can do serious damage to a young person's sense of self-worth and self-esteem.[30] Often craving any form of adult attention – positive or negative – many children who are ultimately excluded from mainstream education will 'act out' in large classrooms of 30 or more pupils in order to attract their teacher's gaze.[31]

Some of the experts contributing to the YVC evidence sessions indicated a need for additional support in mainstream schools to replicate the level of enhanced support young people receive in AP, albeit *before* they have been excluded from the mainstream:

> There needs to be allocation of funding for more specialist workers in schools to take the weight off the everyday teachers. Because in referral units it's one to four students, but in the mainstream it's one teacher to 30 or more than, or one head of year to 150 students, and the ratio just doesn't balance out. So people are being missed, issues are being missed and overlooked.
> *(Housing, Communities and Faith Groups)*

> Zero exclusion I think is a policy to aim for. The thing is it's not going to work at the moment without substantial extra resources available in the schools to cope with those children.
> *(Early Years, Education and Employability)*

Finally, in addition to extra resources, several experts highlighted the potential role and influence of Ofsted, which is a non-ministerial department responsible for inspecting schools in England. More specifically, experts were critical of the fact that Ofsted failed to place sufficient emphasis on, and hold schools to account for their use of, fixed-term and permanent exclusions:

> At the moment schools are only held to account on their examination results. Ofsted used to go in and hold schools to account on permanent exclusions, but they don't anymore.
> *(Early Years, Education and Employability)*

Recent reports have also drawn attention to a practice known as 'off-rolling', through which schools remove a child from the school roll without implementing a formal, permanent exclusion, or by encouraging or coercing parents to remove their child when this in the best interests of the school rather than the child.[32]

As with some permanent exclusions, experts have suggested that some schools are off-rolling pupils in order to achieve the requisite examination scores and attendance statistics to ensure they achieve a positive Ofsted rating. Far from Ofsted serving to restrain bad practice around exclusions and off-rolling, therefore, inspections that focus overwhelmingly on metrics around progress scores and examinations results may be contributing problems around school exclusions and off-rolling.

Mainstream schools are struggling to cope with stretched resources, and partly as a consequence many are engaging in the overuse of off-rolling and exclusionary processes that leave many children disengaged from one of society's most integral

26 Irwin-Rogers, K. (2016) *Safer Schools: Keeping gang culture outside the gates*. Catch22: London.
27 Timpson, E. (2019) Timpson Review of School Exclusion [Online] [Accessed on 01 June 2019]
28 Timpson, E. (2019) Timpson Review of School Exclusion [Online] [Accessed on 01 June 2019] https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/799979/Timpson_review_of_school_exclusion.pdf
29 Department for Education (2018) Permanent and fixed-period exclusions in England: 2016 to 2017. [Online] [Accessed on 01 June 2019] https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/permanent-and-fixed-period-exclusions-in-england-2016-to-2017
30 Irwin-Rogers, K. (2016) *Safer Schools: Keeping gang culture outside the gates*. Catch22: London.
31 Trotman, D., Tucker, S. and Martyn, M. (2015) Understanding problematic pupil behaviour: perceptions of pupils and behaviour coordinators on secondary school exclusion in an English city. *Educational Research*. 57(3): 237-253.
32 Hutchinson, J. and Crenna-Jennings, W. (2019) Unexplained pupil exits from schools: A growing problem? [Online] [Accessed on 01 June 2019] https://epi.org.uk/publications-and-research/unexplained-pupil-exits/; Timpson, E. (2019) Timpson Review of School Exclusion [Online] [Accessed on 01 June 2019] https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/799979/Timpson_review_of_school_exclusion.pdf

prosocial institutions. Confirming the findings of previous research[33] – experts contributing to the YVC evidence sessions made clear their concerns about a range of flaws and shortcomings in our current education system, highlighting the ways in which these flaws and shortcomings are contributing to rising levels of serious violence between young people.

Employment

"If young people had better opportunities and access to employment it would make my area safer" ***Safer Lives Survey Respondent***

Employment is a centrally important issue for many young people, providing not only financial security, but purpose, direction, and identity. Many witnesses were concerned that a significant proportion of young people either were unable to find work or were only able to obtain insecure forms of employment. Recent figures show that almost half a million young people aged 16-24 were unemployed between October-December 2019.[34] While this number is low by historical standards, the quality of employment for those in work was a major concern of many witnesses. Indeed, figures indicate that over one in five young people aged 16-24 are subject to insecure work (zero-hours contracts, temporary employment, working for an agency, or some combination of these); this is far higher than any other age group.[35]

Many of the witnesses to the Commission emphasised the pivotal importance of high quality employment in young people's lives, and suggested that more could be done to ensure that young people are supported to obtain desirable skills, develop their aspirations, and ultimately gain good quality work.

Schools can of course be a strong influence on the employment prospects of young people and their career goals, as one of our witnesses highlighted:

> Schools have a role to play, particularly in upping the levels of aspirations of young people. I work to some extent with charities which work with children who are involved in violence, and one of the things that they report to me is that the children they counsel typically would not be able to give a clear answer to the question, 'What profession would you like to get involved in?'. Their parents also, with some exceptions, also find it difficult to name aspirations for their children. So schools have a definite role to play in terms of counselling and also in terms of raising aspirations.
> *(Early Years, Education and Employability)*

This echoes a report by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, which stated that 'place, family and schools tend to coalesce around particular views of future options [for young people] and reinforce each other'.[36] This can be a wholly positive phenomenon, if a young person's local community, parents, wider family and school all encourage them to have an ambitious vision for their future. On the other hand, it can be a substantial constraint on young people, if all of the adults, institutions and communities in their lives appear to set limits on what they think particular young people can achieve, or provide no guidance at all.

The Social Mobility Foundation has been more forceful about the role of educational institutions in this, stating: 'Schools do not focus enough on destinations (where their pupils go next). Success in exams must not be seen as an end in itself.'[37] The accountability regime governing schools could contribute to this problem, placing significantly more emphasis on results than destinations: schools are judged far more publicly and directly on their exam performance than they are on where their students go on to after education.

Another witnessed focused on the consequences of low aspirations:

> I absolutely agree about low aspiration being so key where a lot of the people that I work with do not have a clear view of what they want to do when they leave school. I can think of a young person who said they can only imagine working in a pub, and then that slipping away to not working in a pub and just being basically an alcoholic like their mum.
> *(Early Years, Education and Employability)*

Lacking a hopeful, positive vision for the future, which can serve as a motivation and a guide, can clearly have detrimental effects on young people's outcomes. Research has suggested that aspirations in themselves aren't always the most significant factor determining a young person's life course, however: the Joseph Rowntree Foundation emphasise that,

33 Ang, R. P., Huan, V. S., Chan, W. T. Cheon, S. A. and Leaw, J. N. (2015) The role of delinquency, proactive aggression, psychopathy and behavioural school engagement in reported youth gang membership. *Journal of Adolescence.* (41), 148-156; Hawkins, J. D., Herrenkohl, T. I., Farrington, D. P., Brewer, D., Catalano, R. F., Harachi, T. W. and Cothern, L. (2000) Predictors of youth violence. *Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Juvenile Justice Bulletin,* April 2000.

34 House of Commons Library (2020) Youth unemployment statistics. [Online] [Accessed 3rd February 2020] https://researchbriefings.parliament.uk/ResearchBriefing/Summary/SN05871

35 Trust for London (2020) *Insecure work by age.* [Online] [Accessed 3rd February 2020] https://www.trustforlondon.org.uk/data/insecure-work-age/; Hudson-Sharp, N. and Runge, J. (2017) *International trends in insecure work: A report for the Trades Union Congress.* London: National Institute of Economic and Social Research.

36 Kintrea, K., St Clair, R. & Houston, M. (2011) 'The influence of parents, places and poverty on educational attitudes and aspirations', Joseph Rowntree Foundation report, pp. 8

37 "Schools: The Engine of Social Mobility", Social Mobility Commission. Available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/social-mobility-fact-sheets

whatever their aspirations, young people 'also need to be able to navigate the paths to their goals'.[38] Young people need guidance and support to get into the careers that they aspire to. For instance, young people need help ensure to that they acquire the relevant qualifications and develop the necessary skills.

In the contemporary economy, IT and technology skills are especially desirable, as one of our witnesses stressed:

> There's a tech literacy wage premium of about £10,000, and I think that's vastly understated personally. So, if we can find a way to give people a boost with tech skills, an area where we also have a skills and employment gap, actually that could supercharge young people into jobs regardless of their background.
> *(Early years, Education and Employability)*

Employers often refer to different forms of skills gap when assessing the quality of the labour force; upskilling young people in the relevant areas could help both to close that gap and to boost youth employment.

Alongside developing aspirations and gaining the right skills, young people can also benefit significantly from meaningful work experience:

> I think in relation to work experience there have been numerous studies done to show that if people get work experience in school, they're less likely to be unemployed. They're more likely to meet people who will be useful to them and form early relationships with potential mentors in businesses. Too often though most of the work experience schemes we come across are in retail – most young people don't want to go into retail, and that's totally fair enough. And also, most of them are done through family contacts. That's a big problem. There is way too much of that going on.
> *(Early Years, Education and Employability)*

The Social Mobility Commission has also been critical of schools on this front, highlighting the damaging effects of 'poor careers advice and work experience'.[39] The degree of insight that young people have into the working world can clearly have an influence on how they view the job market, and the goals that they set for themselves. If their only work experience prior to leaving school is highly limited and uninspiring, young people may not feel galvanised by the potential careers they can envisage.

Together, these factors can leave young people pessimistic and anxious about their prospects. A large-scale survey of young people across Britain recently undertaken by the Princes Trust found that nearly 75% of young people feel their generation is less certain about future employment than their parents; 53% worry that they are never going to be financially stable; and over a quarter feel that they are going to fail.[40] The jobs that *are* open to young people may not be appealing to them, for a number of reasons. Young people in Camden working on the *Take Back the Power* report stated frankly that for many young people, the jobs available to them are 'unrewarding, low-paid and boring'.[41]

Opportunities to gain income illegitimately can seem clearer and simpler than opportunities in the job market: young people from Hackney in one recent research report said that it is easier for young people to make money illegally than legally.[42] If this remains the reality for many of our under-30s, we will continue to see far too many young people engaging in criminal activity rather than in work opportunities, and we will continue to suffer the effects of far too many young people committing acts of violence.

38 Kintrea, K., St Clair, R. & Houston, M. (2011) 'The influence of parents, places and poverty on educational attitudes and aspirations', Joseph Rowntree Foundation report, pp. 8
39 "State of the Nation Report", Social Mobility Commission. Available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/state-of-the-nation-2016
40 Prince's Trust (2019) 'The Prince's Trust Ebay Youth Index 2019', available online at: https://www.princes-trust.org.uk/about-the-trust/research-policies-reports/youth-index-2019?gclid=CjwKCAiA767jBRBqEiwAGdAOr_bNk9t-gwym--RZuZE90FSc2AT3eaw1mHFjhz9jX_oXu2VduGTVnxoCyV0QAvD_BwE [accessed 24/02/2019]
41 Lunghy, E., Osman, A., M. K., Musa, A., Angel, Silva, Che (2019) *Insiders Looking Out: Solutions to Youth Violence from People who have Lived it,* London: The Winch, pp. 25
42 Billingham (2018) Hackney Wick Through Young Eyes: What local people value, the problems they face, and what they want to change, London: Wick Award and Hackney Quest

Housing and Communities

"We need to build communities that involve rather than alienate young people" ***Safer Lives Survey Respondent***

Many of the witnesses who gave evidence to the Commission spoke of the links between the economic situation that young people find themselves in, the psychological effects this has on them, and the behavioural tendencies that result. Housing is one fundamentally important feature of anyone's economic circumstances: taken for granted by many, secure housing is often the base from which people build their lives, emotionally, financially, and literally. The insufficient supply of housing which is secure, affordable and high quality (especially in London) was commented upon by multiple witnesses.

For those in the most tenuous housing situations, a move to a better – if equally precarious – housing situation can be a primary concern. Housing can be an overwhelming preoccupation for those in the least fortunate situations, such that life aspirations can be shaped by the desire to get into just a slightly better home:

> They're not thinking that they can have a home in the way that many of us in this room have. I remember working with a young man who was in one of the residential units that I worked in, and his aspiration was to be in a B&B as his brother had been in a B&B. And, you know, that's not acceptable.
> *(Early years, Education, and Employability)*

Clearly, this witness felt that the considerable constraints placed on this young man's ambitions by his housing circumstances were a significant barrier to his progress and development. It appears that the horizons of his aspiration were dictated to an extent by the housing prospects he was most familiar with: either a residential unit or a B&B.

The potential ramifications of housing insecurity on other areas of young people's lives were made clear by one witness who highlighted the links between housing insecurity, work, and crime:

> From a homeless young person's perspective, if you have managed to get a supported accommodation bed that's absolutely brilliant. You're learning skills, you want to move on, move on to your own accommodation. You may move on then to insecure private rented accommodation where the rents are far too high to live on minimum wage, which means that you're pushed out of the employment market. Again, you don't have any income and will be forced into crime again.
> *(Housing, Communities and Faith Groups)*

As this witness makes clear, moving on to higher quality housing and more independent living can bring significant risks and pitfalls. Renting privately can involve exorbitant costs, and substantial uncertainty. This can exacerbate poverty and intensify the temptation to seek money through illicit means as young people become effectively shut out of the employment market by their housing situation. The witness was not suggesting that young people should stay permanently in supported accommodation, of course, but they were emphasising that a housing market characterised by insecurity, precariousness and inflated costs is significantly exacerbating the challenges faced by vulnerable young people.

Given the conditions experienced by many young people in the private rental sector, council or social housing can be a highly preferable alternative, in terms of affordability, security and quality. Unfortunately, witnesses to the Commission emphasised that there is a chronic lack of such housing:

> There just isn't the [council housing] stock available. That's not just for young people as you know, that's for all ages. For every house that's bought through right to buy, there should be another council house built – it should be one to one, but actually it's eight to one or something. That shows the number of the stock is just diminishing and diminishing and diminishing.
> *(Housing, Communities and Faith Groups)*
>
> I think developers have targets, and they try, they call it 'affordable housing', but affordable housing normally isn't affordable in city centres. They don't want to build social housing.
> *(Housing, Communities and Faith Groups)*

The government definition of affordable rented housing is housing charged at 'a rent of no more than 80 per cent of the local market rent (including service charges, where applicable)'.[43] In March 2019, the median monthly rent in London was £1,495[44] - 80% of which would still be wholly unaffordable to many of its young people. With insufficient council and social housing stock, massive rental costs, and a questionable statutory definition of affordability, young people's quest to find somewhere to live can be futile and demoralising.

As well as housing, witnesses to the Commission highlighted the growing costs of local activities which had previously been enjoyed by young people for free, further undermining the affordability of community life. One witness focused on the privatisation of public play spaces:

> Even the parks are being taken over - companies have come in and run the football and the sports spaces now. And I live in this community – the kids used to go and play football there. Now you have

43 https://www.plymouth.gov.uk/housing/privaterentedaccommodation/rentaffordablehousing
44 Valuation Office Agency (2019) *Statistical Summary*. Available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/private-rental-market-summary-statistics-april-2018-to-march-2019 [Accessed 10 March 2020]

> to pay to go on there, because it's a MUGA, multi-games area, and it's all booked out to corporates. So kids get squeezed out.
> *(Housing, Communities and Faith Groups)*

Growth in the cost of housing and of popular leisure activities are two examples of financial displacement: young people being squeezed out (as this witness put it) of the places they live or spend time in because they can no longer afford them. Similar concerns were expressed by young people themselves in recent research undertaken by London Youth. Their report concluded that young people in London are 'hugely concerned about the lack of affordable housing', and are conscious of 'the impact of regeneration on the areas in which they live, including what this might mean for their ability to continue to live in the communities where they have grown up'.[45]

Recent youth-led research undertaken in Hackney, East London, found similar concerns. One respondent said: 'people will have to move out, no young person will own a house', 'in London there's no places to live, you cannot get into a place in London'.[46] Even for young people who can stay in their home community, rapid demographic changes in their area prompted by regeneration and rising house prices – often forcing family members or friends to move elsewhere – can undermine their sense of belonging. Urban geographers have called this 'affective displacement': a compromised sense of being part of your community, due to feeling progressively displaced by wealthier groups.[47] This feeling was expressed in the Hackney study: young people reported that that they 'don't belong anymore', that 'the area is not really ours anymore', and that 'Hackney is no longer the Hackney I grew up in'.[48]

In short, witnesses were unequivocal in their views that decent, secure housing was a prerequisite to ensuring young people's safety and well-being. One witness summed up the views and concerns of many who spoke with the Commission:

> Housing is fundamental to all of us, so whether or not you're a young person who might end up being involved with crime…that is the absolute basis to make sure that we have fulfilling lives. And the lack of quality accommodation, whether or not it's the private rented sector, or whether or not it's in the local authority sector, it is a massive issue – the lack of it for our young people.
> *(Housing, Communities and Faith Groups)*

Youth Services

"There needs to be more opportunities for younger people - that's why they get into gangs: there is nothing for people to do around here at night. There should be youth clubs to help kids stay out of trouble" ***Safer Lives Survey Respondent***

The link between high quality youth services and a reduction in serious violence is increasingly well understood.[49] Through our research and evidence gathering we have been able to build up a comprehensive picture of the role of youth services, and in this section we have sought to set out the key findings regarding the types of youth provision that play a positive role in reducing serious violence among young people, and considerations around how this provision is funded and delivered.

The witnesses in our evidence sessions made clear that there is no shortage of motivated individuals and organisations keen to support young people through the provision of high-quality youth services. Since 2010, however, public spending cuts have had a significant impact on youth services, as councils have sought to prioritise and protect 'essential services':

> It's not just little salami slices, that used to be the case – whole youth services are now disappearing; whole areas don't have youth workers. This is dangerous.
> *(Youth Services and Community Work)*

While councils have seen their budgets reduced by up to 50% between 2010 and 2018, local government spending on youth services in England fell by 62%, equating to over £750m in cuts.[50] From 2010 to 2018, 600 youth clubs closed nationally, 3,500 youth workers lost their jobs, and there was an overall reduction of 139,000 places on youth programmes.[51]

There has been wide variation in cuts to the provision of youth services across the country, with some councils estimated to have cut youth budgets by as much as 91%.[52] Across all of the evidence sessions, Commission witnesses linked the scale and impact of youth service cuts to escalating violence between young people:

45 London Youth (2017) 'Young people's capital of the world?', available online at: http://londonyouth.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/Young-peoples-capital-of-the-world-March-2017.pdf
46 Billingham (2018) *Hackney Wick Through Young Eyes: What local people value, the problems they face, and what they want to change,* London: Wick Award and Hackney Quest, pp. 56
47 Butcher, M. & Dickens, L. (2016) 'Spatial dislocation and affective displacement: Youth perspectives on gentrification in London', International Journal of Urban and Regional Research, Volume 40, Issue 4, pp. 800-816
48 Billingham (2018) *Hackney Wick Through Young Eyes: What local people value, the problems they face, and what they want to change,* London: Wick Award and Hackney Quest.
49 APPG on Knife Crime (2019) *New research draws link between youth service cuts and rising knife crime.* [Online] [Accessed on 22nd November 2019] http://www.preventknifecrime.co.uk/news/
50 YMCA (2018) *Youth and Consequences: A report examining Local Authority expenditure on youth services in England and Wales.* [Online] [Accessed on 22nd November 2019] https://www.ymca.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/Youth-Consequences-v0.2.pdf
51 YMCA (2018) *Youth and Consequences: A report examining Local Authority expenditure on youth services in England and Wales.* [Online] [Accessed on 22nd November 2019] https://www.ymca.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/Youth-Consequences-v0.2.pdf
52 APPG on Knife Crime (2019) *New research draws link between youth service cuts and rising knife crime.* [Online] [Accessed on 22nd November 2019] http://www.preventknifecrime.co.uk/news/

> When I was younger, youth club was a way for me to get out my aggression – it was a way for me to express myself and whatnot. There are no more youth clubs. From the day a young person is born to the day a young person picks up a knife something clearly went wrong in that young person's life, and there's no youth workers dealing with the mental health of that young person.
> *(Media, Music and Role Models)*

It is worth noting that the ongoing APPG on Knife Crime, chaired by MP Sarah Jones, recently reported that the areas hit by the greatest cuts to youth services in recent years have been the areas subject to some the greatest increases in serious violence between young people.[53] The top four areas for cuts to youth services – City of Wolverhampton (91%), City of Westminster (91%), Cambridgeshire County Council, (88%), and Wokingham Borough Council (81%), saw rises in knife crime of 87%, 47%, 95% and 99% respectively.

Commission witnesses commented at length on the restructuring brought about by austerity in youth services and how this has affected the support and guidance available to young people at-risk of being drawn into serious violence. They discussed a shift in priority from early stage intervention to late-stage and short-term crisis intervention, accompanied by short-term funding cycles:

> For me the teachable moment is an incredibly short window when young people, young men and young women are suddenly aware, often for the first time, of their vulnerability. They have had to create bravado, this mask while they are at home or on the streets, having grown up undoubtedly with incredible adversity through their childhood. So there's definitely a teachable moment.
> *(Public Health and Mental Health)*

The "teachable moment" mentioned above refers to the unique opportunity afforded by a particular crisis in a young person's life, such as an incident of hospitalisation following a stab wound. Against a backdrop of funding decimation, significant cash injections have been made in youth organisations operating in hospital accident and emergency departments to enable youth workers to engage young people who have been on the receiving end of serious violence.[54]

While such "teachable moments" constitute important opportunities to connect with young people and provide much needed support, witnesses stressed that it should not come at the cost of long-term early intervention, which attempts to support young people before they are involved in weapon carrying and serious violence:

> It's almost like until the kid's in trouble then we won't do anything; so let's do the prevention work as well.
> *(Housing, Communities and Faith Groups)*

This type of proactive youth work that involves ongoing support and guidance is increasingly scarce in the current climate of cuts to public spending:

> What's happened since 2010 has been the dismantling of youth services across the country. We know from reports that were released last year that over £300m has disappeared, possibly more since then. And what that has created is a fractured approach across the country.
> (Youth Services and Community Work)

One source of optimism came from those discussing the potential role of faith groups in supporting young people. Witnesses described the strong desire and capacity for faith organisations to step into the gaps left by cuts to frontline youth services, but highlighted the need for additional training specifically around violence reduction:

> There are around 50,000 churches in the UK, 40,000 of them have their own buildings… for me it is a no brainer. You've got faith groups who could actually step into that gap. They are willing; a lot of them have youth groups already. A lot of them are very well connected to the communities which are being impacted by youth violence. But the problem is that a lot of those faith groups, whether it's churches or mosques or whatever, they're not equipped, and they're not trained to really deal with the issue of serious youth violence.
> *(Housing, Communities and Faith Groups)*

The evidence sessions revealed a picture of youth services characterised by short-term and inconsistent funding and planning cycles, which follow the agendas set by electoral politics and a small number of influential funding bodies. This hampers the ability of youth services and particularly grassroots organisations to engage in long-term, early stage intervention that builds consistent relationships and trust with vulnerable young people:

> Because we're running back-to-back project, project, project, there's no sustainability… the real work happens in those one-to-one relationships that are built, and the trust that is built within those. And that's something that for the last five years I've not seen.
> *(Youth Services and Community Work)*

Another issue raised by witnesses was the extent to which significant resources in the youth sector

were being spent not on frontline provision, but on bureaucratic and professionalised bid writing and back-end programme evaluations. This has led to small grassroots local charities being squeezed out by larger national organisations that have sufficient resources to employ dedicated teams of bid-writers that can out-compete smaller charities, at least on paper. While larger organisations have become savvy to the nuances of successful bid writing, witnesses warned that in practice the services they deliver often rely on the exploitation of smaller charities:

> We've got really large organisations that don't have any connection with the local communities that get funded to do the work, and they don't help the young people. And then they try to come to organisations like mine to say 'where are the young people?'. But we don't have any resources to undertake the work.
> *(Youth Services and Community Work)*

One witness highlighted that if the shortcomings of the current provision of youth services are to be addressed, then long term strategies need to be developed that are independent of and immune to the whims of short-termist political cycles:

> I'm making a plea for a 20-year plan. And it needs to be a 20-year plan that is immune from electoral cycles, and is immune from politics big and small 'p', where funding and leadership and strategy are guaranteed and sustainable. Because when you're dealing with issues that have a generation or more in the making, barring miracles, pretending that they're going to take less than a generation to fix is just a fool's errand.
> *(Public Health and Mental Health)*

Media, Music and Role Models

"Young people are actually a lot more approachable and kinder than they're made out to be in the media – we're an interesting and creative group that deserve more positive recognition" ***Safer Lives Survey Respondent***

Utilising terms such as 'bloodbath', mainstream media outlets often produce sensationalist reports that run the risk of glamourising serious violence between young people.[55] One witness, however, highlighted that in terms of its influence on young people, the role of the mainstream media is sometimes overstated:

> The other thing to remember is Generation X is a digital-only generation. They're online seven hours a day with three devices each, and they're consuming online brands like Netflix and YouTube. They're not even on mainstream TV and radio. So when we put mainstream media in the dock, those young people that are affected by this youth violence, they're not on those platforms, so there's a disconnect there.
> *(Media, Music and Role Models)*

While many young people might not be influenced directly by its reports, mainstream media outlets can nevertheless exert a powerful influence over public opinion (and as a consequence, politicians), which in turn can serve to shape and constrain policy agendas. A good example of this has been the recent preoccupation of a number of mainstream media outlets with 'drill'[56] – a genre of music created by young people allegedly involved in urban street gangs and associated illicit activities such as drug distribution. One witness described the role drill music played in some teenagers' lives:

> Drill is reaffirming what it is like to be a teenage boy, so reaffirming their daily lives, entrenching their thoughts about the most extreme aspects of what it's like to be a teenage boy living in a housing estate in London…is it any surprise that boys like that -- often from single parent homes, constantly told they're a problem in school, vilified in mainstream media -- are seeking a way of gaining recognition, respect and a voice with which to vent their frustrations. Drill music reinforces ideas about violence and at worst encourages it, but it doesn't cause it.
> *(Media, Music and Role Models)*

The role of drill music in encouraging or causing violence remains a contested topic, with some studies indicating that drill both constitutes a reflection of the

55 Rahman, K. and Robinson, M. (2018) Bank Holiday Bloodbath. *Mail Online.* Available at: https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-5701127/Bank-Holiday-bloodbath-ELEVEN-gun-knife-acid-attacks-Britain-weekend.html; see further Gordon, F. (2018) *Children, Young People and the Press in a Transitioning Society: Representations, Reactions and Criminalisation.* London: Springer.

56 Lazarus, B. (2019) Blood on his hands: How privately educated bishop's son and ex BBC DJ Tim Westwood champions drill music gangs behind a sickening wave of violence on the streets of Britain. *Mail Online.* Available at: https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-6635923/Blood-hands-privately-educated-Tim-Westwood-champions-drill-music-gangs.html

violence already present in young people's lives, as well as having the potential to be a proximate driver of further violence.[57]

One witness drew attention to the fact that many young, and predominantly black, men in London use drill music as a means of making money, in the context of high unemployment rates in BAME (Black, Asian and minority ethnic people) communities. They highlighted that if the police are perceived to be suppressing drill music, this could have negative ramifications, particularly for young black people's perceptions of the police:

> Drill music is for a lot of young black men in London at the moment one of the only means of making an income. You know, there's high unemployment in black communities, up to 50% in some areas. A bit of music that you can put online and make some cash because other people are buying it. If you hear the police slamming that, it's quite important to understand the effect of that on young black people.
> *(Policing and Criminal Justice)*

While there was some disagreement on the extent to which certain drill tracks uploaded to social media ought to be censored on the grounds of their content (for example, tracks that contained direct threats against other individuals or groups), most witnesses agreed that focusing time, energy and resources on the suppression of music was not prudent with other pressing priorities:

> Music is the tip of a huge iceberg. Its negative influence over young teenage boys in particular only becomes activated by bigger environmental forces…we can do better than being distracted by their music taste.
> *(Media, Music and Role Models)*

Similar views were expressed in relation to social media more broadly. Reflecting the findings of recent studies,[58] witnesses generally recognised that social media played a role in catalysing and triggering incidents of serious violence between young people:

> The situation now is that videos are posted online. Tensions are raised, and people are goaded into violent action. Recently in London parents have had to contend with the murder of their child, whilst opposing gangs have been celebrating what they consider to be a success online.
> *(Policing and Criminal Justice)*

Some witnesses suggested that 'control' ought to be exercised over some of the more extreme content uploaded to social media, but neglected to expand on what such control might constitute in practice:

> A 14-year-old gets beaten up. That gets filmed and put on Instagram. This child then suffers shame because of people viewing that on Instagram and mocking him etc. He then, he's highly motivated to seek retribution, to get a knife and get his own back as it were on those who beat him up. So the control of humiliating videos on those media I think is one thing which we can do in the very short term.
> *(Early Years, Education and Employability)*

Many of the lyrics expressed in drill music videos are likely to violate YouTube's own guidelines, which state that the platform will remove malicious content involving 'hurtful or negative comments' designed to 'humiliate someone'. Social media companies, however, have been slow to deploy the resources necessary to enforce their own guidelines, often placing the burden on platform users to report content, rather than proactively scrutinising the content uploaded to their platforms.[59]

If the police present themselves as a primary actor in censoring drill music, then it is crucial that free speech rights are protected. Common law precedent is clear that 'free speech includes not only the inoffensive but the irritating, the contentious, the eccentric, the heretical, the unwelcome and the provocative'.[60] This pivotal statement, however, contains the caveat: 'provided it does not tend to provoke violence'. Whether drill 'tends to provoke violence' is therefore the crux of the matter when it comes to determining whether a particular track ought to be censored.

Several witnesses discussed the importance of prosocial role models, and their absence in the lives of many young people who are involved in serious violence. One witness suggested that there was a lack of BAME role models in the workplace, largely because people from a BAME background faced workplace discrimination that affected both rates of pay and the ability to reach positions of seniority:

> The idea of having role models within the workplace hasn't been discussed enough, I think. Because we have quite a chronic misrepresentation of BAME people within employment, and there's a very clear glass ceiling and ethnic minority pay gaps, the glass cliff as it's called, to get to the top…we need to have more people that look like and come from the same backgrounds as these young people in the working world, and get them more visible in that space. But also it's about how you communicate what is going well, what is happening and what opportunities young people can take – that's not being done effectively enough yet.
> *(Early Years, Education and Employability)*

57 Irwin-Rogers, K., Densley, J. and Pinkney, C. (2018) Social media and gang violence. In J. L. Ireland, P. Birch and C. A. Ireland (Eds.) *International Handbook on Aggression.* Abingdon: Routledge.
58 Irwin-Rogers, K. and Pinkney, C. (2017) Social Media as a catalyst and trigger for youth violence. London: Catch22.
59 House of Commons Home Affairs Committee (2019) Serious Youth Violence. *Sixteenth Report of Session 2017-19.* Available at: https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201719/cmselect/cmhaff/1016/1016.pdf
60 Redmon-Bate v Director of Public Prosecutions, 1999, 7 BHRC 375, para 20, per Sedley LJ.

While recent drives to improve the quality and quantity of apprenticeships for young people were praised, some witnesses thought the young people benefitting from these schemes were unlikely to be those drawn for the cohort of young people currently involved in serious violence. To reach this cohort, one witness suggested doing more to tap into the potential of social media platforms:

> I'll come back to the mentorship again and the role model point, because it is just so critical…the government has just spent a lot of money on a 'Go Far on Apprenticeship' campaign – that's great, but it's not going to be half as effective as doing something actually a lot rawer. Social media is completely essential to this in terms of how you reach young people from atypical backgrounds who often aren't engaging with formal processes.
> *(Early Years, Education and Employability)*

Other witnesses also stressed the importance of prosocial role models, particularly in the lives of BAME young people, but directed attention toward the role of school curriculums that focused myopically on white historical figures, at the expense of people of colour:

Finally, some witnesses argued that the problem wasn't a lack of prosocial BAME role models per se, but that the media – like the education system – neglected to highlight the achievement of people from a BAME background:

> We've got role models, but what we don't have is representation in the media. We don't have an interest in the successful lives of people from many diverse backgrounds.
> *(Media, Music and Role Models)*

Policing and the Criminal Justice System

"If relationships were to improve between young people and the police, there would be less crime and young people would feel safer and more likely to ask for help" ***Safer Lives Survey Respondent***

While the Commission recognises the need to avoid framing violence reduction as a narrow suppression and enforcement issue, both policing and the wider criminal justice system have the potential to play key roles in reducing serious violence between young people.

Many of our witnesses highlighted that in order to effectively tackle serious violence, the police need to be able to depend on the support, trust and confidence of young people:

> Engaging with young people and children is critical for the Met. Due to the size and scale of London we have millions of interactions with young people each year…so winning the trust and confidence of young people is key for the Met to operate effectively in London. When trust breaks down that is a significant concern for us. Trust is something that's hard to win, but easily lost.
> *(Policing and Criminal Justice)*

Despite winning the trust and confidence of young people being a clear priority of police forces across the country, the Commission found that many young people hold relatively negative perceptions of the police. For example, findings from our Safer Lives survey revealed that less than half of all young people responding to the survey agreed or very much agreed with the statement 'The police make the lives of young people safer'.

Some witnesses argued that far from providing a means of protection, engaging with the police had the potential to make young people less safe:

> To go and report something to a policeman is signing your death warrant, so you'd never ever going to be able to break that. That's something deep embedded in every community where you do not grass…so that's something you're going to find really hard to change…because you're basically saying to someone, 'sign your death warrant', and their family's possibly as well.
> *(Youth Services and Community Work)*

Another key issue at the heart of young people's perceptions of police legitimacy is stop and search. The police's use of stop and search has a long and contentious history, particularly in England's capital (see Equality and Human Rights Commission, 2010). It should come as no surprise, therefore, that of the issues discussed across the six evidence sessions, stop and search was among the most contested. Some experts argued vociferously in favour of stop and search:

> I believe that stop and search is a vital police tactic that saves lives. In the past 12 months, 4,200 weapons have been taken off the streets of London through the use of this tactic… who knows how many more families would be grieving the loss of a loved one had these 4,200 weapons not been removed from our streets.
> *(Policing and Criminal Justice)*

Accompanied by a straightforward rationale – the removal of potentially lethal weapons from the streets – these stark statistics appear to provide strong support for the continued use of stop and search. Yet quantitative data on the potential for stop and search to reduce violent crime is limited.

In 2009-10, when the rate of stop and search in London was relatively high (25 per 1,000 people), there were 130 murders in the capital. By 2014-15, when the rate of stop and search in London had fallen to 10 per 1,000 people, the capital saw fewer murders: 84 (Full Fact, 2018; Home Office, 2019). In other words, murders in London were falling at the same time that the use of stop and search was significantly declining.

A similar pattern has been seen in other cities across the globe. In New York, for example, stop and search underwent a dramatic decline between 2011 and 2016, from 685,724 to just 12,404 (New York Civil Liberties Union, 2019). If stop and search helped to reduce violence, we would have expected homicides in New York to have risen significantly as its use plummeted. The opposite is true: homicides in New York declined from 769 in 2011 to 630 in 2016 (Disaster Centre, 2017).

It is worth highlighting that one can identify other periods during which stop and search has declined and murder rates have gone up, and vice versa. Owing to the serious limitations associated with relying on such simple correlations, researchers have conducted more sophisticated quantitative analysis using a decade's worth of data on crime rates and stop and search in London. The authors concluded that: 'claims that [stop and search] is an effective way to control and deter offending seem misplaced (Tiratelli et al., 2018).

One potential contributing factor to the seeming ineffectiveness of stop and search in deterring weapon possession and violence is that objective shifts in rates of stop and search may not translate straightforwardly into young people's subjective experiences and perceptions:

> Despite the huge drop we've had in stop and search over the last few years, only 16% of young BAME people think that stop and search is being used less than it was five years ago… and nearly two fifths thought it was actually being used more.
> *(Policing and Criminal Justice)*

Even assuming that young people typically engage in relatively rational decision-making when choosing between different courses of action – accurately weighing up the costs and benefits of each of their options – if they are unable to detect shifts in the levels with which police officers are conducting stop and search in their area, this would significantly undermine the potential of stop and search being an effective deterrent.

Several experts offered explanations for why the use of stop and search could be counter-productive. First and foremost, people highlighted the potential for stop and search to alienate young people, and particularly Black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) young people, from the police:

> What we do know about stop and search?... the huge impact that it has on young people's trust in the police, and particularly young BAME people…we conducted a range of interviews with young BAME people who have been stopped and searched, and they reported feelings of victimisation, humiliation and harassment.
> *(Policing and Criminal Justice)*

> Even in some police forces where they've said that they're not particularly policing drugs, we're still seeing 60%-70% of stop and searches being used for drugs. And that is also driving up the disproportionality because black people are more likely to be stopped and searched for drugs. And that's despite the fact that white people are actually more likely to be found carrying drugs.
> *(Policing and Criminal Justice)*

> [Stop and search] alienates black and ethnic minority youth from the police, when they are precisely the sorts of young people that police need to give them information, to support them in their job. So that's why I think it's very dangerous.
> *(Policing and Criminal Justice)*

Studies have shown that if trust, confidence, and perceptions of police legitimacy decline as a result of intensified stop and search, this can have a marked effect on the people's willingness to cooperate with the police and obey the law.[61] Therefore, if the ultimate goal is to reduce levels of violence, the likely effect of stop and search on perceptions of police legitimacy ought to be factored into any decisions about the use of this police tactic.

61 Myhill, A. and Quinton, P. (2011) *It's a fair cop? Police legitimacy, publication cooperation, and crime reduction*. [Online] [Accessed 22nd November 2019] https://whatworks.college.police.uk/Research/Documents/Fair_cop_Full_Report.pdf

A number of witnesses suggested that there were better ways of gathering intelligence and reducing the risk of violence between young people than stop and search. Some, for example, highlighted the importance of identifying positive spaces of interaction between young people and the police:

> Now our school in Haringey has got an absolutely outstanding PCSO who's been there for a couple of years, forged really positive relationships with the young people. They go to him now if there's an issue on the street. They go to him now with intelligence if they need to.
> *(Early Years, Education and Employability)*

In summary, the most recent and robust research suggests that stop and search is of limited use in reducing rates of violent crime.[62] In addition, high rates of stop and search leave many young people feeling discriminated against and violated by an institution that is supposed to help them to feel safe and protected.

Seen in this context, it would be prudent to avoid high rates of stop and search that are prompted by suspicion and hostility, and focus police officers' time, energy and resources into forging constructive relationships with young people through proactive and positive interactions across a range of public spaces including schools and youth centres.

The Commission recognises the difficulty of such work in the context of significant cuts to policing budgets in recent years. Between March 2010 and March 2018, cuts to police funding led to the loss of 21,732 officers.[63] Losing these officers has made it more difficult to move beyond reactive policing, which is concerning given that several witnesses discussed the crucial nature of child-centred and community-based policing:

> We think community policing is an absolutely critical part of the system for all the reasons that other people have said. Community policing is critical to community confidence and the legitimacy of the whole law enforcement family.
> *(Policing and Criminal Justice)*

> At the heart of [child centred policing] is a key principle, which is that children should be treated as children first in every encounter. Policing should be professional, and should look behind the behaviour…And the police should recognise that young people are not really adults: there are different vulnerabilities, there are different needs of communication – trauma is something that we take really seriously.
> *(Policing and Criminal Justice)*

> Let's not pay lip service to community policing. We have to engage. We have lost great swathes of communities that I police; we've lost it. We have to start somewhere, and my view is we start in schools.
> *(Policing and Criminal Justice)*

The Prime Minister's recent announcement of plans to recruit an additional 20,000 officers is a welcome one in this regard, particularly given the potential for these officers to be engaged in the type of work described by our witnesses above.

Another key topic discussed in our evidence sessions concerned the state of prisons and the secure estate for children and young people. Prisons were generally described as places that lacked the resources to provide any kind of meaningful, prosocial training or education to the majority of prisoners, which exacerbated existing problems:

> Far too many boys are being locked in their cells for more than 22 hours each day and not able to get into classrooms…increasing self-harm, increasing use of restraint, increasing use of segregation of young adults. Custody has the worst reconviction rates of any criminal justice disposal, and so it should be a last resort. But for those who are in it we really need to focus on those basic human needs being met. Because if they're not you're going to end up with increased resentment, frustration, trauma, and a sense of hopelessness, which is not what we want to end up with a young person coming out of custody.
> *(Early Years, Education and Employability)*

62 Tiratelli, M., Quinton, P. and Bradford, B. (2018) Does Stop and Search Deter Crime? Evidence From Ten Years of London-wide Data. *The British Journal of Criminology.* 58(5): 1212-1231.
63 Home Office (2018) *Police Workforce, England and Wales, 31 March 2018.* [Online] [Accessed 4th February 2020] https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/726401/hosb1118-police-workforce.pdf

A number of witnesses lamented the low-quality of education provided in the secure estate, but provided necessary steps for improvement, as well as examples of existing best practice:

> My final point is actually around technology for education in custodial establishments: the lack of the internet, the lack of any technology – this has got to change. Particularly for [young people], this is how learning should be done; this is how it can be individualised, how it can be made more engaging, so we really need to think very carefully about a big review of what technology is there.
> *(Early Years, Education and Employability)*

> I think the thing that makes me sad sometimes about prison education is this real idea of this low aspiration. That it should reflect a traditional classroom. It's about literacy, numeracy, worksheets, but it's preparing people for low skilled work…the work that we've been doing, for example in Isis Young Offenders, where Goldsmith's University have been going in, students have been studying alongside students at the prison. Suddenly they're thinking actually university could be a place for me that have never ever thought about university before, and so really proving that aspiration is key.
> *(Early Years, Education and Employability)*

It needs to be recognised, however, that before any meaningful academic education can take place, many young people embroiled in the secure estate require serious support around trauma and mental health. Often a key factor in explaining their offences, trauma generated by early adverse childhood experiences, such as witnessing or experiencing physical or sexual abuse, is commonplace among those in the secure estate, and therefore likely to pose a significant barrier to education.[64]

Aside from needing to improve education and employability training across the secure estate, another issue that formed a significant barrier to people living healthy and prosocial post-prison lives was the stigma of a criminal record. One witness highlighted that the criminal record regime in England and Wales was one of the most severe in the world, and consequently served to keep those released from prison 'trapped in a life of crime':

> There is a group of young people, probably now around the age of 25, who badly want to leave the life of crime behind, but because we've got the most aggressive regime other than Texas - of not being able to leave your criminal record behind, of not being able to seal your criminal record from employers - you're trapped in a life of crime because you can't get a job.
> *(Policing and Criminal Justice)*

A theme that echoed across all of the Commission's evidence sessions was that of ethnicity. More specifically, witnesses were keen to highlight that those from BAME backgrounds faced additional barriers and challenges in their lives, as well as potential discrimination. One witness drew our attention to the fact that disproportionality in the secure estate had increased, arguing that diversionary policies had primarily benefited white young people:

> Diversion and preventative approaches have only served to benefit white people, and to the detriment of black, Asian minority ethnic individuals. So what we see is increasing disproportionality, disparity within the system… there's a virtue to the gang, and it's appropriate to say this: the virtue to the gang is that it can secure the convictions of groups of young black and brown individuals who are seen as engaging in violent behaviour.
> *(Policing and Criminal Justice)*

The use of the term 'gang' to label groups of predominantly BAME young people has been criticised in a number of recent studies, which suggest that 'gang lists' such as the Met's Gang Matrix are means by which the police target their resources on young people from particular communities in a manner that lacks transparency and due process.[65] Similarly, the practice of stop and search, which is predominantly conducted on suspicion of drug possession,[66] was criticised by one witness on the basis that it disproportionately targets BAME young people:

> I made reference to cannabis use as a gateway drug - it's a gateway into the criminal justice system for black and Asian young men. Essentially, [black and Asian young men] smoke cannabis, there's a stop and search, 'oh and by the way we found X, Y and Z' – these become the strategies by which we pull [BAME] individuals into the criminal justice system.
> *(Policing and Criminal Justice)*

In addition to the criminalising potential of gang lists and high rates of stop and search conducted on suspicion of drug possession, the recent creation of Knife Crime Prevention Orders (a late addition to the Offensive Weapons Act 2019) holds further potential to drag significant numbers of young people into the criminal justice system. These orders can be imposed

64 Chitsabesan, P. Kroll, L., Bailey, S., Kenning, C., Sneider, S., Macdonald, W. and Theodosiou, L. (2006) Mental Health Needs of Young Offenders in Custody and in the Community. *The British Journal of Psychiatry.* 188: 534-540; Youth Justice Board (2007) *Accommodation needs and experiences*. Youth Justice Board, London.

65 Amnesty International (2018) *Trapped in the Matrix: Secrecy, stigma and bias in the Met's Gang Database.* Available at: https://www.amnesty.org.uk/files/reports/Trapped%20in%20the%20Matrix%20Amnesty%20report.pdf; Williams, P. (2015) Criminalising the Other: challenging the race-gang nexus. Race & Class. 56(3): 18-35; Williams, P. and Clarke, B. (2016) Dangerous Associations: Joint enterprise, gangs and racism. London: Centre for Crime and Justice Studies.

66 Metropolitan Police (2020) *Stop and search dashboard.* [Online] [Accessed 2nd February 2020] https://www.met.police.uk/sd/stats-and-data/met/stop-and-search-dashboard/

on children as young as 12 on a balance of probabilities judgement, and are highly likely to result in children and young people being criminalised for behaviour that would otherwise have fallen below the threshold required to impose criminal justice sanctions.[67]

Supporting the conclusions of a well-established body of literature[68] – as well as the findings of our Safer Lives Survey (see Appendix C) – several witnesses recognised the close link between illicit drug markets and serious violence:

> Undoubtedly there is a link between drugs and violence, and we see that link. Drugs are very profitable. You fight to keep your market and at all costs you'll use what it takes. And I think we're seeing in London and maybe elsewhere across the UK the purity of cocaine was going up, the purity of cannabis is going up. It's becoming stronger, it's becoming more potent, and that drives violence because it's unregulated, it's unrestricted, and you've got to watch your patch.
> *(Policing and Criminal Justice)*

In short, to prevent conflict and violence, the flow of the vast majority of goods and services across our economy is regulated and governed by legislation, contracts and courts. Because many drugs have been prohibited, however, those involved in the distribution of these drugs do not have recourse to contracts and courts; instead, they rely on serious violence to defend their business interests and settle disputes.[69]

One witness drew attention to the fact that under drug prohibition, some drugs had significantly increased in strength, posing a greater threat to young people's mental well-being:

> I don't know if everybody's aware here, but cannabis that probably we recreationally used in the '80s and '90s was 1.4% THC content. It's now 10 times that, and that's what the kids are smoking day in, day out.
> *(Policing and Criminal Justice)*

While opinion was divided on the precise ways in which drug policy could be improved, witnesses generally agreed that it would be prudent to explore alternative approaches to reducing the harms associated with drugs, learning lessons from other jurisdictions and basing policy not on ideology but the best evidence available:

> We are going to have to follow the evidence [on drug policy]. Does the evidence tell us that actually we're doing more harm than good in terms of what we're doing? Stop and searching people, and arresting people and throwing them into prison because of smoking cannabis or perhaps having a few grams of cocaine on them – has that made the problem any better?
> *(Policing and Criminal Justice)*

> What I don't understand is why we don't learn the lessons from other countries, which have been very successful about decriminalising drugs, and reducing harm.
> *(Policing and Criminal Justice)*

67 Irwin-Rogers, K. and Billingham, L. (2020) From social media to mattering: Reframing the narrative around serious violence between young people. *Onati Special Issue: 'Youth Violence' reframed: Disrupting Discourses;* Standing Committee for Youth Justice (2019) SCYJ Submission to Consultation on Knife Crime Prevention Orders Guidance. Available at: http://scyj.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/FINAL-SCYJ-Submission-to-Consultation-on-Knife-Crime-Prevention-Orders-Guidance.pdf

68 Irwin-Rogers, K. (2019) Illicit drug markets, Consumer Capitalism and the Rise of Social Media: A Toxic Trap for Young People. *Critical Criminology.* 27(4): 591-610; Whittaker, A., Densley, J., Cheston, L., Tyrell, T., Higgins, M., Felix-Baptiste, C. and Havard, T. (2019) Reluctant Gangsters Revisited: The Evolution of Gangs from Postcodes to Profits. *European Journal on Criminal Policy and Research.* 1-22.

69 European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (2019) *EU Drug Markets Report 2019.* Available at: http://www.emcdda.europa.eu/2019/drug-markets

Poverty and Inequality

"Young people living in poverty and hardship go through and do things they would not necessarily do to make money. These things pose risks, however, some young people are so desperate they don't care about the risks." ***Safer Lives Survey Respondent***

While the Commission did not hold an evidence session specifically on the issues of poverty and inequality, both were recurring themes throughout many witness statements. One witness spoke about the 'shame of poverty', arguing that child poverty was best conceptualised as a form of violence inflicted on children:

> The shame of poverty, deprivation: of wanting things, of seeing things that they can't have; of the free school meals, that's often talked about – how people on free school meals feel the shame around it. The violent impact on that young person's life is something I think you also need to consider.
> *(Public Health and Mental Health)*

Shame has been identified as a fundamental and significant driver of violence in a well-established body of literature.[70] Some theories linking shame to violence suggest that acts of violence begin with an individual feeling a sense of rejection – in this case, rejection by a society that allows some of its young people to grow up in poverty while others enjoy the head-start and benefits that come accompany extreme wealth. Such rejection elicits feelings of shame, to which many young people respond with anger, which then manifests in acts of violence.[71]

It is of significant concern, therefore, that in London alone there are over 700,000 children growing up in relative poverty.[72] Indeed, inequality in the UK's capital city is stark: the top 10% of households in London command a combined wealth of £260 billion, whereas the bottom 10% are indebted by £1.3 billion.[73]

The stark divide between rich and poor was raised by many witnesses, some of whom discussed the role of modern technology in exposing the blatant gulfs in wealth:

> Inequality is a critical issue. Not only do we see that in cities where rich and poor people are living right next to each other, but things like information technology makes it very easy now for people to see what the rich have…people are often facing a stark issue around those that have and those that have not. Relative poverty as well as absolute poverty is another driver of violence that can be addressed.
> *(Public Health and Mental Health)*

The visceral experience of a childhood lived in poverty was highlighted by one of the Commission's young witnesses who had recently been released from prison for committing a serious act of violence:

> I live on a grey estate where it's normal for me to see blood stains on the floor. It's normal for me to see used condoms on the floor. It's normal for me to see even quite blatant gang wars happening on this estate. But then literally right across the way you can see a house – right across my road there's a beautiful house with a garage and a drive. They've got their own trees in the back yard and pools and everything, and it's right in front of me.

70 Gilligan, J. (2003) Shame, Guilt and Violence. *Social Research.* 70(4): 1149-1180.
71 Thomas, H. E. (1995) Experiencing a Shame Response as a Precursor to Violence. *Bulletin American Academy Psychiatry Law.* 23(4): 587-593.
72 Child Poverty Action Group (2019) *Child poverty in London – Key Facts* http://www.cpag.org.uk/campaigns/child-poverty-london/keyfacts
73 New Policy Institute. (2017). *London's poverty profile: Inequality.* www.londonspovertyprofile.org.uk. Accessed February 01, 2019.

> That massive difference started to play with my head so much, because I just couldn't understand it. It was just too vast for me to understand how, it just kept on making me think, and also ask my friends, is this life? Is this really what we've come to settle for? And obviously when you're going down that road with a young mind, a mind that at the time can't do anything, you're just realising it, it messes with you even more.
> *(Public Health and Mental Health)*

Some witnesses highlighted other routes by which poverty could lead to violence. One witness, for example, discussed the role of poverty in increasing the likelihood of young men being drawn into illicit activities such as drug dealing and robbery:

> Being a young man if you come from a single parent house, it may be difficult for your parent to be able to afford certain clothing or the top mobile phones and stuff, which then makes you a target for other young people to pick on. That can affect mental health, and also lead you down the path into drug dealing or robbery just to get what you think you need.
> *(Public Health and Mental Health)*

The fast money that young people can make from drug distribution provides an incredibly powerful pull on those living in poverty, despite the fact that their involvement significantly increases the risk of being the victims or perpetrators of serious violence.[74] The pull of illicit drug markets is all the greater when young people feel that they lack control and influence in their lives – a deficit neatly summed up by one of our witnesses in their closing statement:

> We need to understand [young people's] sense of powerlessness in society as a whole and their inability to affect any kind of change in any aspect of their life. That lack of hope, the lack of being able to influence anything – that's really something that needs to be addressed.
> *(Youth Services and Community Work)*

74 Irwin-Rogers, K. (2019) Illicit drug markets, Consumer Capitalism and the Rise of Social Media: A Toxic Trap for Young People. *Critical Criminology.* 27(4): 591-610; Irwin-Rogers, K., Decker, S., Rostami, A., Stephenson, S., and Van Hellemont, E. (2019) In I. Vojnovic, A. Pearson, G. Asiki, G. DeVerteuil and A. Adriana (Eds.) *Handbook of Global Urban Health.* New York: Routledge. Pp. 484-508.

Part 2

The Economic and Social Cost of Serious Youth Violence

Part 2: The Economic and Social Cost of Serious Youth Violence

1. Motivation and Summary

Public resources are scarce *relative* to the demands on them, even when dealing with an issue as serious as Youth Violence, hence the need for a methodology to guide the best and optimal allocation of such resources amongst its competing uses, e.g. the NHS, Police, Schools and Social Services. This applies equally to any public service or body, for example, it applies to the allocation of police resources dealing with the multitude of potential crimes. The police need to decide how much resource is allocated to preventing each crime. The well-established methodology of 'economic and social cost-benefit analysis' known as CBA[75], is the gold standard for this type of assessment and evaluation. This CBA methodology[76] will be used in the analysis in this part of the report to assess, evaluate and quantify - in monetary terms – some of the main *economic and social costs* of serious youth violence.

The analysis here will focus only on incidents and offences of youth violence (offences committed by young people aged 24 or under) that involve the use of a knife instrument or a gun. This does mean that the estimates of the costs of serious youth violence reported here are lower than they would otherwise be if including other serious violence.

The levels of such violence (in particular knife crime) have been on the rise over the past several years, and by 2017, the level has reached such a critical point that the Prime Minister at the time, Theresa May, held an emergency Serious Violence Summit[77] in April 2019. As things stand, without any significant deployment of new and additional resources, it is reasonable to assume that the current high levels of serious youth violence are unlikely to reduce in any significant way over the coming months and years.

As an introduction to this part of the report, here are some of the main findings:

We established that **the total economic and social cost of serious youth violence across England and Wales in 2014/15 was at least £440 million, but more likely in the region of £790 million.** The first number is an under-estimate as it is calculated using only crimes recorded by the Police, which omits the large volume of non-fatal serious youth violence incidents that are not reported to the Police. These non-reported incidents are estimated from the British Crime Survey[78], in order to establish a more accurate estimate of the total volume of offences actually carried out and to show the real magnitude of the total economic and social cost, which is the higher number. That said, both of these numbers are substantial by any measure.

In 2018/19, the total economic and social cost of serious youth violence across England and Wales was at least £700 million, but more likely in the region of £1.3 billion. This means that the total cost rose by well over 50% between the year 2014/15 and the year 2018/19. There is a direct correlation between this growth and the magnitude of the growth in serious youth violence over the same period.

Over the full period of the **last eleven years**, **the total economic and social cost of serious youth violence across England and Wales was at least £6 billion, but more likely in the region of £11 billion.** These are staggering numbers, capturing the huge adverse impacts of this serious youth violence on individuals, communities and the various services such as the Police, the Criminal Justice Service and the NHS.

The two key fundamental messages emerge from the analysis, calculations and results presented in this chapter are as follows:

Firstly, we show that in each of the past eleven years, the **absolute magnitude** of the total economic and social cost of serious youth violence across England and Wales has been huge - in each year, the total cost has been at least circa £780 million, and in some years much more than this. This evidence in itself is a call for action and investment of new and additional resource to help reduce the levels of serious youth violence.

Secondly, we show the costs have **increased significantly** in each and every region of England and Wales over the past four years, with some regions experiencing an increase in total costs in excess of 50%. This evidence compounds the call for appropriate action and investment in appropriate policies, as discussed elsewhere in this report to reduce the level of violence and in turn the economic and social costs, within the context of limited budgets and ever growing demands on such budgets.

Roadmap to Part 2

In **section 2**, we outline the main adverse impacts of serious youth violence, our approach and discuss what is omitted from the estimated cost calculations.

75 Boardman, A.E. *et al*, *Cost-Benefit Analysis,* Cambridge University Press, 5th Edition, 2018.
76 Boardman, A.E. *et al*, *Cost-Benefit Analysis,* Cambridge University Press, 5th Edition, 2018.
77 https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/pm-opening-statement-at-serious-violence-summit-1-april-2019
78 https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/british-crime-survey-methodology

Section 3 presents our results at the aggregate level: we present results of the total number of offences that relate to serious youth violence and the estimated total economic and social costs of serious youth violence. This information is presented across the ten regions in England and Wales for the past eleven years.

Section 4 presents our results in a disaggregated format, the estimated costs for each category of adverse impact. There are six categories that the costs of serious youth violence are associated with:

- Police
- Criminal Justice System
- health services
- victim services
- physical and emotional harm
- lost economic output.

Some information about our data and methodology are referenced in Sections 3 and 4 but we also discuss that further in **section 5**.

In **section 6** we briefly discuss some of the economic and social costs that have been left out of the analysis such as the costs associated with the fear of violence and the costs to victims' families. There is also a brief discussion of the need for future work to assess and evaluate the net benefits (net of costs) of specific policies recommended in this report to help reduce levels of youth violence.

Appendices A and B within Part 2, contain tables showing all the estimated costs, that are referenced in Sections 3 and 4.

2. The Adverse Impacts of Serious Youth Violence

Our aim is to assess, evaluate and quantify the adverse *economic and social* impacts of serious youth violence *in the absence* of any significant deployment of (new and additional) public resources, to use the terminology from HM Treasury's Green Book[79] (their seminal text on the CBA methodology), assuming 'Business As Usual (BAU)'.

Such evaluation is important as it will quantify the total economic and social cost of the currently high level of serious youth violence in the England and Wales – the cost of inaction. While that figure will be of significant independent interest, it provides the 'benchmark' *cost* against which the net total costs/benefits of various policy interventions can then be assessed, which we discuss in Part 3 of this report, helping guide the allocation of (new/additional) public resources to address this matter.

We will in particular measure and estimate the economic and social cost resulting from fatalities due to youth violence, and several other *direct* impacts of such violence. There are also direct costs to various public services (such as the Police, the NHS, and the Criminal Justice System (CJS)) from dealing with the consequences of violence.

Our calculations and results will be an underestimate of the true cost since we have not measured and costed some additional negative 'externalities' that such high levels of violence generate - the adverse impacts on individuals, families, communities and society at large, for example, perceived risks, and the fear of violence, which we have omitted from the current analysis. This is, however, something that is critical to try to measure and estimate in future work.

That such *indirect costs* are significant is obvious and perhaps is one reason for the Serious Violence summit in April 2019, and the reason the current Government has started to invest in the network of the newly established Violence Reduction Units (VRUs) across the country, which are adopting public health approaches to conceptualising and responding to serious violence – mirroring the top-line recommendations in the YVC's Interim Report[80] launched in Parliament in July 2018.

Further discussion of direct and indirect costs is provided below. While some of these costs are relatively easy to measure such as the cost to the police of deploying resource to deal with the violence – others are harder to measure, such as the cost of the loss of life, but there are well-established methodologies that enable us to do so.

We now outline some of the main elements of the analysis to establish the economic and social cost of serious youth violence (knife and gun crime). First, we establish the sources of such costs and then we measure such costs and attach an economic value to them (in Great British Pounds – GBP).

We focus here, due to measurement and data availability, on knife-crime and gun related youth violence. The outcomes of knife crime can be many including stabbing that results in loss of life, and also outcomes that result in some form of non-life threatening injury. We will include gun violence in the analysis and calculations, although the levels of such violence are significantly lower than those from knife crime. It should be noted, that we are omitting incidents of youth violence that do not involve a knife instrument or a gun from our analysis and calculations.

As previously mentioned, data on recorded knife crime (and gun violence) are available from the Police[81], but we have also assessed levels of unrecorded knife-crime, from the British Crime Survey to gather a more accurate picture of the levels and

79 HM Treasury, *Green Book: Central Government Guidance on Appraisal and Evaluation*, 2018.
80 Youth Violence Commission, *Interim Report*, 2018.
81 https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/police-recorded-crime-open-data-tables

nature of serious youth violence. Based on work done in the 2018 Home Office report, the *incidence of actual violence* is likely to be around *2.6* times that which is recorded by the Police. This number is known as the 'multiplier'.[82]

One point to note upfront is that data on offences are not available by age and we have used information and data from other sources to make reasonable estimates of what proportion of the relevant offences (knife crime and gun violence) are committed by young people aged 24 or under. We will discuss our detailed approach on this in Section 5, but in summary concluded for such offences that lead to a homicide, an estimated 36% of the total of such offences are committed by young people, and for such offences that lead to a non-fatal injury, an estimated 60% of the total of such offences are committed by young people.

3. Total Number of Offences and Total Economic and Social Costs

In this section, we will present the data on the volume (total number) of serious youth violence (offences committed by young people aged 24 or under), across the regions of England and Wales and for the past eleven years. We present this data in two different ways: first, in section 3.1, we present the data as recorded by the Police. In section 3.2, we will present data on the total volume of offences informed by the British Crime Survey (BCS), and using the Police Recorded Crime (PRC) data as the base data.

We then present the results of our analysis and calculations on the *total* economic and social costs of serious youth violence. We do so for each of the regions of England and Wales and across the past eleven years.

The total economic and social cost of serious youth violence across England and Wales in 2018/19 the total cost was at least £700 million, but more likely in the region of £1.3 billion. In 2014/15 it was at least £440 million, but more likely in the region of £790 million – with the lower number in these ranges very likely to be an underestimate.

Key things to note are firstly, these are staggering numbers, by any measure and within any context. Secondly, these are per annum numbers - the £440 million is the estimated minimum total economic and social cost of serious youth violence in the *one year* of 2014/15. Thirdly, the total cost has significantly increased – by over 50% – over this recent four year period, which is not surprising given the significant increase in knife crime over the same period.

3.1. Police Recorded Crime (PRC) Data

In this subsection we present the total cost estimates based solely on the PRC data on serious youth violence. As mentioned, this is an under-estimate of the true total economic and social costs of serious youth violence as much (non-fatal) violence is not recorded.

3.1.1. Total Offences

Figure 1 shows the total number of knife related offenses committed by young people (of age 24 or under) as recorded by the police in four regions of England, and for two years. Full data, across all regions in England and Wales, and for past eleven years, is in Table A1 in Part 2, Appendix A. These numbers include offences that resulted in fatalities and those that resulted in non-fatal injury.

Figure 1: *Total number of knife related offences committed by young people recorded by the Police.*

Figure 1 shows that in each of these four regions, there has been a significant growth in violence by 50% or more - in the number of knife related offenses over a period four years. As can be seen from Table A1 in Part 2, Appendix A, this is the same in the other six regions of England and Wales. So each and every region in England and Wales has seen a significant growth in the number of knife related offenses over this period of four years.

In aggregate terms, as Table A1 shows, in 2014/15, there were in total, across England and Wales, 15,832 Police recorded knife related offences committed by someone of age 24 or under, while in 2018/19 the number was 28,344, which is a **growth in the number of offences by young people over this four year period of 80%.**

Figure 2 below shows the total number of gun violence related offences committed by young people (24 or under) as recorded by the Police.

82 Heeks, M. *et al*, "The economic and social costs of crime", second edition, Research Report 99, Home Office, July 2018.

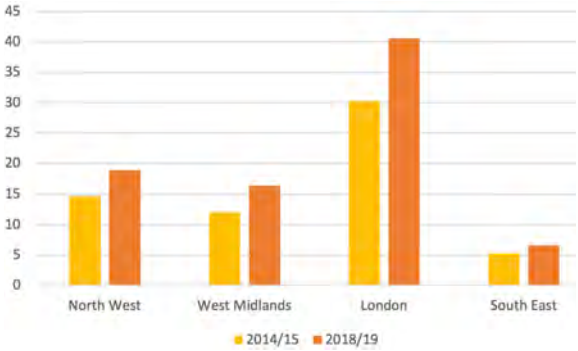


Figure 2: *Total number of gun violence related offences committed by young people as recorded by the Police.*

While we have included these gun related offence numbers here, in Figure 2, these numbers are tiny compared to knife crime numbers in Figure 1, in absolute terms. But what is noticeable from Figure 2 is that there is also a non-trivial increase in the number of gun related offences across the same four years. As can be seen from Table A2 in Part 2, Appendix A, gun violence by young people, across England and Wales, increased by around 40% from 2014/15 to 2018/19. While this is not nearly as large as the increase in knife crime, which as noted above, was 80% - this is still huge.

Combining Figures 1 and 2, we have Figure 3 below that thus shows the total number of serious violent offences committed by young people as recorded by the Police.

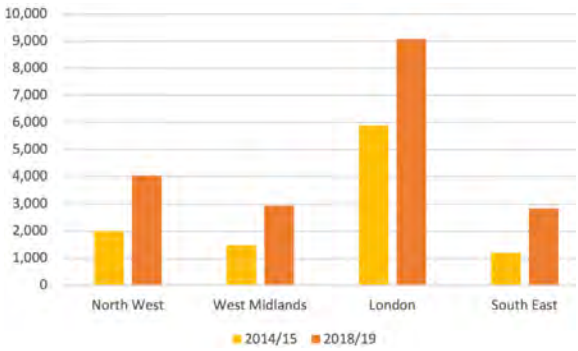


Figure 3: *Total number of serious violent offences committed by young people as recorded by the Police.*

Figure 3 looks almost identical to Figure 1 since as noted above gun related offences as show in Figure 2 make up a tiny fraction of the total offences compared to knife related offences.

3.1.2. Total Economic and Social Costs

We now look at total economic and social costs of serious youth violence, using only the PRC data above for the numbers of offences. Figure 4 below show the total economic and social cost – summing up six categories/areas of direct costs – resulting from the above offences, for four regions and two years. The six categories are: ***Police costs; Health costs, Criminal Justice System costs; Emotional and Physical Harm costs, Lost Output costs, Victim Services costs***. More details of what these costs are will be detailed in Section 4, where the main estimated results of these individual costs are presented.

These total costs are underestimates of the full, total economic and social cost for several reasons discussed elsewhere.

Figure 4: *The total economic and social cost – in pounds - of serious youth violence, using Police Recorded Crime data on the total number of offences.*

From Figure 4 above, it is clear that in each of these four regions, the total economic and social cost of serious youth violence significantly increased from an already high base over the intervening four years, between 2014/15 and 2018/19. There is however much variation across the regions. The total economic and social cost of serious youth violence grew by 55% in the North West, by 68% in the West Midlands, by 40% in London and by 135% in South East. Of course these variations in costs correspond to similar variations in levels of violence.

As shown in Table A10 in Part 2, Appendix A, at the aggregate level across the whole of England and Wales, the total economic and social cost of serious youth violence for 2014/15 comes to £440 million and for 2018/19 comes to £700 million. Both of these figures are huge and are underestimates. And to emphasise these are per annum figures, one for the year 2014/15 and one for the year 2018/19. It is worth noting that **this is a growth by 59% in the total economic and social cost of serious youth violence, over this four year period.**

3.2. British Crime Survey Data together with PRC Data

For offences that result in a fatality, we only use PRC data. But for offences that do not result in a fatality, the Home Office 2018 report has used the British Crime Survey data to estimate more accurate levels of such offences, many of which are not recorded by the police. For such offences, we apply a multiplier of 2.6

to the PRC data on non-fatal, violent injuries caused by the knife instrument to arrive at a more accurate estimate of the number of offences. This multiplier is based on the detailed work in the 2018 Home Office report - see Section 5 below for further information.

3.2.1. Total Offences

Figure 5 below provides a summary highlight of the calculations of the total number of violent (using a knife instrument or gun) offenses committed by young people – Table B1 in Part 2, Appendix B has the exact numbers across all regions of England and Wales and across the past eleven years.

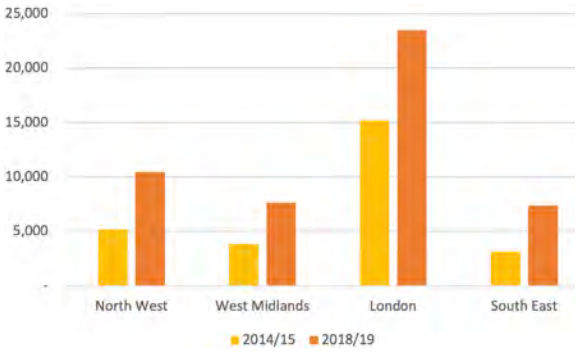


Figure 5: *Total number of serious youth violence offenses (using a knife instrument or a gun) committed by young people, using the data from the British Crime Survey data and the PRC data.*

Figure 5 above shows that in each of these four regions, there has been a significant increase – growth in violence by 50% or more - in the number of knife and gun related offences over this recent period of four years. As can be seen from Table B1 in Part 2, Appendix B, which shows the full data, this is the same in the other six regions of England and Wales. So each and every region in England and Wales has seen a significant growth in the number of knife related offences over this period of four years.

In aggregate terms, as Table B1 in Part 2, Appendix B shows, in 2014/15, there were in total, across England and Wales, 40,847 knife offences committed by young people aged 24 or under, while in 2018/19 the number was 73,395, which is an increase **in the number of offences over this four year period of 80% -** which, interestingly, is the same percentage growth in the number of offences with only PRC data, as noted above in Section 3.1.1.

Figure 6 above right show the percentage increases – *year on year* – since 2014/15, in the total number of offences committed by young people. As can be seen, there is significant growth *each year* between 2014/15 and 2018/19, of 11%, 21%, 19% and 12%.

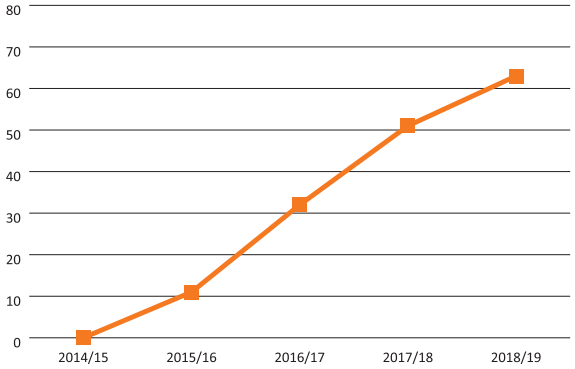


Figure 6: *Percentage increases – year on year – in the total number of serious youth violent offences using the data from the British Crime Survey data and the PRC data (with 2014/15 as base year).*

3.2.2. Total Economic and Social Costs

Figure 7 summarises the total economic and social cost. These costs are more accurate estimates of the costs of serious youth violence but are still an underestimate as they only capture direct costs, neglecting the indirect costs, such as those associated with the *fear of violence* - more on this in Section 6.

Figure 7: *The total economic and social cost (in pounds) of serious youth violence, using the British Crime Survey data and the PRC data.*

From Figure 7, it is clear that in each of these four regions, the total economic and social cost of serious youth violence significantly increased from an already huge base over the intervening four years, between 2014/15 and 2018/19. There is however much variation across the regions. The total economic and social cost of serious youth violence grew by 76% in the North West, by 82% in the West Midlands, by 47% in London and by 134% in South East. Of course, these variations in costs correspond to similar variations in levels of violence.

As shown in Table B8 in Part 2, Appendix B, at the aggregate level across whole of England and Wales - the total economic and social cost of serious youth violence for 2014/15 comes to £786 million and for 2018/19 comes to £1.3billion. Both of these figures are vast and a present a reasonable estimate

of the true costs of serious youth violence. And to emphasise these are per annum figures, one for the year 2014/15 and one for the year 2018/19. It is also worth noting that **this is a growth by 65% in the total economic and social cost of serious youth violence, over this four year period.**

Figure 8 below show the percentage increases – *year on year* – since 2014/15, in the total economic and social cost of serious violence. As can be seen, there is significant growth *each year* between 2014/15 and 2018/19, of 12%, 16%, 21% and 7%.

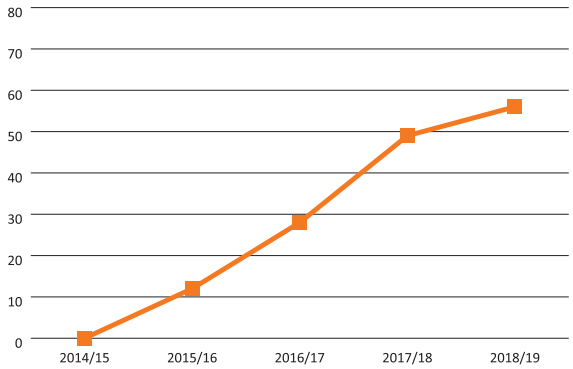


Figure 8: *Percentage increases – year on year – in the total economic and social cost of serious youth violence using the data from the British Crime Survey data and the PRC data (with 2014/15 as base year).*

4. Costs by Category

In this section, we outline how the total economic and social costs associated with knife and gun offences committed by young people break down across particular categories of cost. Four of these categories constitute public services, namely, the Police, the Criminal Justice System, the Health Services and Victim Services. All four of these services incur direct and indirect costs associated with serious violence and their resources are respectively deployed to deal with the consequences of the violence. We show and discuss the costs to each such service in sections 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, and 4.5, respectively.

The other two important cost categories concern the victims of serious violence. The most important is the physical and emotional harm caused by a violent incident. We present the results on that in section 4.4. The other cost is lost economic output due to the violence and we present the results on that in section 4.6.

4.1. Cost to the Police

Here we present the results of our calculations that estimate the cost to the Police in dealing with and investigating incidents of serious youth violence – which the Home Office 2018 report denotes as the costs in response to the crime. Such costs capture the opportunity cost of police time and resources taken up investigating incidents of serious youth violence rather than engaging in other activities such as responding to other crime and non-crime activities. Let us state some of the main results. First, we will show that the costs to the Police of dealing with this violence have been increasing over the past four years or so. But also in absolute terms that the numbers are high. **Total cost to Police across England and Wales from serious youth violence increased from £52 million in 2014/15 to £84 million in 2018/19.** These are substantial figures, particularly in the context of overly stretched police budgets. Significant reductions in levels of serious violence between young people would free up police capacity that could then be redeployed to tackle other forms of crime that are currently being neglected, due in large part to a lack of resources.

This is an increase in the cost to the Police over this four year period by 62%. This is a significant increase, arising of course from the weighty increase in serious youth violence offenses.

Section 6.1 of the Home Office 2018 report describes the methodology used to arrive at the average unit cost per incident to the Police. For an incident that leads to a homicide, the unit cost (in 2015/16 prices) is £11,960. And for an incident that leads to a non-fatal, violent injury the unit cost to the Police is £1,130. These unit costs, as noted in the Home Office 2018 report, have been estimated using cost data from the Police but also using the overall crime data from both the police and from the British Crime Survey. In particular, it is noted in that report that the accurate total cost to the police would be when the unit cost is applied to the volume of offences using the multiplier that is informed by the British Crime Survey. It is the Police costs shown in Figure 10 below that constitute more accurate estimates. It should be emphasised that for offences that lead to a homicide the multiplier is not applied since the number of homicides are all recorded by the Police. The multiplier is only used as a way to estimate those non-recorded incidents that lead to a non-fatal injury.

We first apply the unit costs only to the PRC data on serious youth violence offences. Figure 9 overleaf shows the police costs for each of the ten regions in England and Wales and for two selected years, 2014/15 and 2018/19. The exact costs and for the past eleven years are in Table A4 in Part 2, Appendix A. As noted above, these are underestimates of the true costs to Police. But act as lower bound to such costs.

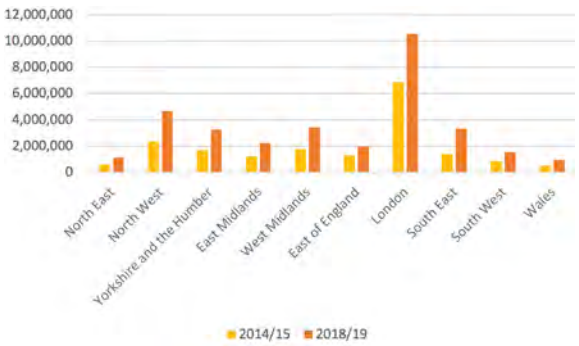


Figure 9: *The total costs to Police from Serious Youth Violence across all regions and for selected two years using only PRC data*

What is clear from Figure 9 is the significant increase in police costs over the recent four year period. So, for example, the cost to the police in London from dealing with and investigating serious youth violence has risen by 52% between 2014/15 and 2018/19. In other regions the increase is less, but for some is much more. For example, the cost to the police in the North East has risen by 83% over this period.

In Figure 10 below (which for reasons noted above, is the more accurate picture of the costs to the police.), once again, it is clear there has been a significant increase in costs to police in all the ten regions over the four year period from 2014/15 to 2018/19. For London, the increase is 59%, while for the West Midlands the increase is 98% - the exact figures for the past eleven years is in Part 2, Table B2 in Appendix B. Once again, we see massive increases in costs to the police.

A good illustration of the magnitude of police costs can be gathered from the statistics concerning London in 2018/19: £27 million. In 2014/15, the corresponding figure was £17 million.

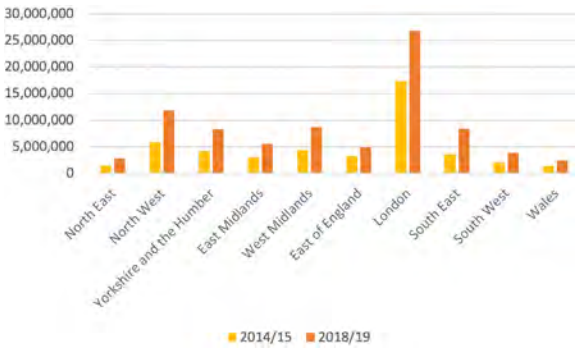


Figure 10: *The total costs to Police from Serious Youth Violence across all regions and for selected two years using the British Crime Survey data and the PRC data*

4.2. Costs to the Criminal Justice System (CJS)

Here we present the results of our calculations that estimate the cost to the Criminal Justice System (CJS) in dealing with incidents of serious youth violence. Such costs relate to Prosecution (CPS), the Courts, Jury Service, Legal Aid, Probation and Prison Services, and the Youth Justice Board.

Let us state upfront some of the main results. First, we show that the costs to the CJS of dealing with the consequences of serious youth violence have been increasing over the past four years or so. But also in absolute terms, the numbers are high. **We will show that total cost to the CJS across England and Wales from serious youth violence incidents and cases increased from £113 million in 2014/15 to £181 million in 2018/19.** Both of these figures are substantial. A significant reduction in levels of serious youth violence would generate significant cost savings in the context of severely limited CJS resources – resources that could then be redeployed to improve the CJS in various ways.

This is an increase in the cost to the CJS over this four year period by 60%, which is roughly the same increase as with the police costs noted above. This is a significant increase, arising of course from the significant increase in serious youth violence offences.

Section 6.2 of the Home Office 2018 report describes the methodology used to arrive at the average unit cost per incident to the CJS. For an incident that leads to a homicide, the unit cost (in 2015/16 prices) is £800,980. And for an incident that leads to a non-fatal, violent injury the unit cost to the CJS is £1370. Just pause to look at the cost per incident when there is a fatality in the said incident.

These unit costs – as noted in the Home Office 2018 report – have been estimated using cost data on the various areas of the CJS, provided by the Ministry of Justice, but also crime data from both the Police and from the British Crime Survey. In particular, the accurate total cost to the CJS would be estimated when these unit costs are applied to volume of offences using the multiplier that is informed by the British Crime Survey. Hence it is the CJS costs shown in Figure 12 below that are better estimates.

That said, we first apply the unit costs only to the PRC data on serious youth violence offences. Figure 11 below shows the CJS costs for each of the ten regions in England and Wales and for two selected years, 2014/15 and 2018/19. The exact costs and for the past eleven years are in Table A5 in Appendix A. As noted above, these are almost certainly under-estimates of the true costs to CJS, but act as a lower bound to such costs.

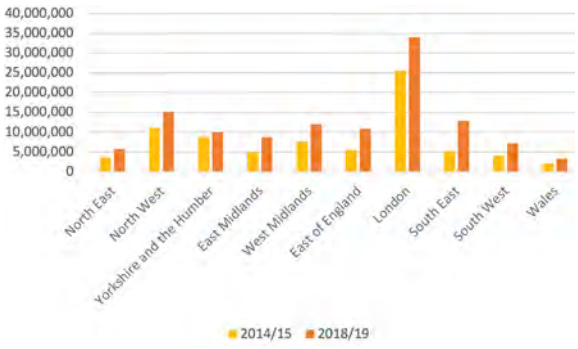


Figure 11: *The total costs to the Criminal Justice System from Serious Youth Violence across all regions and for selected two years using only PRC data*

What is clear first of all from Figure 11 is the increase in CJS costs over the recent four year period. So, for example, the cost to the CJS in London from serious youth violence has risen by 39% between 2014/15 and 2018/19. Other regions the increase is less, but for some is much more. For example, the cost to the CJS in the North East has risen by 57% over this period.

Let us now turn to Figure 12, which, for reasons noted above, is the more accurate picture of the costs to the CJS. Once again, it is clear there has been a significant increase in costs to CJS in all the ten regions over the four year period from 2014/15 to 2018/19. For London, the increase is 42% while for the West Midlands the increase is by 64% - the exact figures and for the past eleven years is in Table B3 in Part 2, Appendix B. Once again, we see huge increases in costs, this time to the CJS.

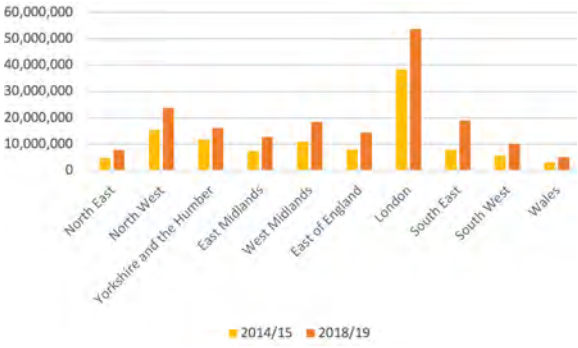


Figure 12: *The total costs to the Criminal Justice System from Serious Youth Violence across all regions and for selected two years using the British Crime Survey data and the PRC data*

To illustrate the magnitudes just look at **the cost of serious youth violence to the CJS in London in 2018/19: £54 million.** In 2014/15, the corresponding figure was £38 million.

4.3. Costs to Health Services

Here we present the results of our calculations that estimate the cost to the Health Services in dealing with incidents of serious youth violence. Such costs come from dealing with the physical and emotional harms from this violence. These include ambulance costs, medical procedure costs associated with physical harm, and counselling costs associated with the emotional harms.

Let us here state some of the main results. First, we show that the costs to the Health Services from dealing with the consequences of serious youth violence have been increasing over the past four years or so. But also in absolute terms, the numbers are high. **We show that total cost to the Health Services across England and Wales from serious youth violence incidents and cases increased from £38 million in 2014/15 to £67 million in 2018/19.** Both of these figures are huge and a significant reduction in serious youth violence would mean savings of these huge costs and in the context of limited health and NHS funding, resources that could then be deployed to the multitude of other areas of the health services.

This is an increase in the cost to the Health Services over this four year period by 76% - higher increase than the corresponding increases in Police and CJS costs, as noted above. This is a significant increase, arising of course from the significant increase in serious youth violence offenses.

Section 5.4 of the Home Office 2018 report describes the methodology used to arrive at the average unit cost - that is, per incident - to health services. For an incident that leads to a homicide, the unit cost (in 2015/16 prices) is £1100. And for an incident that leads to a non-fatal, violent injury the unit cost is £920. These unit costs – as noted in the Home Office 2018 report – have been estimated using cost data from various sources including the NHS Reference costs, but also crime data from both the Police and from the British Crime Survey. In particular, the more accurate picture on the total costs to the health services would be when the unit costs are applied to volume of offences using the multiplier that is informed by the British Crime Survey.

It is the health services costs shown in Figure 14 below that are better estimates.

That said, we first apply to the unit costs only to the PRC data on serious youth violence offences. Figure 13 below shows the health service costs for each of the ten regions in England and Wales and for two selected years, 2014/15 and 2018/19. The exact costs and for the past eleven years are in Table A6 in Part 2, Appendix A. As noted above, these are underestimates of the true costs to the health services. But act as lower bound to such costs.

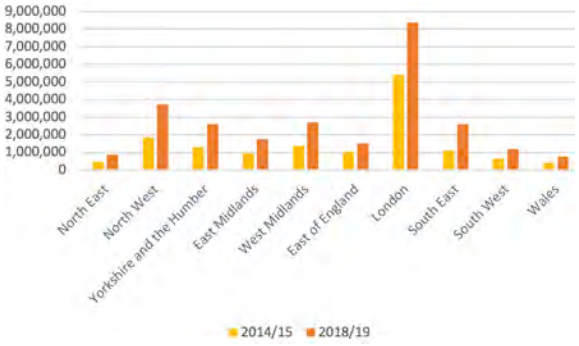


Figure 13: *The total costs to Health Services from Serious Youth Violence across all regions and for selected two years using only PRC data*

What is clear first of all from Figure 13 is the increase in health service costs over the recent four year period. So, for example, the cost to the health services in London from serious youth violence has risen by 60% between 2014/15 and 2018/19. Other regions the increase is less, but for some is much more. For example, the cost to the health services in the North East has risen by 89% over this period.

Let us now turn to Figure 14 below, which, for reasons noted above, is the more accurate picture of the costs to the health services. Once again, it is clear there has been a significant increase in costs to the health services in all the ten regions over the four year period from 2014/15 to 2018/19. For London, the increase is 57% while for the West Midlands the increase is by 99% - the exact figures and for the past eleven years is in Table B4 in Part 2, Appendix B. Once again, gigantic increases in costs to the health services.

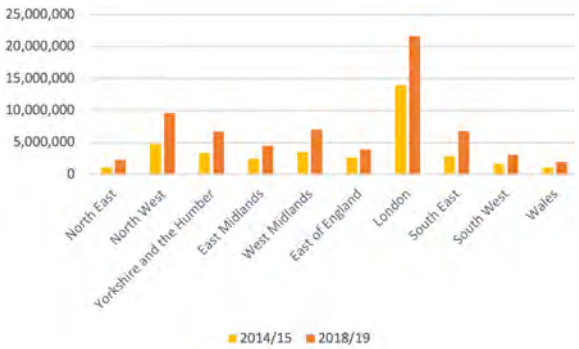


Figure 14: *The total costs to the Health Services from Serious Youth Violence across all regions and for selected two years using the British Crime Survey data and the PRC data*

To illustrate the magnitudes just look at the cost to the health services in London in 2018/19. **It is £22 million - the cost to the health services in London in the one year of 2018/19 from dealing with offences relating to serious youth violence.** In 2014/15, the corresponding figure was £14 million.

4.4. Costs of Physical and Emotional Harm

Here we present the results of our calculations that estimate the cost of the physical and emotional harm to victims of serious youth violence. Such costs come from the reduction in the quality of life of the victim from the physical and emotional harm suffered as a result of the incident. Victims of serious youth violence will suffer substantial physical and emotional injuries. In order to quantify this cost the well-established 'quality-adjusted life years (QALY)' methodology - first used in Dolan et al. (2005)[83] – is used to estimate the cost. For details of this approach and methodology, see Section 5.2 of the Home Office 2018 report.

Let us state some of the main results. First, we will show that the costs of Physical and Emotional Harm from serious youth violence has been increasing over the past four years or so. But also in absolute terms the numbers are high. **We show that total economic and social cost of physical and emotional hard across England and Wales from serious youth violence increased from £485 million in 2014/15 to £814 million in 2018/19.** Both of these figures are staggering. The social welfare gains would be significant following a reduction in youth violence. And these costs (numbers) do not capture the adverse indirect impact of the said violence on families, communities and society at large as we have not estimated such negative externalities of the violence, which ought to be estimated in future work as previously mentioned.

This is an increase in the total economic and social cost from physical and emotional harm over this four year period by 68% - around similar corresponding increases in Police and CJS costs, as noted above. This is a significant increase, arising of course from the significant increase in serious youth violence offenses in particular these costs capture the huge increase in the number of fatalities especially with knife crime.

Section 5.2 of the Home Office 2018 report describes the methodology used to arrive at the average unit cost per incident of physical and emotional harm. For an incident that leads to a homicide, the unit cost (in 2015/16 prices) is just over £2 million. And for an incident that leads to a non-fatal, violent injury the unit cost is £8240.

These unit costs, as noted in the Home Office 2018 report, have been estimated using a well-established QALY approach, but also crime data from both the Police and from the British Crime Survey. In particular, the accurate total cost of the physical and emotional harm would be when the unit costs are applied to volume of offences using the multiplier that is informed by the British Crime Survey. The costs shown in Figure 16 below that are better estimates.

83 Dolan, P. *et al*, "Estimating the intangible victim costs of serious violence", *British Journal of Criminology*, 2005

However, we first apply to the unit costs only to the PRC data on serious youth violence offences. Figure 15 below shows the physical and emotional harm costs for each of the ten regions in England and Wales and for two selected years, 2014/15 and 2018/19. The exact costs and for the past eleven years are in Table A7 in Part 2, Appendix A. As noted above, these are under-estimates of the true costs of the physical and emotional harm. But act as lower bound to such costs.

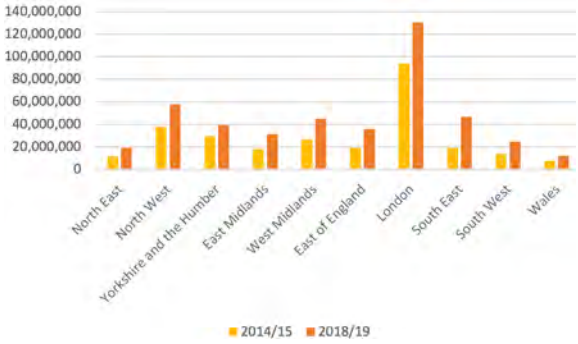


Figure 15: *The total costs of Physical and Emotional Harm from Serious Youth Violence across all regions and for selected two years using only PRC data*

What is clear from Figure 15 is the increase in these costs over the recent four year period. So, for example, the cost of the physical and emotional hard in London from serious youth violence has risen by 40% between 2014/15 and 2018/19. Other regions the increase is less, but for some is much more. For example, the cost from physical and emotional hard in the North West has risen by 53% over this period.

Let us now turn to Figure 16 below, which is the more accurate picture of the costs of physical and emotional harm. Once again, it is clear there has been a significant increase in these costs in all the ten regions over the four year period from 2014/15 to 2018/19. For London, the increase is 46% while for the West Midlands the increase is by 83% - the exact figures and for the past eleven years is in Table B5 in Appendix B. Once again, huge increases in costs of physical and emotional harm.

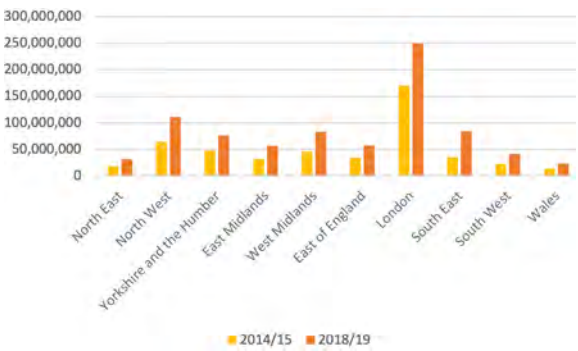


Figure 16: *The total costs of Physical and Emotional Harm from Serious Youth Violence across all regions and for selected two years using the British Crime Survey data and the PRC data*

To illustrate the magnitudes, look at the cost in London in 2018/19. **It is £249 million - the cost of physical and emotional harm in London in the one year of 2018/19 from serious youth violence.** In 2014/15, the corresponding figure was £171 million.

Figure 17 below show the percentage increases – *year on year* – since 2014/15, in the total cost of physical and emotional harm from serious youth violence across England and Wales. As can be seen, there is significant growth *each year* between 2014/15 and 2018/19, of 13%, 15%, 22% and 7%.

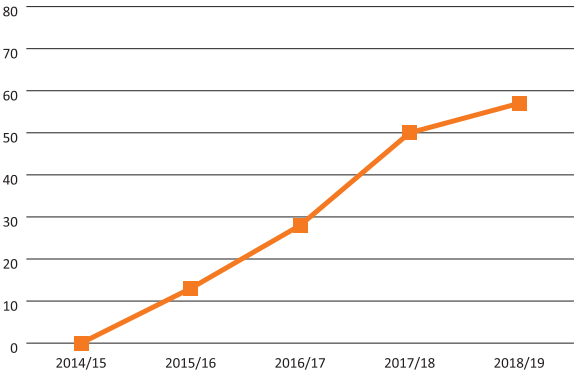


Figure 17: *Percentage increases – year on year – in the total cost of physical and emotional harm from serious youth violence in England and Wales using the data from the British Crime Survey data and the PRC data (putting 2014/15 as base year).*

4.5. Costs to Victim Services

Here we present the results of our calculations that estimate the cost to Victim Services arising from serious youth violence. Such costs arise from the cost of support provided to victims of crime as well as their families and friends, and from the opportunity cost of volunteer time in delivering victim services.

Let us here state some of the main results. First, we show that the costs to Victim Services from dealing with the consequences of serious youth violence have been increasing over the past four years or so. But also in absolute terms the numbers are high. **We show that total cost to Victim Services across England and Wales from serious youth violence increased from £392 million in 2014/15 to £554 million in 2018/19.** Both of these figures are huge. That would mean savings of these huge costs and in the context of limited Victim Services resources, resources that could then be deployed to the multitude of areas of their work.

This is an increase in the cost to Victim Services over this four year period by 42% - similar percentages increases to corresponding increases in other categories of costs, as noted above. This is a significant increase, arising of course from the significant increase in serious youth violence incidents that lead to fatalities.

Section 5.5 of the Home Office 2018 report describes the methodology used to arrive at the average unit cost - that is, per incident – to Victim Services. For an incident that leads to a homicide, the unit cost (in 2015/16 prices) is £5480. And for an incident that leads to a non-fatal, violent injury the unit cost is less than £10 and hence rounded to £0. This means the costs will be the same with or without applying the multiplier. These unit costs – as noted in the Home Office 2018 report – have been estimated using cost data from various sources such as the publically available data from Victim Support, but also crime data from both the Police and from the British Crime Survey.

Figure 18 below shows the costs to Victim Services for each of the ten regions in England and Wales and for two selected years, 2014/15 and 2018/19. The exact costs and for the past eleven years are in Table A8 in Appendix A (and reproduced in Table B6 in Appendix, for sake of completeness).

What is clear from Figure 18 is the increase in the costs to Victim Services over the recent four year period. So, for example, the cost to Victim Services in London from serious youth violence has risen by 24% between 2014/15 and 2018/19. Other regions the increase is less, but for some is much more. For example, the cost to the health services in the West Midlands has risen by 42% over this period.

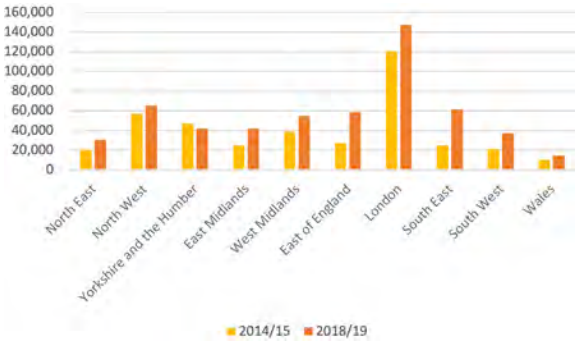


Figure 18: *The total costs for Victim Services from Serious Youth Violence across all regions and for selected two years using only PRC data*

To illustrate the magnitudes look at the cost in London in 2018/19. **It is £148 million - the cost to Victim Services in London in the one year of 2018/19 from serious youth violence.** In 2014/15, the corresponding figure was £120 million.

4.6. Costs from Lost Economic Output

Here we present the results of our calculations that estimate the cost from lost economic output arising from serious youth violence. Lost economic output estimates the lost productivity from time off work and reduced productivity whilst at work for victims of crime. Victims of crime may take time off work as a result of the crime and may also be less productive at work for some time following the crime. For details of the methodology, see Section 5.3 of the Home Office 2018 report.

Let us here state some of the main results. First, we show that the costs of Lost Output from serious youth violence has been increasing over the past four years or so. But also in absolute terms the numbers are high. The best estimate of these costs shows **that the total economic and social cost from Lost Output across England and Wales from serious youth violence increased from £102 million in 2014/15 to £176 million in 2018/19.** Both of these figures are huge and so the gains to individuals, firms, the economy and society would be significant if youth violence were reduced.

This is an increase in the cost from lost output over this four year period by 73% - around similar corresponding increases in the other five categories of total costs, as noted above. This is a significant increase, arising of course from the growing increase in serious youth violence offenses in particular these costs capture the huge number of fatalities.

Section 5.3 of the Home Office 2018 report describes the methodology used to arrive at the average unit cost - that is, per incident – from lost output. For an incident that leads to a homicide, the unit cost (in 2015/16 prices) is £254,710. And for an incident that leads to a non-fatal, violent injury the unit cost is £2060. These unit costs – as noted in the Home Office 2018 report – have been estimated using a detailed approach to reductions in productivity, but also crime data from both the Police and from the British Crime Survey. In particular, as with other costs, it is thus noted that the accurate total cost of Lost Output would be when the unit costs are applied to volume of offences using the multiplier that is informed by the British Crime Survey.

It is the costs shown in Figure 20 below that are better estimates.

However, we first apply to the unit costs only to the PRC data on serious youth violence offences. Figure 19 below shows the costs of lost output for each of the ten regions in England and Wales and for two selected years, 2014/15 and 2018/19. The exact costs and for the past eleven years are in Table A9 in Appendix A. As noted above, these are underestimates of the true costs of Lost Output. But act as lower bound to such costs.

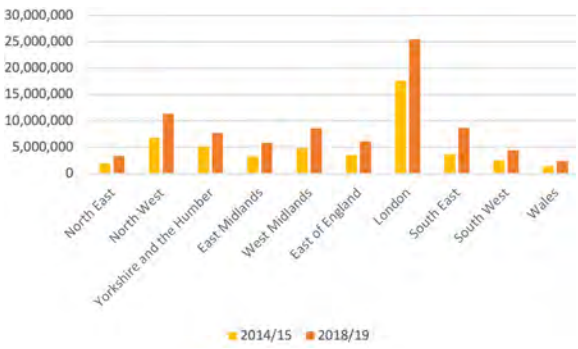


Figure 19: *The total costs from Lost Output from Serious Youth Violence across all regions and for selected two years using only PRC data*

What is clear first of all from Figure 16 is the increase in these costs over the recent four year period. So, for example, the cost of lost output in London from serious youth violence has risen by 47% between 2014/15 and 2018/19. Other regions the increase is less, but for some is much more. For example, the cost from physical and emotional hard in the West Midlands has risen by 81% over this period.

Let us now turn to Figure 20 below, which, for reasons noted above, is the more accurate picture of the costs from lost output. It is clear there has been a significant increase in these costs in all the ten regions over the four year period from 2014/15 to 2018/19. For London, the increase is 49% while for the West Midlands the increase is by 86% - the exact figures and for the past eleven years is in Table B7 in Part 2, Appendix B. Once again, huge increases in costs from lost output.

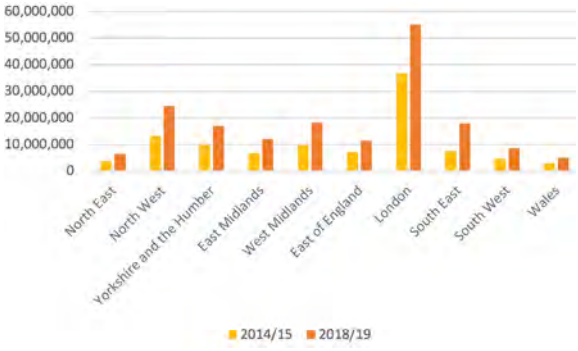


Figure 20: *The total costs from Lost Output from Serious Youth Violence across all regions and for selected two years using the British Crime Survey data and the PRC data*

To illustrate the magnitudes just look at the cost in London in 2018/19. **It is £55 million - the cost from lost output in London in the one year of 2018/19 from serious youth violence.** In 2014/15, the corresponding figure was £37 million.

5. Data and Methodology

In section 5, we describe our data and methodology, including a brief discussion of the *unit costs* that are taken from the analysis and calculations from the 2018 Home Office report.[84]

5.1. Police Recorded Crime (PRC) Data

The raw data on number of offences involving a knife or sharp instrument are from the Police Recorded Crime (PRC) data.[85] And similarly, the raw data for number of offences involving a weapon are from the PRC data too.[86] This data is available for the past eleven years, from 2008/09 till 2018/19. For each year, the data is from 1st April till 31st March.

The raw data for each year is by Police Force Area in England and Wales and by offence description. We used this raw data to calculate the total number of such offences in each of the ten regions of England and Wales and by (a) the number of offences that led to a homicide and (b) the number of offences that led to violence with injury (non-fatal).

These offences are across all ages. But we are interested in offences committed by young people, that is, offences committed by those aged 24 or under. Data by age (and region and offence type) is not readily available.

So we proceeded as follows. We estimated - using other sources of data – the number of the above offences committed by young people.

So we estimated that 36% of all offences (knife or gun related) recorded by the Police that led to a homicide was committed by young people.[87] And we estimated that 60% of all offences recorded by the Police that led to a non-fatal violent injury was committed by young people.[88] We assume these proportions remain the same across all of the past eleven years.

While this is of course a rough estimation, it is a reasonable assumption. We adopt it to then to calculate the total number of serious violent offences committed by young people in each year since 2008/09 and in each region of England and Wales. **These are shown in Table A3 in the Part 2, Appendix A.**

84 Heeks, M. *et al*, "The economic and social costs of crime", second edition, Research Report 99, Home Office, July 2018
85 https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/police-recorded-crime-open-data-tables - Knife crime open data year ending March 2009 onwards https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/datasets/policeforceareadatatables
86 https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/datasets/offencesinvolvingtheuseofweaponsdatatables
87 https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommmunity/crimeandjustice/datasets/appendixtableshomicideinenglandandwales - in 2017-2018 (most recently published year), 36% of knife homicides were committed by under 16, plus 16-17, plus 18-24 age groups.
88 See for example: https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/mopac_knife_crime_strategy_june_2017.pdf

5.2. British Crime Survey Data

The PRC data is accurate as it is recorded by the Police at the time of the incident/offence. For offences that lead to a homicide, this data captures all such offences. But there will be serious youth violence offences that don't lead to a fatality that are not recorded by the Police. The British Crime Survey[89] is a survey that aims to capture/estimate the true level of such offences. And we will appeal to such data to estimate the true number of offences - police recorded and those not recorded by the police – committed by young people that lead to a non-fatal violent injury.

To estimate this, we accept the analysis undertaken about this very issue in the 2018 Home Office Report in which so-called 'multipliers' are derived from the BCS data. It is estimated in that Report that for every Police recorded offence leading to a violent injury, there are 2.6 times as many such offences actually occurring. So the multiplier is 2.6, which is what we thus adopt in our calculations of the number of offences by young people leading to non-fatal, violent injury.

Table B3 in Appendix B shows a more accurate total number of serious offences committed by young people which is arrived at by adding the PRC data on homicides (times 0.36 to account for age) and 2.6 times the PRC data on non-fatal, violent injury (times 0.6 to account for age).

5.3. Methodology

The overall aim of our analysis in this part of the report was to derive the total economic and social costs of serious youth violence. We identified the sources of such costs to the following categories: Costs to various public services from the serious youth violence, namely, to the Police, the Criminal Justice System (CJS), Health Services and Victim Services. We also importantly calculated the economic and social cost from the physical and emotional harm and from lost output.

We focused on the above six categories due to data availability and established ways to measure them. Some costs such as the costs from the fear of youth violence we have left out due to difficulty in measuring this but is something which ought to be assessed, measured and costed in future work. Indeed, given that, the total economic and social cost of serious youth violence calculated in this report would be considered an under-estimate of the true total cost of such violence.

The methods to measure and estimate these six category of costs are relatively well-established in the economic cost-benefit analysis. Fortunately, the 2018 Home Report applied the said methods on these six sets of costs to various crimes in general. In particular one of main, substantive and critical numbers that the 2018 Home Office Report derives are the so-called **unit costs,** for each and every one of these six category of cost, where the 'unit' cost is the cost per incident. This will be different for an incident that leads to a homicide from one the leads to a non-fatal, violent injury.

These units costs are reported below. Although these costs are in 2015/16 prices, with inflation having been relatively low over the past three years, these will still constitute a relatively accurate reflection of prices in 2018/2019.

Of course the unit cost for each category of cost is higher for an offence that leads to a homicide than one that does not, and significantly so in several categories.

Homicide (2015/16 prices)	
Health Services	£1,100
Lost Output	£254,000
CJS Costs	£801,000
Physical and Emotional Harm	£2,080,000
Police Costs	£11,900
Victim Services	£5,400
Total	**£3,153,400**

Figure 21: *The unit costs – that is, the cost to each category for an offence that leads to a homicide.*

Non-Fatal Injury (2015/16 prices)	
Health Services	£920
Lost Output	£2,060
Other CJS Costs	£1,370
Physical and Emotional Harm	£8,240
Police Costs	£1,130
Total	**£13,720**

Figure 22: *The unit costs – that is, the cost to each category for an offence that leads to non-fatal injury.*

89 https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/british-crime-survey-methodology

Section 6: Conclusions and Omissions

Two overall and fundamental messages emerge from the analysis, calculations and results presented above in this part of the report:

Firstly, we showed that in each of the past eleven years, the **absolute magnitude** of the total economic and social cost of serious youth violence across England and Wales has been considerable - in each year, the total cost has been at least circa £780 million, and in some years much more than this. This evidence in itself is a call for action and investment of new and additional resource to help reduce the levels of serious youth violence.

Secondly, we showed the economic and social costs have **increased significantly** in each and every region of England and Wales over the past four years or so, with some regions experiencing an increase in total costs in excess of 50%. This evidence compounds the call for appropriate action and investment to help reduce the levels of violence. Investment in appropriate policies – as discussed elsewhere in this report – that would help reduce the level of violence, which in turn will reduce these economic and social costs, in the context of limited budgets and ever growing demands on such budgets.

Indeed, to re-state and re-emphasise the orders of magnitude, we showed that over the full period of the **past eleven years**, **the total economic and social cost of serious youth violence across England and Wales is at least £6 billion, but more likely in the region of £11 billion.** These are staggering numbers, capturing the huge adverse impacts of this serious youth violence on individuals and various services such as the police, the Criminal Justice System and the NHS.

Still, these numbers are underestimates of the true total economic and social cost of serious youth violence since a number of important costs lie outside our analysis. We have already alluded to what some of these omissions are, but it is worth briefly highlighting them here again.

We did not, for example, attempt to cost associated with the fear of violence. This is hard to do but an attempt must be made in future work as this cost will be considerable. The fear of violence is meant to capture the adverse impacts of serious youth violence on communities and society at large. For example, the emotional trauma of a fatal stabbing on individuals, families and communities is considerable. This is a serious and significant social cost of the said violence. It has to be assessed, and an attempt made to measure it and impute a monetary cost to it. This is critical in order to estimate a more accurate, total economic and social cost of serious youth violence. In turn, this would provide further weight to the case for allocating additional public resources to reduce levels of violence.

There are other similar types of negative externalities of serious youth violence, adversely impacting on people, communities and societies, that we have also not assessed, measured and attributed a cost to, and future work ought to look into them. Another example is to consider how such high levels of knife crime are causing further breakdowns in social norms on various crucial matters such as staying away from crime, being prosocial and law-abiding citizens, being kind and respectful and so on. These are all social costs of first order arising from high levels of serious youth violence. They should form part of the calculation of the total economic and social cost of serious youth violence.

The expected costs of all such negative externalities will be huge, and may well more than double the numbers reported in this section of the report. The figures we present already provide a *prima facie* case for significant and sustained deployment of new and additional public resource to help reduce levels of serious youth violence. But we can and must make the case even stronger, emphasise the urgency of the task in hand hence our call for further work on the costs of serious youth violence as noted above.

In Part 3, we will discuss the matter of undertaking an additional assessment of the net benefits (net of costs) of the various specific policy recommendations we outline in this final report.

Part 2 Appendix A: Offences and Costs (using only Police Recorded Crime data)

Please note that all figures are rounded.

A1 Total number of youth (age 24 or under) offences with a knife instrument (fatal and non-fatal):

	2018/19	2017/18	2016/17	2015/16	2014/15	2013/14	2012/13	2011/13	2010/12	2009/10	2008/09
North East	944	854	641	619	500	407	47	438	459	449	500
North West	4,023	2,566	2,196	2,097	1,996	1,971	1,836	2,002	2,221	2,503	3,008
Yorkshire and the Humber	2,800	2,571	2,073	1,691	1,405	1,290	1,231	1,424	1,299	1,479	1,528
East Midlands	1,885	1,629	1,343	1,134	1,040	1,112	1,037	1,052	1,109	1,206	1,389
West Midlands	2,939	2,532	2,203	1,899	1,478	1,444	1,375	1,857	2,379	2,484	2,831
East of England	1,635	1,716	1,800	1,347	1,101	894	859	904	1,093	1,168	1,261
London	9,045	8,897	7,278	5,894	5,848	6,078	6,875	8,550	8,134	7,700	7,591
South East	2,834	2,566	2,064	1,614	1,212	1,113	1,182	1,288	1,418	1,753	1,942
South West	1,290	1,154	1,014	770	716	651	634	775	870	1,015	1,135
Wales	823	686	565	441	446	344	373	373	443	466	562
	28,219	25,171	21,177	17,505	15,742	15,304	15,450	18,662	19,424	20,223	21,747

A2 Total number of youth (age 24 or under) offences with a gun (fatal and non-fatal):

	2018/19	2017/18	2016/17	2015/16	2014/15	2013/14	2012/13	2011/12	2010/11	2009/10	2008/09
North East	3	3	3	2	1	1	2	2	3	2	2
North West	19	19	17	16	15	16	17	19	24	27	27
Yorkshire and the Humber	14	14	15	12	8	9	11	9	10	10	9
East Midlands	8	8	8	6	4	5	7	8	9	8	10
West Midlands	16	16	15	13	12	14	14	18	26	23	22
East of England	10	10	11	7	7	6	5	7	9	8	7
London	41	41	42	31	30	32	44	57	65	75	57
South East	7	7	7	7	5	7	8	7	9	9	10
South West	6	6	5	5	5	5	5	8	7	6	5
Wales	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	3	4	3	3
	124	124	124	102	90	99	115	137	166	172	152

Note: Due to unavailability of 2018/19 figures at this point time, we have used in Table A2 above figures of the year 2017/18 for the year 2018/19.

A3 Total number of offences from Serious Youth Violence (sum of A1 and A2):

	2018/19	2017/18	2016/17	2015/16	2014/15	2013/14	2012/13	2011/12	2010/11	2009/10	2008/09
North East	946	857	643	621	501	409	49	439	462	451	502
North West	4,042	2,585	2,212	2,113	2,011	1,987	1,853	2,021	2,245	2,530	3,035
Yorkshire and the Humber	2,814	2,584	2,089	1,703	1,413	1,299	1,242	1,433	1,310	1,488	1,538
East Midlands	1,893	1,637	1,351	1,140	1,044	1,117	1,043	1,061	1,118	1,215	1,399
West Midlands	2,955	2,549	2,217	1,912	1,490	1,458	1,389	1,875	2,404	2,507	2,853
East of England	1,645	1,727	1,811	1,354	1,108	900	865	911	1,102	1,177	1,269
London	9,085	8,938	7,320	5,924	5,879	6,110	6,918	8,606	8,198	7,775	7,648
South East	2,841	2,573	2,071	1,621	1,217	1,120	1,190	1,295	1,427	1,763	1,952
South West	1,296	1,159	1,019	775	721	656	639	783	877	1,021	1,140
Wales	825	688	567	443	448	346	375	376	446	469	564
	28,344	25,296	21,301	17,607	15,832	15,402	15,565	18,799	19,590	20,395	21,900

A4 – Total Police Cost from Serious Youth Violence, in GBP and using 2015/16 prices:

	2018/19	2017/18	2016/17	2015/16	2014/15	2013/14	2012/13	2011/12	2010/11	2009/10	2008/09
North East	1,129,461	993,078	752,317	730,547	606,169	513,466	98,868	525,038	554,977	526,003	591,287
North West	4,696,590	3,061,967	2,604,395	2,502,238	2,385,237	2,362,881	2,198,791	2,402,758	2,690,455	2,928,650	3,543,032
Yorkshire and the Humber	3,263,411	2,995,804	2,463,555	2,016,781	1,690,199	1,564,070	1,476,584	1,739,832	1,558,614	1,792,363	1,875,670
East Midlands	2,221,809	1,920,742	1,617,162	1,350,995	1,229,236	1,320,394	1,226,347	1,302,008	1,341,135	1,431,983	1,629,110
West Midlands	3,447,601	3,023,278	2,593,028	2,239,290	1,760,551	1,723,800	1,676,294	2,198,235	2,863,837	2,916,043	3,353,306
East of England	1,974,758	2,039,539	2,135,885	1,613,062	1,306,292	1,111,255	1,027,392	1,116,272	1,343,235	1,404,421	1,473,067
London	10,558,100	10,566,758	8,516,858	6,939,261	6,880,594	7,130,305	8,052,615	9,958,690	9,542,198	9,042,931	8,975,655
South East	3,331,728	2,989,674	2,411,446	1,933,649	1,424,528	1,321,691	1,444,103	1,538,975	1,722,016	2,086,696	2,296,854
South West	1,538,376	1,356,365	1,205,097	929,941	855,875	807,246	768,995	941,293	1,048,160	1,230,580	1,400,618
Wales	961,109	828,968	681,370	533,288	526,965	416,051	456,490	446,319	538,547	606,064	693,868
	33,122,943	29,776,173	24,981,112	20,789,051	18,665,645	18,271,160	18,426,479	22,169,419	23,203,174	23,965,733	25,832,466

A5 – Total CJS Cost from Serious Youth Violence, in GBP and using 2015/16 prices:

	2018/19	2017/18	2016/17	2015/16	2014/15	2013/14	2012/13	2011/12	2010/11	2009/10	2008/09
North East	5,735,376	3,021,833	2,745,606	2,955,283	3,620,959	4,375,485	3,305,328	2,715,920	3,102,968	1,842,485	2,498,639
North West	15,080,866	13,948,465	10,739,904	11,392,590	11,084,982	11,364,502	10,259,741	11,592,032	14,407,813	8,621,535	12,517,633
Yorkshire and the Humber	9,995,267	9,104,557	10,502,254	9,192,912	8,851,929	8,884,245	7,102,549	10,832,391	7,615,321	10,212,738	12,291,379
East Midlands	8,716,172	7,501,764	8,557,021	6,168,897	5,054,800	5,824,964	4,921,820	9,102,838	7,292,702	6,046,356	5,503,663
West Midlands	12,035,511	14,069,260	9,497,371	8,392,377	7,683,665	7,622,379	9,766,357	8,470,268	14,146,073	9,575,166	13,461,336
East of England	10,804,359	8,900,969	9,053,986	7,950,494	5,528,481	8,184,403	4,895,874	7,675,164	8,718,281	7,144,601	4,641,201
London	33,971,696	46,723,166	28,138,585	26,198,566	25,611,848	25,063,107	26,816,493	29,047,923	31,757,247	29,602,768	35,079,331
South East	12,848,965	9,602,935	8,073,182	9,739,059	5,323,033	5,663,448	8,931,287	7,348,240	10,040,172	9,429,221	9,411,404
South West	7,225,729	5,023,131	5,372,702	5,051,833	4,051,607	5,777,593	4,303,639	5,251,677	5,386,256	7,106,444	9,841,384
Wales	3,239,151	4,777,742	3,755,466	3,011,531	2,123,633	2,309,447	2,916,654	2,105,435	3,141,998	6,249,203	4,912,883
	119,653,093	122,673,823	96,436,077	90,053,542	78,934,937	85,069,573	83,219,742	94,141,889	105,608,829	95,830,519	110,158,853

A6 – Total Health Costs from Serious Youth Violence, in GBP and using 2015/16 prices:

	2018/19	2017/18	2016/17	2015/16	2014/15	2013/14	2012/13	2011/12	2010/11	2009/10	2008/09
North East	871,668	788,583	592,393	572,079	461,859	376,875	45,551	404,655	425,182	415,034	461,856
North West	3,720,804	2,380,643	2,037,217	1,945,527	1,852,088	1,830,523	1,706,864	1,861,024	2,068,193	2,328,762	2,794,400
Yorkshire and the Humber	2,590,694	2,379,031	1,923,285	1,567,961	1,301,468	1,196,747	1,143,900	1,320,813	1,206,152	1,371,077	1,417,208
East Midlands	1,742,842	1,507,043	1,244,267	1,050,222	961,693	1,028,674	960,761	977,504	1,029,736	1,118,581	1,287,648
West Midlands	2,720,723	2,347,304	2,041,442	1,760,859	1,372,497	1,342,759	1,279,931	1,726,033	2,214,531	2,307,869	2,627,057
East of England	1,515,512	1,589,994	1,668,038	1,247,528	1,020,257	829,738	796,419	839,476	1,015,836	1,083,727	1,167,990
London	8,363,737	8,231,023	6,738,680	5,454,565	5,412,456	5,625,101	6,369,041	7,921,761	7,547,411	7,157,922	7,042,178
South East	2,615,919	2,368,491	1,906,813	1,493,182	1,120,347	1,031,519	1,096,963	1,192,831	1,314,761	1,623,220	1,797,313
South West	1,193,679	1,067,234	938,231	714,071	663,757	604,585	589,103	721,273	808,224	940,300	1,050,997
Wales	759,746	633,527	522,610	408,238	412,746	318,931	345,732	346,215	411,159	432,942	520,255
	26,095,324	23,292,874	19,612,976	16,214,232	14,579,168	14,185,453	14,334,265	17,311,582	18,041,184	18,779,434	20,166,903

A7 – Total Cost of Physical and Emotional Harm from Serious Youth Violence, in GBP and using 2015/16 prices:

	2018/19	2017/18	2016/17	2015/16	2014/15	2013/14	2012/13	2011/12	2010/11	2009/10	2008/09
North East	19,312,230	11,853,221	10,137,333	10,577,471	11,741,804	13,265,092	8,802,133	9,103,739	10,211,872	6,891,994	8,831,846
North West	58,060,960	48,296,065	38,227,004	39,452,074	38,178,391	38,793,242	35,298,721	39,538,597	47,894,965	34,220,090	46,694,522
Yorkshire and the Humber	39,116,568	35,728,610	37,030,283	31,824,874	29,582,857	29,133,039	24,244,191	34,816,353	25,890,907	33,465,844	39,090,390
East Midlands	31,479,898	27,129,674	28,526,756	21,346,089	18,006,364	20,344,545	17,656,825	28,582,647	24,155,489	21,376,686	20,831,084
West Midlands	45,069,061	48,439,382	35,026,901	30,732,169	26,915,722	26,605,287	31,844,038	30,756,668	47,961,994	36,586,195	48,288,648
East of England	35,735,762	31,180,199	31,974,613	26,970,774	19,532,935	25,448,394	16,752,146	24,177,662	27,780,890	24,046,611	17,985,181
London	130,699,084	163,084,738	107,294,540	95,721,241	93,985,441	93,646,208	101,983,127	115,680,672	120,797,878	113,227,116	126,836,925
South East	46,644,148	36,967,096	30,648,273	32,859,879	19,510,259	19,940,261	28,746,555	25,130,543	32,731,456	32,719,148	33,560,046
South West	24,817,221	18,462,041	18,711,068	16,736,910	13,887,154	18,060,767	14,160,220	17,291,760	18,083,758	23,216,839	30,872,031
Wales	12,269,741	15,615,838	12,400,107	9,888,458	7,609,292	7,613,034	9,323,961	7,223,097	10,241,610	18,408,945	15,389,047
	443,204,672	436,756,862	349,976,878	316,109,940	278,950,219	292,849,869	288,811,917	332,301,737	365,750,820	344,159,467	388,379,720

A8 – Total Cost of Victim Services from Serious Youth Violence, in GBP and using 2015/16 prices:

	2018/19	2017/18	2016/17	2015/16	2014/15	2013/14	2012/13	2011/12	2010/11	2009/10	2008/09
North East	30,421	12,666	12,775	14,420	20,109	26,150	22,196	14,489	16,932	8,395	12,415
North West	65,405	71,323	52,832	58,243	57,088	59,224	52,913	60,473	77,662	35,333	57,290
Yorkshire and the Humber	42,076	38,131	52,366	47,017	47,400	48,691	37,015	60,780	39,895	56,019	69,798
East Midlands	41,963	36,045	45,962	31,571	24,836	29,433	23,934	52,427	39,484	30,033	24,586
West Midlands	54,736	72,492	44,270	39,559	38,665	38,549	53,889	40,449	74,374	42,084	65,468
East of England	58,600	44,791	45,043	41,771	27,486	47,639	25,434	44,049	49,400	37,918	19,895
London	147,516	236,292	124,116	123,925	120,332	114,399	118,825	118,271	140,668	129,874	168,601
South East	61,383	41,655	35,881	51,525	25,056	28,296	50,032	38,200	55,411	48,073	46,173
South West	37,351	23,542	27,255	27,344	21,000	33,438	23,491	28,641	28,676	39,120	56,740
Wales	14,451	26,287	20,411	16,479	10,345	12,577	16,466	10,900	17,343	38,423	28,370
	553,903	603,223	460,912	451,853	392,319	438,396	424,195	468,679	539,845	465,270	549,337

A9 – Total Cost of Lost Output from Serious Youth Violence, in GBP and using 2015/16 prices:

	2018/19	2017/18	2016/17	2015/16	2014/15	2013/14	2012/13	2011/12	2010/11	2009/10	2008/09
North East	3,351,966	2,348,721	1,914,451	1,944,674	1,959,720	2,047,450	1,123,575	1,572,930	1,731,379	1,315,685	1,605,571
North West	11,341,708	8,613,315	6,993,264	7,036,994	6,774,613	6,824,661	6,257,275	6,950,420	8,205,462	6,840,634	8,893,857
Yorkshire and the Humber	7,737,530	7,081,987	6,716,700	5,674,889	5,095,803	4,920,724	4,265,017	5,754,955	4,536,959	5,648,355	6,385,880
East Midlands	5,833,862	5,033,476	4,901,544	3,804,668	3,296,489	3,658,018	3,252,879	4,601,805	4,123,034	3,886,943	4,014,820
West Midlands	8,611,375	8,592,447	6,608,661	5,763,566	4,852,829	4,780,876	5,346,243	5,726,529	8,381,777	7,104,584	8,895,569
East of England	6,090,579	5,621,750	5,808,112	4,715,926	3,549,572	4,050,563	2,953,931	3,907,103	4,548,278	4,171,826	3,530,969
London	25,517,104	29,305,978	20,801,371	17,917,296	17,657,660	17,860,727	19,730,209	23,181,465	23,374,067	22,005,129	23,528,458
South East	8,682,633	7,220,601	5,921,073	5,714,921	3,661,826	3,612,085	4,759,025	4,429,114	5,494,266	5,847,222	6,149,612
South West	4,391,957	3,473,224	3,355,293	2,857,450	2,452,814	2,892,754	2,400,261	2,933,251	3,129,556	3,906,028	4,964,879
Wales	2,366,275	2,628,461	2,109,645	1,672,549	1,400,352	1,293,004	1,532,023	1,276,899	1,718,884	2,737,891	2,470,697
	83,924,990	79,919,960	65,130,113	57,102,932	50,701,677	51,940,861	51,620,438	60,334,472	65,243,662	63,464,296	70,440,314

A10 - Total Cost of Serious Youth Violence (sum of A4, A5, A6, A7, A8 and A9), in GBP and using 2015/16 prices:

	2018/19	2017/18	2016/17	2015/16	2014/15	2013/14	2012/13	2011/12	2010/11	2009/10	2008/09
North East	30,431,121	19,018,102	16,154,876	16,794,475	18,410,621	20,604,517	13,397,651	14,336,769	16,043,311	10,999,595	14,001,614
North West	92,966,334	76,371,778	60,654,616	62,387,665	60,332,400	61,235,033	55,774,305	62,405,303	75,344,550	54,975,003	74,500,733
Yorkshire and the Humber	62,745,546	57,328,120	58,688,442	50,324,434	46,569,655	45,747,516	38,269,257	54,525,124	40,847,849	52,546,395	61,130,327
East Midlands	50,036,546	43,128,743	44,892,712	33,752,441	28,573,418	32,206,028	28,042,565	44,619,230	37,981,579	33,890,582	33,290,911
West Midlands	71,939,007	76,544,162	55,811,673	48,927,820	42,623,930	42,113,649	49,966,752	48,918,182	75,642,585	58,531,941	76,691,384
East of England	56,179,569	49,377,241	50,685,677	42,539,555	30,965,023	39,671,993	26,451,196	37,759,726	43,455,919	37,889,104	28,818,303
London	209,257,236	258,147,954	171,614,151	152,354,853	149,668,331	149,439,848	163,070,310	185,908,782	193,159,469	181,165,740	201,631,149
South East	74,184,777	59,190,453	48,996,667	51,792,214	31,065,048	31,597,299	45,027,964	39,677,903	51,358,082	51,753,579	53,261,402
South West	39,204,314	29,405,537	29,609,646	26,317,549	21,932,206	28,176,383	22,245,709	27,167,895	28,484,630	36,439,311	48,186,649
Wales	19,610,473	24,510,824	19,489,609	15,530,544	12,083,333	11,963,044	14,591,327	11,408,865	16,069,541	28,473,469	24,015,120
	706,554,924	693,022,914	556,598,068	500,721,550	442,223,964	462,755,312	456,837,036	526,727,778	578,387,515	546,664,719	615,527,594

Part 2 Appendix B: Offences and Costs, using Police Recorded Crime data and the British Crime Survey Data via Multiplier

Please note that all figures are rounded.

B1 Total Number of Offences from Serious Youth Violence (using either a knife instrument or a gun; fatal and non-fatal), using Multiplier:

	2018/19	2017/18	2016/17	2015/16	2014/15	2013/14	2012/13	2011/12	2010/11	2009/10	2008/09
North East	2,459	2,223	1,667	1,611	1,298	1,056	121	1,139	1,195	1,172	1,303
North West	10,452	6,658	5,700	5,439	5,178	5,113	4,764	5,193	5,759	6,503	7,810
Yorkshire and the Humber	7,276	6,676	5,380	4,386	3,642	3,342	3,194	3,689	3,372	3,831	3,957
East Midlands	4,902	4,231	3,483	2,944	2,700	2,887	2,693	2,727	2,880	3,135	3,611
West Midlands	7,634	6,568	5,719	4,931	3,836	3,748	3,563	4,820	6,170	6,451	7,347
East of England	4,263	4,462	4,681	3,499	2,863	2,320	2,239	2,354	2,847	3,047	3,290
London	23,482	23,072	18,896	15,294	15,176	15,776	17,848	22,207	21,122	19,996	19,697
South East	7,356	6,662	5,359	4,184	3,145	2,888	3,062	3,341	3,673	4,547	5,039
South West	3,346	2,994	2,629	1,995	1,856	1,684	1,643	2,009	2,257	2,629	2,936
Wales	2,225	1,808	1,497	1,169	1,182	918	996	1,004	1,191	1,246	1,493
	73,395	65,354	55,010	45,451	40,874	39,731	40,124	48,482	50,466	52,558	56,484

B2 Multiplier Police Cost from Serious Youth Violence, in GBP and using 2015/16 prices:

	2018/19	2017/18	2016/17	2015/16	2014/15	2013/14	2012/13	2011/12	2010/11	2009/10	2008/09
North East	2,829,087	2,536,493	1,908,528	1,848,433	1,506,130	1,244,820	180,485	1,315,314	1,383,973	1,341,507	1,496,697
North West	11,934,777	7,664,090	6,545,311	6,261,621	5,963,559	5,894,582	5,488,171	5,987,281	6,661,382	7,418,554	8,938,323
Yorkshire and the Humber	8,301,715	7,619,714	6,182,429	5,049,177	4,208,588	3,873,101	3,682,478	4,288,250	3,888,641	4,440,140	4,609,912
East Midlands	5,614,088	4,851,981	4,026,954	3,388,636	3,100,435	3,320,732	3,090,220	3,185,362	3,332,180	3,601,606	4,128,698
West Midlands	8,730,280	7,565,038	6,550,017	5,650,205	4,410,656	4,311,430	4,133,127	5,526,813	7,119,337	7,372,988	8,432,017
East of England	4,913,745	5,130,398	5,378,052	4,036,665	3,289,710	2,715,600	2,580,630	2,746,734	3,314,387	3,518,081	3,757,274
London	26,825,891	26,538,399	21,597,619	17,526,877	17,386,293	18,052,613	20,403,557	25,327,255	24,146,422	22,851,896	22,590,929
South East	8,431,384	7,610,933	6,126,188	4,829,580	3,602,904	3,319,191	3,558,877	3,851,064	4,260,310	5,232,868	5,785,593
South West	3,854,495	3,429,489	3,025,140	2,307,920	2,138,832	1,968,597	1,902,837	2,326,757	2,607,379	3,047,875	3,429,862
Wales	2,480,418	2,095,519	1,731,836	1,353,344	1,355,793	1,061,865	1,158,122	1,156,148	1,379,762	1,484,106	1,743,599
	83,915,879	75,042,053	63,072,075	52,252,457	46,962,898	45,762,532	46,178,505	55,710,978	58,093,773	60,309,622	64,912,904

B3 Multiplier CJS Costs from Serious Youth Violence, in GBP and using 2015/16 prices:

	2018/19	2017/18	2016/17	2015/16	2014/15	2013/14	2012/13	2011/12	2010/11	2009/10	2008/09
North East	7,795,984	4,893,052	4,147,385	4,310,596	4,712,062	5,262,172	3,404,280	3,674,042	4,108,034	2,831,195	3,596,348
North West	23,856,367	19,528,030	15,517,828	15,950,426	15,423,301	15,646,298	14,247,750	15,937,869	19,222,122	14,065,047	19,058,827
Yorkshire and the Humber	16,103,653	14,710,537	15,010,978	12,869,356	11,905,197	11,683,689	9,776,951	13,922,065	10,440,220	13,422,876	15,606,346
East Midlands	12,828,936	11,055,567	11,478,628	8,639,312	7,323,421	8,250,152	7,181,560	11,386,195	9,706,624	8,676,784	8,534,137
West Midlands	18,440,173	19,575,641	14,294,782	12,527,734	10,896,624	10,759,595	12,744,996	12,505,801	19,305,395	14,978,720	19,618,712
East of England	14,367,555	12,648,294	12,984,756	10,888,845	7,933,156	10,129,495	6,779,003	9,651,920	11,108,084	9,707,180	7,410,549
London	53,694,593	66,087,013	43,997,561	39,034,879	38,348,846	38,305,197	41,790,644	47,680,608	49,463,253	46,344,611	51,586,345
South East	19,031,734	15,205,701	12,576,896	13,250,054	7,964,073	8,085,196	11,495,217	10,151,394	13,117,573	13,243,607	13,641,114
South West	10,033,768	7,536,565	7,579,303	6,722,481	5,607,050	7,185,602	5,678,297	6,931,399	7,276,636	9,309,713	12,301,618
Wales	5,081,146	6,313,295	5,029,040	4,005,759	3,128,495	3,092,425	3,767,305	2,966,025	4,161,879	7,313,731	6,185,566
	181,233,910	177,553,696	142,617,156	128,199,442	113,242,225	118,399,821	116,866,004	134,807,318	147,909,821	139,893,464	157,539,561

B4 – Multiplier Total Health Cost from Serious Youth Violence, in GBP and using 2015/16 prices:

	2018/19	2017/18	2016/17	2015/16	2014/15	2013/14	2012/13	2011/12	2010/11	2009/10	2008/09
North East	2,255,434	2,045,169	1,533,733	1,482,216	1,194,571	972,314	112,001	1,048,065	1,100,117	1,078,985	1,199,004
North West	9,613,841	6,127,504	5,245,750	5,006,263	4,765,412	4,705,890	4,384,943	4,779,396	5,301,160	5,984,259	7,187,026
Yorkshire and the Humber	6,692,676	6,143,630	4,951,041	4,036,814	3,351,838	3,076,666	2,939,850	3,395,630	3,103,165	3,526,790	3,643,317
East Midlands	4,504,698	3,893,539	3,206,222	2,709,187	2,485,147	2,657,268	2,478,251	2,510,853	2,650,764	2,885,000	3,322,711
West Midlands	7,021,665	6,045,020	5,263,061	4,537,887	3,530,104	3,449,502	3,280,185	4,436,026	5,679,185	5,936,533	6,761,937
East of England	3,908,315	4,106,446	4,307,678	3,220,727	2,635,076	2,135,931	2,061,002	2,166,932	2,620,667	2,804,583	3,027,698
London	21,608,310	21,234,482	17,388,503	14,074,571	13,965,769	14,517,600	16,424,675	20,434,221	19,437,576	18,400,620	18,127,180
South East	6,767,852	6,130,933	4,931,205	3,850,930	2,893,892	2,657,802	2,818,726	3,075,240	3,381,336	4,184,705	4,637,702
South West	3,079,370	2,755,088	2,420,037	1,835,966	1,708,288	1,550,110	1,512,231	1,849,261	2,077,677	2,419,867	2,703,125
Wales	1,996,706	1,664,702	1,377,856	1,075,895	1,087,544	844,727	916,972	924,129	1,096,042	1,147,808	1,374,903
	67,448,865	60,146,511	50,625,087	41,830,457	37,617,639	36,567,810	36,928,835	44,619,754	46,447,690	48,369,150	51,984,605

B5 Multiplier Total Cost from Physical and Emotional Harm from Serious Youth Violence, in GBP and using 2015/16 prices:

	2018/19	2017/18	2016/17	2015/16	2014/15	2013/14	2012/13	2011/12	2010/11	2009/10	2008/09
North East	31,705,962	23,107,855	18,568,468	18,729,136	18,304,350	18,598,155	9,397,288	14,866,460	16,256,940	12,838,684	15,434,126
North West	110,842,075	81,854,908	66,964,301	66,865,626	64,271,637	64,546,528	59,284,994	65,677,064	76,851,104	66,960,628	86,037,176
Yorkshire and the Humber	75,856,055	69,446,325	64,148,446	53,937,210	47,947,041	45,970,575	40,329,649	53,399,503	42,881,543	52,773,533	59,028,583
East Midlands	56,216,517	48,504,373	46,099,048	36,204,642	31,651,211	34,931,077	31,248,256	42,316,125	38,674,263	37,197,658	39,058,169
West Midlands	83,590,536	81,558,054	63,881,403	55,604,683	46,240,377	45,474,382	49,759,355	55,028,779	78,993,248	69,086,401	85,322,793
East of England	57,166,960	53,718,853	55,616,612	44,643,774	33,996,091	37,147,338	28,078,410	36,067,051	42,154,600	39,459,493	34,641,697
London	249,324,390	279,550,504	202,679,912	172,926,516	170,593,369	173,292,061	192,046,636	227,748,793	227,292,396	213,922,579	226,119,986
South East	83,831,021	70,665,482	57,736,305	53,977,106	35,395,055	34,506,105	44,167,569	41,990,385	51,240,787	55,661,148	59,000,052
South West	41,706,447	33,579,338	31,982,892	26,785,184	23,242,521	26,529,377	22,428,236	27,394,611	29,453,638	36,468,619	45,669,349
Wales	23,348,598	24,851,572	20,060,141	15,868,336	13,653,135	12,322,335	14,440,284	12,399,200	16,375,785	24,811,652	23,043,727
	813,588,562	766,837,264	627,737,527	545,542,213	485,294,786	493,317,932	491,180,676	576,887,971	620,174,305	609,180,395	673,355,659

B6 Multiplier Total Cost of Victim Services from Serious Youth Violence, in GBP and using 2015/16 prices:

	2018/19	2017/18	2016/17	2015/16	2014/15	2013/14	2012/13	2011/12	2010/11	2009/10	2008/09
North East	30,421	12,666	12,775	14,420	20,109	26,150	22,196	14,489	16,932	8,395	12,415
North West	65,405	71,323	52,832	58,243	57,088	59,224	52,913	60,473	77,662	35,333	57,290
Yorkshire and the Humber	42,076	38,131	52,366	47,017	47,400	48,691	37,015	60,780	39,895	56,019	69,798
East Midlands	41,963	36,045	45,962	31,571	24,836	29,433	23,934	52,427	39,484	30,033	24,586
West Midlands	54,736	72,492	44,270	39,559	38,665	38,549	53,889	40,449	74,374	42,084	65,468
East of England	58,600	44,791	45,043	41,771	27,486	47,639	25,434	44,049	49,400	37,918	19,895
London	147,516	236,292	124,116	123,925	120,332	114,399	118,825	118,271	140,668	129,874	168,601
South East	61,383	41,655	35,881	51,525	25,056	28,296	50,032	38,200	55,411	48,073	46,173
South West	37,351	23,542	27,255	27,344	21,000	33,438	23,491	28,641	28,676	39,120	56,740
Wales	14,451	26,287	20,411	16,479	10,345	12,577	16,466	10,900	17,343	38,423	28,370
	553,903	603,223	460,912	451,853	392,319	438,396	424,195	468,679	539,845	465,270	549,337

B7 Multiplier Total Cost of Lost Output from Serious Youth Violence, in GBP and using 2015/16 prices:

	2018/19	2017/18	2016/17	2015/16	2014/15	2013/14	2012/13	2011/12	2010/11	2009/10	2008/09
North East	6,450,399	5,162,380	4,022,235	3,982,590	3,600,357	3,380,715	1,272,363	3,013,610	3,242,646	2,802,357	3,256,141
North West	24,536,987	17,003,026	14,177,588	13,890,382	13,297,925	13,262,982	12,253,843	13,485,037	15,444,497	15,025,768	18,729,521
Yorkshire and the Humber	16,922,402	15,511,416	13,496,241	11,202,973	9,686,848	9,130,108	8,286,382	10,400,743	8,784,618	10,475,278	11,370,428
East Midlands	12,018,017	10,377,150	9,294,617	7,519,306	6,707,701	7,304,651	6,650,736	8,035,175	7,752,728	7,842,186	8,571,591
West Midlands	18,241,743	16,872,115	13,822,286	11,981,695	9,683,992	9,498,150	9,825,073	11,794,557	16,139,591	15,229,635	18,154,106
East of England	11,448,378	11,256,413	11,718,611	9,134,176	7,165,361	6,975,299	5,785,498	6,879,450	8,141,705	8,025,047	7,695,099
London	55,173,431	58,422,420	44,647,714	37,218,615	36,809,641	37,772,190	42,246,087	51,198,495	49,997,696	47,178,995	48,349,224
South East	17,979,351	15,645,198	12,693,081	10,994,227	7,633,025	7,253,546	8,614,278	8,644,074	10,121,599	11,582,722	12,509,614
South West	8,614,264	7,252,548	6,673,249	5,369,519	4,791,656	5,009,907	4,467,265	5,458,964	5,972,026	7,218,973	8,664,208
Wales	5,135,989	4,937,394	4,024,654	3,167,519	2,911,312	2,470,329	2,811,103	2,570,925	3,252,428	4,338,568	4,384,367
	176,520,962	162,440,060	134,570,276	114,461,001	102,287,819	102,057,877	102,212,628	121,481,030	128,849,534	129,719,528	141,684,299

B8 Multiplier Total Cost of Serious Youth Violence (sum of B2, B3, B4, B5, B6, and B7), in GBP and using 2015/16 prices:

	2018/19	2017/18	2016/17	2015/16	2014/15	2013/14	2012/13	2011/12	2010/11	2009/10	2008/09
North East	51,067,287	37,757,616	30,193,126	30,367,392	29,337,578	29,484,326	14,388,612	23,931,980	26,108,643	20,901,123	24,994,731
North West	180,849,453	132,248,881	108,503,609	108,032,560	103,778,921	104,115,505	95,712,614	105,927,119	123,557,928	109,489,589	140,008,163
Yorkshire and the Humber	123,918,576	113,469,752	103,841,501	87,142,547	77,146,912	73,782,831	65,052,325	85,466,972	69,138,082	84,694,636	94,328,385
East Midlands	91,224,219	78,718,655	74,151,430	58,492,654	51,292,751	56,493,313	50,672,957	67,486,138	62,156,044	60,233,268	63,639,892
West Midlands	136,079,134	131,688,359	103,855,819	90,341,764	74,800,418	73,531,607	79,796,626	89,332,424	127,311,131	112,646,360	138,355,032
East of England	91,863,555	86,905,194	90,050,752	71,965,958	55,046,879	59,151,302	45,309,977	57,556,136	67,388,844	63,552,302	56,552,212
London	406,774,129	452,069,110	330,435,425	280,905,384	277,224,249	282,054,060	313,030,424	372,507,643	370,478,010	348,828,574	366,942,265
South East	136,102,725	115,299,902	94,099,556	86,953,421	57,514,004	55,850,136	70,704,700	67,750,358	82,177,016	89,953,122	95,620,248
South West	67,325,695	54,576,570	51,707,876	43,048,412	37,509,347	42,277,030	36,012,357	43,989,632	47,416,032	58,504,168	72,824,902
Wales	38,057,308	39,888,770	32,243,937	25,487,331	22,146,624	19,804,258	23,110,252	20,027,328	26,283,239	39,134,288	36,760,533
	1,323,262,081	1,242,622,807	1,019,083,032	882,737,422	785,797,685	796,544,368	793,790,843	933,975,730	1,002,014,968	987,937,430	1,090,026,365

Part 3

Looking Ahead and Recommendations

Part 3: Looking Ahead and Recommendations

As is clear from this final report, serious violence has a devastating impact on the lives of many young people across the UK, leaving deep and enduring scars on the families, friends and communities affected. The evidence provided to the Commission over the last three years has often forced us to switch our focus, from the violence perpetrated by young people, to the shocking levels of serious violence inflicted on these same young people throughout their lives.

Far too many young people have seen their own friends stabbed to death. Others have had to endure the crushing experience of seeing their own mothers being brutally and repeatedly attacked in their homes or have been the victims of domestic violence themselves. These same young people often grow up surrounded by stark levels of deprivation, insecurity and adverse early-life experiences that have left many suffering from severe trauma, which too often goes overlooked and unaddressed.

While the magnitude of the effort needed to protect young people from serious violence cannot be underestimated, we believe there is cause for cautious optimism. In recent years, among the vast majority of the individuals and groups with whom the Youth Violence Commission (YVC) has had the privilege of engaging, there has been nothing short of a sea-change in the way serious violence is being understood and talked about.

A narrative centred around the 'public health approach' now increasingly dominates discussions among those working to reduce serious violence. For the YVC, these are not empty words. This shift in understanding opens up huge potential for fundamental change in the way we understand and respond to violence between young people.

The publication of the Commission's interim report in July 2018 called for the adoption of a public health approach to violence reduction, overseen and coordinated by regional Violence Reduction Units (VRUs). Following the report, both the Home Secretary, Sajid Javid, and the Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan, endorsed such an approach, leading to the establishment of regional VRUs.

For readers unfamiliar with VRUs, these involve newly established teams of people whose responsibility it is to increase collaboration between a range of agencies at a local level, and – as we discuss below – drive forward evidence-informed policies and practices at a local and national level to reduce serious violence.

The Commission welcomes the Government's commitment of further support and resources to these VRUs. This should be considered a progressive step in securing reductions in violence, mirroring the positive work carried out by the Scottish Violence Reduction Unit (SVRU) that was established back in 2005. Pivotal to the success of the SVRU was its long-term vision of tackling the root causes of serious violence through the adoption of a public health approach to violence reduction.

To be clear, the Commission's perspective on the public health approach is that it should involve three main stages:

1) **Understanding the nature of the problem** by gathering and analysing sufficient data;

2) **Doing what works** by developing and implementing policies and interventions informed by the best available theory, data (interpreted broadly to include, for example, the experiences and views of young people and frontline practitioners), and analysis

3) **Learning from experience** by robustly evaluating and subsequently improving these policies and interventions.

While the cyclical nature of democratic elections exerts pressure on those in positions of power and responsibility to chase short-term results, based on the evidence provided to the Commission, a strong case exists for the adoption of long-term strategies that entail substantial investment in upstream prevention.

As the positive outcomes associated with these strategies are unlikely to accrue during the tenures of those pursuing farsighted violence-reduction strategies, it is particularly important that credit is given to those principled enough to prioritise the long-term safety of young people over the pursuit of short-term political gain.

The YVC's vision is that the regional VRUs be empowered to act as the vehicles that coordinate public health approaches at a local level, while also – as a network – driving forward evidence-informed policies at a national level. Adopting these ambitious and expansive roles will give the VRUs the best possible opportunity to secure long-term, coherent, evidence-informed approaches to reducing serious violence.

Based on recent developments, however, the Commission is concerned that at least two key changes are needed if the recently established regional VRUs are to fulfil their potential:

1) **Long-term funding commitments**
   - Regional VRUs have been given insufficient, short-term funding. Furthermore, the Commission has been alerted to the fact that too many of the recently established VRUs have already been pressured to spend money in haste, resulting in short-sighted attempts to achieve immediate (yet inevitably elusive) results. This is antithetical to an evidence-informed, public health approach to reducing violence and sets the VRUs up to fail.

2) **A more ambitious and expansive role**
   - Early work by the regional VRUs indicates that many may be adopting a relatively narrow vision of their potential role, acting primarily as commissioning bodies for local level violence-reduction initiatives. This is one important strand of a VRU's local level work. It must be accompanied, however, by the regional VRUs coming together as a combined network in order to identify and promote the national level policy changes that are equally crucial in securing lasting reductions in serious violence.

If the VRUs receive the levels of support and investment needed to take on the expansive roles outlined in this report, our hope is that initiatives such as the Youth Violence Commission will be made redundant. In short, the VRUs – as a network – should be working towards the identification and promotion of evidence-informed policies at both a local and national level that will bring about reductions in serious violence.

Given the extensive research conducted by the Commission, we expect that the policy recommendations identified and promoted in future by the VRU network will look broadly similar to those outlined in this section of the YVC's final report.

Consistent with a public health approach to violence reduction, our substantive recommendations cross numerous policy areas and are based on the findings outlined in Parts 1 and 2 of this report. These policy areas include early years support and early intervention, education, employment, housing and local communities, policing and criminal justice, and youth services.

In terms of their content and scope, we recognise the ambitious nature of many of our policy recommendations. With the lives of young people at stake, we believe such ambition is necessary and justified. While the social case for action is compelling, as our analysis in Part 2 illustrates, a powerful economic rationale also underpins our recommendations. With current levels of serious youth violence costing the taxpayer hundreds of millions of pounds every year, even minor reductions in these levels of violence will generate significant cost savings.

Below, we outline our key recommendations and our full set of policy recommendations. Many of them will require new and additional public resources. A case for injecting increased and sustained levels of investment to help reduce serious youth violence has already been made in Part 2 of this report.

What is needed in terms of future work is to undertake an economic and social cost-benefit analysis of the various policies recommended below. The results of such analysis will help guide the optimal allocation of additional public resources amongst the different policy interventions.

Different policies will have different impacts on violence reduction over the course of time, and we need to try to assess and measure precisely what these impacts are likely to be. Uncertainty and risk will be critical elements in the analysis, which will need to assess the likelihood of different sets of possible outcomes over a long-term horizon of at least ten years.

While some of those involved in the Youth Violence Commission are considering conducting additional analysis along these lines in the coming months, this may be something that falls within the scope of the regional Violence Reduction Units – coming together as a national network – assuming they are prepared to pursue the expansive and ambitious remit that we recommend in this section of the report.

3.1 Key Recommendations

The Commission welcomes the Government's decision to support and invest in regional Violence Reduction Units (VRUs). Our utmost concern is that the recently established VRUs are given the best possible opportunity to succeed in bringing together and implementing genuine, holistic, public health approaches to reducing serious violence. To this end, the Commission's central recommendations are as follows:

Violence Reduction Units

1) **VRUs must receive enhanced funding immediately, accompanied by funding projections for a minimum of ten years.** This will enable each unit to plan how best to deploy its resources strategically, while also ensuring those working within these units have the confidence to promote long-term, evidence-informed policies and initiatives.

2) **The VRUs should have a threefold purpose**:

   i) **to lead on the development, implementation and commissioning of local level initiatives to reduce violence,** helping to rationalise the many disparate funding streams available, while bringing together and coordinating relevant stakeholders;

   ii) to **feed the learning generated by each VRU's local level work into relevant evidence bases,** such as the 'what works' initiative currently being led by the Youth Endowment Fund;

   iii) as a combined VRU network, **to identify and promote the national level policy changes that are beyond each regional VRU's scope and control, but are nevertheless crucial to securing reductions in serious violence**.

3) In their capacity as local level coordinators of holistic public health approaches to reducing serious violence, **VRUs should actively seek to engage all relevant stakeholders to feed into their short-term priorities and long-term planning**. In addition, VRUs should provide regular feedback mechanisms to these same stakeholders to explain how their input has informed the VRU's work and priorities. This will help to increase trust and confidence in the work of the regional VRUs among their local stakeholders.

These VRU-related recommendations aside, we are delighted to note the support structures put in place by the Home Office to enable the regional network of VRUs to meet and communicate regularly, both online through the initiative 'Basecamp', and through face-to-face events. Such communication is vital for ensuring that the VRUs – as a network – are able to come together

to discuss and identify the national level policy changes that the VRU network should champion.

Furthermore, the processes put in place to evaluate the work of the VRUs appear to be entirely appropriate and constructive, providing both continuous feedback as the VRUs evolve, as well as an important degree of oversight and scrutiny of their work.

The YVC would highlight the importance of these evaluations adopting a long-term lens on what 'success' ought to look like from the perspective of the VRUs. It is vital that the evaluations consider, for example, any changes facilitated by the VRUs in relation to local level partnership working that may prove pivotal in the long-term but may not generate immediate reductions in levels of serious violence.

3.2 Full list of policy recommendations

As communication between the regional VRUs and Central Government should be a two-way dialogue, based on the evidence gathered by the Commission, we suggest that in first instance the collective network of VRUs should support and promote the following recommendations for reducing serious violence between young people, many of which require action at a national policy level:

Early years support and early intervention

4) **A collaboration of funders – including, but not limited to, Central, Regional and Local Governments, Arm's Length Bodies, Trusts, Foundations and Corporates -- should invest**

in programmes that help prepare parents for parenthood and provide support in the early years of parenting. Such programmes should be based on existing cradle-to-career models that take a whole family approach and provide consistency of support from the ante- and postnatal periods, through the early years and into childhood and adolescence.

5) **Central Government should carry out an urgent review of the reasons for implementing closure programmes for Children Centres (initially known as 'Sure Start' Centres), desist from future closures, and open new Centres in careful accordance with proven need.** Central Government should provide support to, and investment in, all Children's Centres in order to facilitate strong relationships between children, families and professionals. This will help to reduce inequalities, improve children's health and well-being, and provide integrated services to children and their families.

6) Too many parents are struggling to afford the rising costs of childcare. **Central Government must direct more stable and substantial funding streams towards the provision of high-quality childcare so that all children can have the best start in life.** In addition, it is essential that more is done by Central Government both in terms of raising awareness of support and its accessibility, to ensure that parents and carers are able to take advantage of childcare support.

Education

7) **Central Government should provide significant and immediate increased funding to enable schools to put in place enhanced support necessary to avoid off-rolling and pursue an *aspiration* of zero exclusions.** Such funding should facilitate the provision of trained mental health counsellors from a Government-approved central register in all primary school and secondary schools, as well as the provision of ongoing career and professional development training for all members of staff. The Commission accepts that exclusion will be the only feasible option in some cases. Given the numerous causal links between excluding and off-rolling pupils and the likelihood of these same young people being involved in serious violence, however, it is imperative that schools are provided with sufficient investment to help keep pupils in mainstream education.

8) **The school Admissions Code should be revised and include the return of all powers for admissions to Local Authorities.** This includes giving local authorities the powers to direct the admission of a student in any school.

9) **Central Government should increase resources for Local Authorities so they can deliver on all of their responsibilities for children, including on school admissions.**

10) **Central Government should Commission a review to monitor the impact of the new Ofsted framework on levels of school exclusion and the harmful practice of off-rolling.**

11) **All teachers should receive adequate training in the underlying causes of poor behaviour, including trauma and attachment.** This includes all forms of Initial Teacher Training and the Early Career Framework and subsequent career CPD, and should not be dependent upon the teacher remaining in one school for the duration of that career. An individual teacher's training record in this respect should be tracked via portable individualised 'training passports.'

12) **Schools should ensure that their specialist safeguarding professionals have the time and capacity to effectively integrate support services, such as social workers, school nurses, centrally accredited mental health counsellors and CAMHS, so that pupils have a single point of reliable adult support.**

13) **All schools' careers programmes should meet the Gatsby Benchmarks as soon as possible, so that career guidance provision is universally strong and meets the needs of all young people, providing them with access to a diversity of career role models.**

Employment

14) **A collaboration of funders – including, but not limited to, Central, Regional and Local Governments, Arm's Length Bodies, Trusts, Foundations and Corporates - should provide enhanced investment in youth and community organisations to deliver evidence-based, skills development, employment and aspiration-raising programmes.** Such programmes should be designed for the specific needs of local young people, reaching groups that are particularly at risk of becoming and remaining unemployed, or being stuck in under employment.

15) **Increased investment should be made to improve the quality and consistency of employment programmes.** Such investment should be targeted at voluntary sector infrastructure organisations that are equipped to provide capacity building support, knowledge sharing and upskilling opportunities for practitioners working to support young people into work.

16) **Central Government should address the growing issue of insecure, low quality and low paid work, and inadequate employment packages (which include, for example, insufficient pension contributions) for those aged under 25.** Ensuring young people are in secure, high quality work will improve national productivity and lifetime earnings potential.

17) Too often, employers' training and development budgets are skewed towards senior staff at the expense of those in lower level positions. **Employers should be incentivised by Central Government to invest in training and progression pathways for young people embarking on entry-level job roles, to ensure they are not stranded indefinitely on the lowest rungs of the employment ladder.**

18) **Central Government should promote national adoption of the Youth Friendly Employer Mark from Youth Employment UK to encourage and support businesses that are supporting young people into work by, for example, speaking in schools and colleges, mentoring young people, offering meaningful work experience placements, internships and employment.** There should be a focus on a raising the profile of a diversity of business leaders to demonstrate the myriad different ways that young people from all backgrounds can go on to succeed in work.

19) **Life skills training in schools should be mandated in partnership with the Skills Builder consortium.** As we adopt new technology, the mix of jobs available is set to change and the ability of employees at all levels to think creatively, problem solve and adapt will be crucial. These are the skills business leaders consistently report are lacking among young people, yet they are not consistently taught in our schools.

20) **A collaboration of funders – including, but not limited to, Central, Regional and Local Governments, Arm's Length Bodies, Trusts, Foundations and Corporates – should provide enhanced investment in sustainable programmes that aim to solve the problem of young people's digital access and work-ready digital skills, with the aim being to provide the foundations for improved educational attainment, skill development, job searching and employment.**

21) **Central Government should increase investment in high-quality apprenticeship programmes.** To succeed, apprenticeships must be able to command the support and confidence of apprentices and employers alike. Further investment should therefore be used to broaden the apprenticeship offer to under-represented groups by recruitment taking into account, for example, young people's non-academic achievements and skills, and highlighting benefits such as the ability to 'earn while you learn'.

Housing and local communities

22) **Central Government and Local Authorities should embark on a long-term house-building strategy to ensure all children and young people have realistic prospects of living in affordable homes in the areas in which they grow up, to counteract the debilitating effects of housing insecurity, and to ensure the safety and wellbeing of children and young people.** New partnership models need to be explored to enable innovation.

23) Many faith groups and organisations have access to substantial resources, including funds, buildings and volunteers. If deployed appropriately, these resources could play a significant role in promoting children and young people's safety and well-being. **All professionals working with vulnerable young people should make an enhanced effort to harness the full potential of faith organisations in reducing serious violence between young people.**

24) **Local Authorities should ensure that all children and young people under the age of 18 have free access to leisure and sporting facilities in their local areas.** Such facilities should be promoted to young people through suitable channels, such as through appropriate content-sharing and advertising on social media.

25) **Local Authorities should establish scoping programmes to identify both the leisure and sports facilities that children and young people would most like to use, as well as existing facilities most in need of upgrading and refurbishment.** This should be done in consultation with children, young people and family units.

Policing and criminal justice

26) **The planned increase in police recruitment should be used to underpin significant reinvestment in local neighbourhood policing.** The YVC recognises the fundamental importance of effective community policing in the development of long-term, problem-solving approaches to reducing serious youth violence. It is the basis on which policing capacity, and public trust and confidence in policing, is built and sustained.

27) **Central, regional and local governments should prioritise funding for co-produced police diversionary and deflection projects.** These projects, such as DIVERT Youth, help to prevent the criminalisation of young people and hold significant potential in reducing reoffending.

28) While the evidence concerning the effectiveness of Stop & Search is mixed and frequently contentious, we recognise that there may be instances in which it is a necessary element of the short-term enforcement response to knife crime. **Stop and search should always be intelligence-led, targeted specifically at those known or believed to be carrying weapons.**

29) **The Knife Crime Prevention Order (KCPO) pilot should be subject to close monitoring and a robust and independent evaluation, to be laid before Parliament.** A national rollout should only be approved if there is clearly demonstrable evidence that the orders are effective in preventing young people from carrying knives.

30) **Opportunities for diversion from the criminal justice system should be continuously explored throughout a young person's involvement with the law, not just at the first instance, and should be more widely available than current practice allows.** Attempts to engage young people in preventative and diversionary activities on a voluntary basis must be fully explored and evidenced, prior to an application for a KCPO being considered.

31) **Central government should take action to further reduce the use of custody for children and young people and ensure it is used only as a last resort, with a specific focus on addressing BAME disproportionality.** Independent inspection reports consistently show that imprisonment of children is harmful, exacerbates problems and is damaging to life chances, with an increased risk of offending when young people are released. Where custody is necessary, it should be in small settings, close to home, with a focus on meeting young people's needs and preparing them for life in the community.

32) **At every stage of the criminal justice system where overrepresentation of BAME young people is evident, the relevant agencies must urgently 'explain or reform', in line with the Lammy Review recommendations.**

33) **Central government should conduct a wide-ranging review of the entire criminal records regime for children and young people, with a view to significant reform**. To allow young people to move on from past mistakes and escape a lifetime of stigma, a better balance must be struck between securing appropriate safeguarding measures and ensuring young people do not face disproportionate and unnecessary barriers to rehabilitation, including barriers to employment, education, and housing.

34) Consistent with evidence provided to the Commission, the Government's own Serious Violence Strategy highlights the links between illicit drug markets and serious violence. Numerous reviews into UK drug policy – including but not limited to the reviews by Dame Carol Black (ongoing), the Health and Social Care Committee (2019) and the Home Affairs Committee (2012) - have taken place under successive Governments in recent years, yet recommendations from such reviews have typically been ignored. **The adoption of evidence-informed, rather than ideologically driven, drug policy is long overdue: Central Government should implement the recommendations that have been made by numerous recent reviews into UK drug policy.**

Youth services

35) High quality youth services can transform the lives of young people by helping them to build their emotional and social skills, particularly around confidence, critical thinking, resilience and employability. To do so, however, these services require substantial and long-term funding commitments that recognise the cost-benefit of investing in early intervention and preventative youth services. **Central Government should provide Local Authorities with statutory funding and a clear statutory duty for providing youth services, the levels of which should be determined by the number of young people living in each Local Authority area**. Civil society organisations should be central to designing, delivering and leading youth services, working in partnership with Local Authorities and other key stakeholders.

36) **Adult professionals and practitioners involved in the commissioning, design and delivery of youth services should put in place appropriate structures to ensure that the voices of young people and those that support them are at the heart of any decision-making that affects them.**

37) A collaboration of funders – including, but not limited to, Central, Regional and Local Governments, Arm's Length Bodies, Trusts, Foundations, Corporates and VRUs - should provide enhanced investment in early intervention and open access youth services as well as targeted 'violence-reduction' youth work. **A clear demarcation should be drawn between generic youth services and targeted violence reduction interventions, the latter of which must be delivered by youth organisations whose workers have received specialist training.**

38) **Funders should seek to ensure appropriate training and support is available to all youth workers.** This should include funding for the provision of mental health training for frontline professionals including but not limited to youth workers, focusing in particular on trauma-informed approaches as well as support services for youth workers who may be experiencing trauma themselves.

39) **Funders should invest in quality assurance around youth services, appropriate to the size of the organisation, to secure minimum standards and consistency of provision.** This will help to ensure young people have access to safe spaces and high quality youth work, and will foster a culture of continuous improvement.

40) **Central Government investment should provide national and local infrastructure support to enable coordinated and collaborative working and sustainability of youth services to allow grassroots organisations to focus on frontline delivery.** This should include the establishment of a joined-up youth offer (voluntary and statutory) at a local and national level to coordinate opportunities that are available to young people. This should be underpinned by the establishment of the new Local Youth Partnerships across the country, acknowledging the important role civil society organisations have in providing this service.

41) Youth organisations and other stakeholders should avoid outwardly framing themselves as being involved in 'violence reduction'. **Wherever possible, youth organisations should take an asset-based approach to working with young people, explicitly framing their work around the provision of opportunity, skills and inclusion.**

We hope that the YVC's findings and recommendations will provide welcome support to each of the regional VRUs in their task of driving forward genuine public health approaches to reducing serious violence. While the size of this task should not be underestimated, it is one we are confident can be met provided that the political will exists to drive forward the Commission's recommendations.

Part 4

Expert Reflections on the Final Report

Part 4: Expert Reflections on the Final Report

Alex Atherton, Education Consultant and former Head Teacher

A Public Health Approach Can Work in Education Too

It has been a privilege to be part of the Youth Violence Commission, and to work alongside professionals from a range of services and see how this has been shaped into a final set of recommendations. Through this we have sought to model how a public health approach can be used to best effect to drive down levels of serious youth violence, particularly that which results in the loss of life.

My time as a secondary school headteacher showed me that the vast majority of teachers go into the profession for the same reasons as I did: to make a difference and support young people in reaching their potential. There are no worse examples of wasted potential than the tragedy of either a death or a long prison sentence. The work of the Commission has shown that the waste does not stop there. The costs associated with every tragedy are immense, and the only practical way of reducing them is to cut the number of tragedies themselves. Human costs aside, it is a highly inefficient way to run a country.

Schools can contribute a great deal to understanding the causes of youth violence, most notably to finding solutions for individual cases. I can think of many students where the work of the school and its staff did everything to reduce the chances of a serious incident and were successful in doing so. I also remember the times when I was reminded that the chances can never be eliminated, and those who suffered were often not those thought to be most at risk. Co-ordination across services can make an enormous difference. A meeting of professionals more often than not unearthed new information which provided the breakthrough. Those synergies are invaluable, but if services no longer have the capacity to send staff to those meetings and have those discussions, they are lost. School cuts usually lead to support staff cuts, and it is often those members of staff who can make the biggest difference to vulnerable young people.

Supporting the needs of the most vulnerable is often expensive in terms of time and resources, but the right interventions can ensure the cost is both temporary and also tiny when compared to those associated with youth violence. Without significant additional resources schools will not be able to make the difference and spare the cost to the public purse in the future.

Teachers cannot make any difference to young people if they are not on roll at a school. It is worth reflecting for a moment on how the phrase 'off rolling' ever came into being and why the process of inspection has to focus on the integrity of institutions set up to serve the needs of children. The bewildered look I get when I explain the concept to those who work in education abroad says everything.

The school system has changed a great deal in recent years, but the statutory guidance which governs admissions was last published in 2014. Thousands of young people are falling out of the system and never getting back in. This includes those with a permanent exclusion on their record. The Admissions Code needs to be reviewed as a matter of urgency and enable local authorities to intervene so all children are educated. The Butler Act of 1944 delivered this, restoring this principle is an urgent priority. Local authorities will also require additional resources for delivery. Again, this is a small outlay when compared to the alternatives.

Ofsted's focus on off-rolling is welcome, but the significance of the issue means that the impact needs to be measured in its first year. They also cannot be expected to manage this issue alone given its engagement with each school comes on average every few years. Local authorities engage with schools on a weekly basis and know who is playing games or not taking their share of vulnerable children.

There has been much national publicity about the recruitment and retention crisis in schools, and it is well founded. The focus on supporting teachers in their first years in the profession provides the ideal opportunity for deeper professional development and engagement. Understanding attachment and trauma, amongst other areas, really matters for the future of the many thousands of young people who have had Adverse Childhood Experiences. Teachers who understand the children in front of them have a much better chance of staying in the profession, and enabling them to fulfil their potential.

Duncan Bew, Consultant Trauma and Acute Surgeon at College Hospital London

Healing a Traumatised Society: A Shared Obligation to Care, a Shared Opportunity to Thrive

The development of national major trauma networks has led to significant improvements in the care of patients with major traumatic injury, yet the greatest opportunity to reduce the burden of the disease of trauma is in its prevention. Possibly the greatest change which has improved trauma care is a shared mindset and agreed operating procedures, working

together to form a chain of survival. In a similar way, violence prevention and the safeguarding of those who are vulnerable requires the responsibility of us all, working together to provide a continuum of support.

Cofactors associated with violence are shared with many other public health challenges and addressing all of these is essential for population health, and the true wealth of our society. We have a moral obligation to safeguard those who are vulnerable, but there is also an economic imperative to invest in the sustainable social development of communities to enable them to thrive.

Public health approaches to violence can be effective but must have a true understanding of the local risks and deliver relevant, culturally credible interventions in partnership with families and communities, rather than being imposed upon them. Multi-agency collaboration is essential and it is crucial that partner organisations understand their shared strategy and use the same terminology and definitions. Organisations must view each other as mutually compatible partners rather than competing rivals in their coproduction and delivery and be prepared to share their information and insight which is so vital for swift, early and effective intervention. Violence is not inevitable and is preventable, but it is also not an inevitable product of social inclusion and wealth. Public health approaches must be supported by enforcement from a police force that is adequately resourced to be able to proactively engage with and protect communities with mutual respect.

Both victims and perpetrators of violence have often witnessed or suffered repeated physical and psychological trauma from violence as children. Potential solutions to reducing violence have so far been hampered by a misunderstanding of the diverse challenges individuals in different communities face, often determined by an assumed political narrative rather than fact and an impatience to be seen to produce results. Other than in a small number of Violence Reduction Units, this has resulted in a lack of long term coordinated strategy sustained beyond political cycles or which effectively addresses the reality of the structurally violent environments in which people live. Short term strategy has focused predominantly on enforcement and secondary prevention which offers a very recognisable (and potentially valuable) intervention but only after harm has already occurred. Primary prevention offers huge potential to safeguard, educate and inspire positive futures as well as civic and first aid preparedness, but significantly lacks the investment required to support a comprehensive public health approach.

Society has branded knives, gangs and young people as a cause of violence, when they are instead the most visible symptoms of violence as a much more complex endemic societal disease. Families on adjacent streets are living parallel lives with polarised aspirations and opportunities, and dedicated parents suffering in work poverty working multiple jobs struggle to support their children. Our most deprived communities face discriminatory criminalisation. For many of the most vulnerable children, emotional, physical and sexual violence can become normalised and for some an inevitability. The lack of safe spaces, the ability to make safe journeys and often the absence of a trusted adult in their lives is a true reflection that they are being failed by our society, rather than failing it themselves. Their perceived failure to make the right choice is often due to an absence of choices for them to make.

Healthcare has a pivotal role to play in the physical and psychological care of patients who are injured as a result of violence, the prevention of future harm and also as an inspirational employer in every community. Caring moments offer an opportunity to safeguard and a teachable moment for those at risk, but they are also teachable moments for us to listen, to understand and appreciate unmet needs, expectations and environments which place our most vulnerable at risk.

In a trauma-informed approach we can enable effective reachable moments of primary prevention. In identifying these risks, effective sharing of data across networks must strive to ensure systems of care provide continuing support and prevent unrealistic thresholds of access or gaps between professional silos into which the most vulnerable can fall. This understanding can also enable us to effectively target the allocation of limited resources to guide primary prevention and thereby always place those who are most vulnerable at the heart of our care. There is now significant potential for the government to make this a reality for violence prevention and in doing so the social development goals of the SDG2030 (UN Sustainable Development Goals 2030) agenda.

NHS networks of health care provide an incredible opportunity to work in partnership with violence and injury prevention networks to deliver and evaluate evidence-based prevention.

Every interaction we make is an intervention and we must make every encounter count.

Nicky Bullard, Chairwoman and CCO of MRM/McCann (Relationship Marketing Company)

The Creative Responsibility: From Hype to Hope

If I had to choose one thing that I took from this report, it's the breakdown of relationships. With parents in early years. With educators. With communities. With social workers. With the police. With each other.

And you could call the report a depressing read. However, this three-year deep dive has given us

an understanding of the scope and nature of the problem, and now, if the Violence Reduction Units get the long-term funding and empowerment they need, we will have the hope.

The opportunity 'to do good work, that does good'. That's why I joined the advertising industry.

And of course, we all want to do explosive campaigns for big brands, win awards, be famous.

But doing meaningful work for those household names, that is really why we are here.

So, are we doing good work when it comes to our portrayal of UK Youth?

Or could it be doing more harm than good?

I've taken a look at some relevant data my agency network has drawn from the last 4 years, which provides a glimpse at UK youth attitudes, values and beliefs. And I've had a think about what we, the marketing industry, can do about it.

The loss of belonging
Community. It's a big word. Where are our youth finding it? Well it's not in the places they live. It's in social media. Why? It's a sad fact that 55% of UK 18-24 year olds consider themselves to be in a minority group. And 17% of 18-24 year olds believe it's more important to live by your own rules rather than those set out by others.

Yet to be part of a community, and not ostracised from it, you need to follow that community's accepted norms and guidelines. So, smaller communities are formed online, centered around a passion point or shared belief that all of the community's members buy into (a marketer's dream right?). And then of course, if you no longer buy into that shared belief, you can leave that online community easily and without pain. And be instantly accepted into another. Unlike in the real world.

Marketing Industry challenge: How do we leverage the power of these online communities to bring that sense of belonging to our real-life communities?

The loss of hope
70% of UK 18-24 year olds don't think they can plan for their future due to uncertainty in the world today. 81% say it's harder to trust people in their area than it was in the past. And 20% would be willing to join a counter-crime/terrorism advocacy organisation. That's 1/5 of our youth finding belonging here, rather than the communities they live in.

Industry challenge: Let's not hype 'gangsta' life to the 20%. Why not help brands be part of a 'future plan' for the 70%?

Brands can bring hope.
And the data shows it's also good for business. 58% of Gen Z say that they have bought a product solely because the brand took a stand on an issue they care about. And 70% said they'd be prepared to pay more for it. Advertising can help counter feelings of isolation, with 62% of UK young people saying that advertising has really helped broaden their exposure to other cultures and communities.

And here comes the responsibility for brands and their agencies.

80% of UK 18-24 year olds say that brands should DO MORE to improve everyday life. 79% think global brands have a greater ability to create positive change than the government does. 83% of UK 18-24 year olds think that global brands have the power to make the world a better place.

Conclusion: Hype or hope?
As an industry, it's not enough to simply reflect our youth in our work, show that we 'get them', be edgy for the sake of cool. We have to stop the hype of the stereotype. Be a community catalyst. Show the positivity that young Londoner's are bringing.

It's time to *hype the hope*.

Sources: Truth about New Europe 2018, Truth about Youth 2019, Truth About Global Brands 2017, Meta Q 2019

Pippa Goodfellow, Director of the Standing Committee for Youth Justice

Rethinking 'Justice' for Young People

This welcome report provides a comprehensive analysis of the context in which violence has been exacerbated in recent years, leaving communities feeling unsupported and unsafe. It also highlights the potential to bring about lasting change through investment in communities, through early help, access to opportunity and addressing structural inequalities. There is no question that the future response must address the issues and recommendations raised in this report, which should serve as a pressing call to action for change.

Alongside this focus on early intervention and prevention, the role of the criminal justice system must be considered - but with a focus on minimising its use rather than as the source of long-term solutions. The mantra that 'we can't arrest our way out of the problem' is backed up by a growing body of evidence that diverting children away from the formal youth justice system reduces offending and brings about more positive sustainable outcomes. Moves towards enforcement and punitive measures that are not grounded in evidence risk hampering positive

developments in preventative work. The introduction of criminal justice measures should be thought through carefully and cautiously, to guard against damaging and counterproductive consequences.

The commitment to funding 20,000 additional police officers is, on the face of it, a welcome development. But an effective public health approach to addressing violence will require a simultaneous commitment to investing in community-based and child-centred policing, rather than a narrow focus on enforcement and stop and search. Additionally, if these extra police officers are successfully recruited, then other public services including youth offending teams, youth work, mental health and social care will need additional resources. Police must be able to signpost and divert the young people they encounter into early help services with sufficient capacity to provide them with the necessary support.

The imminent introduction of Knife Crime Prevention Orders exemplifies the absence of an evidence-informed and joined-up approach. They did not receive the level of consultation, parliamentary scrutiny, or impact assessment appropriate for legislation with such wide-reaching potential, and were rushed through despite a wide coalition of professional bodies and voluntary sector organisations expressing strong concerns. There is no evidence that they will prevent harmful behaviour or address the root causes of knife carrying. If it is suspected, not certain, that they have carried a knife twice in two years, children as young as twelve can be given an order lasting up to two years. The order can stipulate where they go, when they have to be indoors and what they can look at and say on social media. Breaching that civil order could see them getting a prison sentence of up to two years.

Neither is there any evidence that the threat of custody acts as a deterrent for young people caught up in violence. Since the introduction of mandatory minimum custodial sentencing for weapon possession offences in 2015, numbers of children and young adults convicted of possession or threatening offences involving knives or offensive weapons have risen. Sending children to prison is damaging, harmful and has a criminogenic effect. Custody should be reserved for the most severe offences, where there is a serious risk of harm to the public and all other options have been fully explored.

The Serious Violence Bill will introduce of a new legal duty on agencies to share information and work together to combat serious violence. But without widespread investment in additional resources this implementation is wholly inappropriate for services already tasked with rising demand and shrinking budgets. Will the information that agencies are forced to share count as 'intelligence' that could be used as justification for stop and searches, or to impose a Knife Crime Prevention Order? Rather than promoting early intervention and diversion, the duty could have the unintended consequence of creating a dragnet, pulling more children into the criminal justice system, and further marginalising them.

Violence affecting young people is the product of complex and deep-rooted issues within our society, but it is not inevitable. As is clearly demonstrated in this report, effective violence prevention means dealing with this complexity, including young people in the development of solutions, and investing in organisations and programmes rooted in the communities that are most affected. There is no need to reinvent the wheel, but agencies are often working without the strategic support and resources they need to be effective. We need a system that receives the recognition and funding it deserves, enabling appropriate and holistic support for children and young people where and when it is needed to keep them safe.

Charlie Howard, Consultant Clinical Psychologist, Founder MAC-UK

Mental Health with Young People at the Heart

I'm a Consultant Clinical Psychologist and I was delighted when The London Mayor announced a Violence Reduction Unit for London. It was a bold move by Sadiq Khan and he should be applauded. It had been wanting for a while. But it was of course the start. The challenge for all of us remains how we make this happen.

Years ago, when I talked about mental health as a solution to the violence on our streets, I was the lone voice in the room. This is no longer the case (thank goodness) but the question remains how to do mental health well. Many of the young people bedevilled by the complexity of violence, won't fit into the 'traditional' mental health service model. They might not recognise that they have needs. They might not be able to get to the place where they have to go for help, service might move too slowly, or their lives might simply be too chaotic for anyone else to join them.

Working from the ground up, co-delivering mental health interventions with and for young people, has taught me one overriding thing: we have to create the solutions with young people. And I don't just mean the front of house but the back of house too: the policies, the risk assessments, the whole lot. Working in this way gives us structures that work better but more importantly, we foster trust with young people and we erode power. These are powerful ingredients for a healthy mind.

When we take the time to listen, young people describe wanting mental health support that is highly flexible and creative. It's about going to where they are, delivering what they want, when they need it. The bigger thing we need to get our heads around is how

to recruit and train the staff to deliver this work. It's not as simple as buying in mental health clinicians and relocating them on the streets. In fact, this entirely misses the point.

A Violence Reduction Unit that takes a good approach to mental health in London will invest in the training of mental health staff and their organisations. It will help them to 'get it' and to adapt how they work. But above all, it will do this with young people. They are the ones who taught me to adapt my clinical practice. Nothing else came close. Without them we won't succeed.

Mental health has to be about them, with them and for them. And it has to be about changing what's in their worlds (the wider systems) as well as what's in their heads.

Whitney Iles, CEO Project 507

From Violence Reduction to Positive Peace

'Violence reduction' is both too limited an ambition and too negative a perspective – that's why I'm passionate about creating a societal culture where peace can exist.

Research on adverse childhood experiences is still expanding, and we are continually learning about the nature, scope and effects of trauma. If we are willing to recognise the devastating repercussions that seeing, hearing or being subjected to domestic violence can have on a child, then we should also acknowledge the severe impact that racism, Islamophobia, homophobia and other forms of hate crime can have on children and young people. All trauma-centred work needs to include an understanding of social injustices and their effects on the mind of a child.

Traumatic experiences can and do express themselves through behaviour. They also have a biological impact on the brain and within the body; in the words of Robert C. Scaer, MD, the body bears the burden. The physical aspect of trauma needs to be taken into consideration when designing and delivering interventions with children and young people. Person and behaviour focused interventions, however, must be part of a more comprehensive programme of societal change.

Ignoring how societal factors contribute to an individual's behaviour -- placing behaviour solely as the responsibility of the child or adolescent – constitutes an injustice to those individuals and the broader communities in which they live. It ignores the often racist and oppressive policies that have contributed to the lack of opportunities and resources within these communities. If we take into consideration these broader issues that influence behaviour, as well as the different identity groups to which the individual relates, this will enable interventions to be more productive.

One of the most important aspects of healing trauma is healthy relationships. All professional adults who engage in working relationships with children and adolescents affected by violence should be qualified, monitored and held accountable for their work. Accountability does not mean we need to create another white-westernised quality standard model that excludes grassroots work. It does, however, mean that we need to work together to develop a new, authentic culture of accountability and quality assurance.

We, as a society, have made good progress in decreasing the number of children in custody. However, statistics show that this has been most effective with the white British population, and we still have a way to go in terms of how we successfully engage with black, brown and other minority groups. Part of the solution is being able to effectively engage community organisations into the criminal justice system and changing how we perceive and manage risk.

The main focus of strategic planning moving forward should not be one of 'violence reduction', but that of creating and maintaining what Galtung refers to as 'positive peace'. By using evidence and practical inventions, such as the 'Peace Indicators', we can change how we measure success and outcomes. By dealing with the root causes of violence and creating community-specific measurements of peace, rather than myopically chasing generic, police or funding-driven performance indicators, we will empower communities to create significant and sustainable change.

Mat Ilic, Chief Development Officer, Catch22; former Special Adviser to the Prime Minister

Giving Back Control

This might sound strange, but even sat at a desk in the country's most famous building and a few rooms away from the Prime Minister, there are days when you feel completely powerless in the fight against serious youth violence. The morning after a teenage murder has happened in faraway Manchester, for example; or the day that you are due to meet bereaved families to try and comprehend what more can be done through victim support services. There can be a lack of grip and control; but there is seldom a shortage of sympathy and concern.

I have been engaged in work surrounding this issue for the past decade, from City Hall to Whitehall, and community sector in between. As I write this, the latest crime statistics confirm

that knife crime is at its highest since records began. The problem is growing *and* mutating, becoming more flagrant, at times even affecting young people (and adults) with no connection to criminal peers, or a background of misbehaviour or neglect. We all can, and must, do more.

Interest in social issues such as violence waxes and wanes. Concerns about crime and safety have shot up into the top five issues of matter to the public, with traditional and new media being in a position to broadcast incidents almost in real time. It is therefore no surprise that the Government is making law and order one of its principal domestic priorities. The commitment to reducing violence – through additional police funding as well as the parallel investment in Violence Reduction Units – needs to be viewed in this context. It goes without saying that the politicians will want to see results from their intervention, in the form of reduced homicides and weapon-enabled injuries, especially among young people.

Funding and legislation are two of the main things that Whitehall can deliver, and on this issue, both have been committed (the legislation being the stated intent to introduce a *public health duty to prevent violence*). The urgency, in response to public interest and media pressure, is crucial and welcomed. What we can demand now is more intelligent design: connecting the cash closer to the root of the problem, for example, greater precision and problem solving in policing, not simply a blunt commitment to 'more' stop and search).

The Commission deserves all the credit for its consistency and drive for the adoption of a public health approach to violence reduction. Adoption has happened, but long-term retention will depend on whether this works: and in order for it to work, the recommendations of this report (adopting solutions based on the '*best available theory, data and analysis*') need to be taken on. Perhaps even more importantly, it is now for communities (defined as anything from towns, cities, local authorities, neighbourhoods) to take control and drive long term change. I think only they can. It is too important and fragile to be left to politics alone.

Ebinehita Iyere, Founder of Milk and Honey (a female-led safe space that empowers young women and helps them to heal from their experiences)

Girls, Young Women and Their Unheard and Unhealed Trauma

The Youth Violence Commission's final report lays bare how society has failed to address the root causes of serious violence that devastates the lives of so many young people and communities. Drawing on the views and experiences of professionals from across the sector, this report provides an important insight into what is happening on the ground, both to understand the impact of youth violence, and to reduce levels of violence in the future.

The final report has, however, like many reports, neglected to provide sufficient attention to young women. It has failed, for example, to look at how young women respond to traumatic experiences -- how their loyalty, rules and roles within their communities are central aspects of youth violence, which we must strive to better understand. There is extensive research on, and frontline work for, young women who are subjected to child sexual exploitation (CSE). However, young women who do not fall into the 'CSE' bracket are often missed and lost in the system, due in large part to the stereotypes with which they are labelled. This in turn increases the likelihood of these young women having negative experiences and contact with various adults across many of our institutions, including education, justice, health and social care.

I started my career working predominantly with young males in the Youth Justice System and across various communities in London. Every time an incident occurred, such as an arrest, a fight or a stabbing, it would be a young female that would call me to explain who they were and also what had happened; this pattern repeated itself many times. These girls were aged as young as 11, and as old as 27, but most of them were between 13 and18 years of age. They also tended to be young black girls, as the sad reality is that black boys are disproportionately affected by serious violence in the areas where I work in London.

There are so many young women who are unhealed and unheard due to the traumatic impact of youth violence, who uphold contextual and cultural rules such as 'no snitching' and roles such as 'keepers' of their environment. Most have had a lack of consistent positive attachment figures and therefore have some of the highest social and emotional needs. The lack of support for these young women leaves many likely to experience negative contact within the education, justice, health and social care systems; they are managed and labelled as a problem, while the problems they have experienced are disregarded or overlooked.

Although some research has been conducted on the role(s) women play in gangs, insufficient attention has been given to the supportive roles many young women play that have nothing to do with gangs, such as their 'brother's keeper' – a role that can bring with it traumatic experiences directly or vicariously from violence, loss, bereavement and family breakdown. These girls have always had to play protective roles, directly or indirectly, sometimes in positive ways, sometimes negative. Their role as 'protector' is expected due to certain unwritten rules, including those stemming from the roles they have seen older women play: to nurture the males around them; to ensure that boys and young men are coping and safe.

Instead of being given the time and space to grieve, girls often have to wear a suit of armour – to immediately adopt the role of protector, caring for the boys and young men around them who have been directly involved in serious violence. Girls put out the flowers, girls organise the funerals or memorial services, girls are on the phone at night to boys who can't sleep and are crying because they're so traumatised and don't feel they can speak to other males.

In short, girls are spending more time and energy mobilising for others than they are healing themselves. This is why I founded Milk and Honey in 2016, an organisation for young women who are either involved in, at-risk of being involved in, or who have already witnessed, traumatic events. We offer young women a therapeutic safe space where they can express their trauma using creative, expressive arts and where they can flourish and take ownership of their healing, empowerment and resilience (HER) through one-to-one sessions and group projects. My work with young people through Milk and Honey has shown me the lack of child and adolescent mental health and therapeutic services for all children and young people, but particularly for those from BME communities who have experienced loss, bereavement and grief in the communities most affected by violence.

It is easy to see why there has been a focus on the male experience of violence, but it leaves a serious blind spot. Apart from brief soundbites provided by distraught mothers or sisters on television in the aftermath of a murder, we rarely hear about the ways in which youth violence hurts young women and girls. Male faces and voices typically feature at the centre of debates, rendering other perspectives secondary. If we as a society are serious about understanding and curing the epidemic of knife crime and violence, we ought to be trying to capture a much more diverse range of experiences and personal insights – especially if those experiences and insights are those of the girls and women who have, for decades, had to pick up the pieces when a community experiences the tragic loss of a young life.

The lack of resource dedicated to, and research on, young girls impacted by the trauma of youth violence, as well as black girls who experience disproportionately negative contact across many of our societal institutions, is a major failing that must be addressed. That is why I am recommending extensive research is conducted in two areas: 1) the traumatic impact youth violence has on young girls; and 2) specific research on black girls and their negative experiences across many societal institutions, including education, social care, health and the criminal justice system. We cannot continue to ignore and neglect the trauma that devastates the lives of so many girls and young women in the UK – it is something that we must address as a matter of urgency.

Pastor Ben Lindsay, CEO Power the Fight

Harnessing the Potential and Resources of Faith Groups

As a pastor, community leader and charity CEO, I welcome the final report of the Youth Violence Commission. This in-depth report looks at the root causes of violence between young people and gains insight from a wide range of sources, presenting a holistic view which is often missing. It is refreshing to see an acknowledgment of the role faith groups can play in the reduction of youth violence and the creation of more peaceful communities. The findings of this report will undoubtedly further encourage faith groups to identify the contributions they can make to these objectives. Youth violence is an issue which belongs to the whole of society – not just to particular groups – and so it requires all of us to play our part.

With recent research showing that spending on youth services in England and Wales has been cut by 70% in the last decade, resulting in a loss of £1bn of investment and zero funding in some areas , the need for faith groups to increase their commitment to youth work has become more urgent. Since the budget cuts in 2011, youth clubs have closed and front-line youth services have been eradicated. According to research by Unison, freedom of information requests from 168 local authorities across the UK show that youth services lost at least £60m of funding between 2012 and 2014. More than 2000 jobs were lost. Around 350 youth centres closed and 41,000 youth service places for young people and at least 35,000 hours of outreach work by youth workers were cut.

Faith groups have access to three resources that, due to the austerity measures of the last decade, are now in short supply: buildings, unrestricted funds and volunteers. Many faith groups own buildings and halls in the heart of their communities at a time when public space is increasingly under threat. A study published in *BMJ Open in 2018* identified the hours after school as a period of significantly heightened risk of violence for school-aged children, with the majority of incidents occurring close to home and school. Places of worship, like other public buildings, are vital to our communities and if accessible to young people, can offer places of refuge.

With unrestricted funds, mainly from congregational giving, faith groups are able to be more responsive to needs in their community by delivering funds to organisations and individuals in need much faster than public sector grants can. Faith groups have established cultures of volunteering and a long history of providing support to families and young people in the UK. They consistently provide free and safe spaces for children and young people through Sunday schools, youth clubs and programmes for

students and young adults. They often include free meals, providing community and nutrition to young people who otherwise may be home alone. Faith groups offer mentoring, advice, support and guidance that, due to austerity, statutory services struggle to provide. They provide connection to an intergenerational community, which can help to build resilience against criminality and violence.

Tragically, some faith groups have been slow to respond to safeguarding issues, sometimes due to negligence and in other cases, due to a willingness to help the vulnerable without understanding the risks and complexities involved. Across the board, faith groups must learn the lessons and improve in the area of child protection. While many have strong safeguarding procedures in place, we know there have been many high-profile incidents where faith groups have either ignored basic safeguarding procedures or have out of date policies. As a member of the Contextual Safeguarding network, I encourage all faith groups to take this seriously and to be open to fresh approaches that can improve their practice and keep young people safe.

Diversity and inclusion is also an important issue for faith communities to engage with and respond to. While some groups are uniquely placed to develop leaders from ethnically diverse backgrounds, in other cases, they can struggle to find youth leaders from the context they are serving and therefore lack the cultural competency to serve their local community with understanding. Often, there can be a lack of a leadership pipeline for working class young people, because of a reliance on unpaid internships and gap years, which tend to be more accessible to white middle class young people.

At Power the Fight we advocate for a partnership approach in which faith groups receive effective training and support as well as access to a network of well-resourced services. The goal is that the bringing together of all of these groups will form part of a wider public health response.

With evidence proving the existence of a 'school-exclusion to pupil referral unit to prison pipeline', it is clear that this needs to be disrupted through more nurturing school environments (as pioneered in Glasgow). While fixed period and permanent exclusions are the highest in England and Wales since 2012 it's heartening to see faith-based charities like Transforming Lives for Good (TLG) working in partnership with local churches to develop alternative education provision.

With the number of police officers in England and Wales falling by 20,600 between March 2010 and March 2019 and a growing 'wall of silence' between officers and the communities they serve, confidence in the police – and particularly by minority communities - is low. Faith groups - often in a position of trust – can be uniquely placed to build stronger relationships between the community and the police.

Some faith groups have, for example, held prayer meetings where the police are given the opportunity to share about their work, answer questions and hear concerns and observations from the general public. Faith leaders often hold critical insights that might support criminal investigations but often do not have clear pathways or procedures to assist the police. There are examples of good partnership work, such as Project Mosaic, an interfaith initiative in Greenwich south east London, which brings faith leaders together with the local authority and Greenwich MET police.

Faith groups have a clear mandate to stand with those who mourn. In my experience it is often people of faith supporting families through grief, conducting funerals and 'nine nights' and providing support to traumatised youth, who for various reasons find it difficult to access therapeutic services.

Many churches, mosques, temples and synagogues are the glue in their local community. With the right training, faith groups could be a major resource in the ongoing battle to reduce youth violence. This will require policy-makers to engage with faith leaders and listen to a wide range of community voices. It will require faith groups to open themselves up to receiving training and specialist support. It will require different parts of the community getting better at working together for the common good of our towns and cities. Clearer guidance is needed to facilitate effective collaboration between local authorities and faith groups.

Through my work with Power the Fight I have seen first-hand the change that comes when people work together. This is why I am heartened that partnership and collaboration is at the centre of this report.

Temi Mwale, CEO The 4Front Project

Rethinking Peace and Justice: Addressing Structural Violence and Institutional Racism

The 4Front Project is a member-led youth organisation on a mission to empower young people and communities to fight for justice, peace and freedom. I set up the organisation in 2012 to support people with direct experiences of violence and the criminal justice system to create change; in their own lives, communities and society. I have welcomed the increased attempts to examine the root causes of serious youth violence in recent years. The work of the Youth Violence Commission certainly falls within this context. Recognising poverty and rising inequality; social, educational and economic marginalisation and exclusion; as well as unaddressed trauma and mental health issues, as prominent causes of this violence brings us closer to the solutions.

However, whilst the general public discourse about serious youth violence in the UK continues to be highly racialised, it is extremely disappointing that institutional racism was not identified as a cause of serious youth violence in this report. It is certainly true that violence affects young people across the UK, but it remains a fact that young Black men and boys are disproportionately represented as the victims of this violence. Between 2015/16 and 2017/18, Black children made up 20% of all child victims and a higher proportion of Black homicides were against children - 17% of Black victims were 17 or younger, compared to an average of 11% across all ethnicities (Ministry of Justice: Statistics on Race and the Criminal Justice System 2018). For the most part, the efforts to explain this disproportionality have failed to progress beyond the age-old racist narratives that seek to link violence and crime more generally, inextricably with Blackness.

Whilst there was some exploration of specific barriers that face young Black people in Part 1 of this report, it is disconcerting that this was not examined further. The report explores poverty and housing, school exclusion, unemployment, and the criminal justice system without highlighting that (1) Black people are most likely to live in the most deprived neighbourhoods (Office for National Statistics, 2018); (2) Black children are disproportionately excluded from schools (Department for Education, 2020); (3) the unemployment rate for young Black men aged 16-24 is higher than for most other groups (House of Commons Library: Unemployment by ethnic background, 2020); and (4) Black people are disproportionately represented at every stage of the criminal justice system (Ministry of Justice: Statistics on Race and the Criminal Justice System 2018). Evidentially, a gap remains within this space for a nuanced account of the relationship between young Black people and serious youth violence. Institutional racism must become central to our analysis of this disproportionality.

Since the launch of this Commission, trauma and adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) have increasingly become part of the mainstream conversation about serious youth violence. It is unfortunate that in many ways, these terms have become 'buzz words', often used without full explanation or understanding. Furthermore, the traditional ACEs survey fails to substantially incorporate the trauma that can be inflicted on children directly by institutions (particularly criminal justice institutions). How can such institutions promote and use a 'trauma informed approach' without recognising the trauma that they can cause?

The positioning of a public health approach as the overall solution, with many institutions already claiming to implement this approach, is unsettling, particularly where these claims lack substance. Without the adequate support in place for victims, it is hard to envision a system that can provide the necessary support to whole communities that are traumatised. Furthermore, the framing of violence as a 'disease' that can be transmitted, often fails to move beyond individual accountability which runs the risk of upholding the systems which generate violence.

I am dubious of this report recommending that the police focus on a truly intelligence-led stop and search approach whilst also acknowledging that there is no evidence that stop and search is an effective policy. We must continue to question what this police 'intelligence' is and how it is obtained. This is particularly important when we consider the use of 'intelligence' in establishing 'gang' lists which have breached data protection laws. We cannot accept the framing of these tools as 'intelligence-led' as a means to justify the disproportionate targeting of young Black people.

More than two decades after the Macpherson report acknowledged institutional racism within the police, young Black boys are still over-policed and under protected. Furthermore, the lack of accountability for historical failures has led to the lack of legitimacy of policing in the eyes of many Black people. Overall, 'crime' should not be the predominant lens through which young Black people are seen and their experiences understood. Not only is this distorted, but incredibly dangerous, as it prevents young Black people from accessing adequate support, offering instead, only punishment.

I do not believe that the recommendation for a further reduction to the number of young people in the secure estate goes far enough. In 2017, the Chief Inspector of Prisons said that youth custody centres in England and Wales were so unsafe that a "tragedy" was "inevitable" and that "not a single establishment inspected was safe to hold young people". How can we reconcile our understanding of trauma with the existence of these establishments which have been exposed as perpetuating further violence and harm? The disproportionate representation of young Black people in the youth estate also highlights the disproportionate impact of this harm on them. Overall, our approach should focus on the needs of children, as opposed to treating them as risks that need to be managed. As Angela Davis said, "prisons do not disappear social problems, they disappear human beings".

It is positive that this report recommends that structures are put in place to ensure that young people's voices are at the heart of decision making that affects them. Whilst capturing youth voice is important, work that empowers the young people most directly impacted by violence and the criminal justice system to drive change should be furthered. We must ensure that movements for change are youth-led.

At The 4Front Project, we were able to transition away from framing our work around violence reduction to a broader more positive focus on building

peace. There is an important distinction between the two, not just in terms of focus, but approach. I fundamentally agree with the recommendation that youth projects should take an asset-based approach which is framed around opportunity and inclusion as opposed to the stigmatising label of 'violence reduction'. However, this recommendation should be expanded to include institutions. This calls into question the establishment of 'Violence Reduction Units' which arguably could be more positively received and effective if framed differently.

Whilst the concept of peace may be aspirational, if we are not bold enough to have this vision within our sight, then attempts to reduce violence are relatively meaningless. I believe the work of the Commission has begun to answer the question of what peace could look like. But overall, without recognising the full extent to which institutions currently contribute towards inflicting harm, this report has only partially answered what would make all young people feel safe.

Lib Peck – Director, London Violence Reduction Unit

Violence Reduction Units: Driving Forward a Preventative, Public Health Approach

In 2019 violence cost 149 Londoners their lives. Financially it cost the capital £3 billion. Neither statistic comes close to representing the incalculable emotional pain and cost to families, friends, and communities. But what these two statistics do provide is a hugely compelling case for a different approach to tackling violence.

In London we have adopted a preventative, public health approach that is rooted in 15 years of Scottish experience. This approach has already demonstrated elsewhere that **violence is preventable**, and is strongly supported by the Mayor of London through the establishment of a London Violence Reduction Unit (VRU). Our model first identifies and then tackles the real **long-term** drivers of violence. This requires working genuinely **with** communities and young people, convening and aligning the policies and priorities of public sector partners, and building a **coalition** of voices that can demand relevant policy change.

This report comes at a timely moment for the London VRU, a year after we started our mission to reduce violent crime in the capital. The report suggests that we are on the right path with what we've focused on in our first year, and it also provides evidence and recommendations that should shape our future work.

The report emphasises the importance of gathering and acting on data, collaborative working, and sustained funding.

Over the last year, we have focused on building our data and evidence. Our blend of public health, public perception of safety, and crime statistics gave us a sharper focus for action. A project with the Information Commissioner's Office is helping to break down organisational barriers to information sharing. More recently, the first ever capital-wide assessment of violence alongside an analysis of the reviews of homicides revealed a gap in our collective learning. With this new data, we are now pressing the government to establish a mechanism for funded statutory reviews to take place for **all** homicides.

An equally valid source of data on what and why violence is occurring is the evidence Londoners have shared with us from their personal experiences. The team prioritises getting out of City Hall to talk and, critically, listen to communities directly affected by violence. They tell us what they think the key challenges are and suggest what needs to be done now and in the longer term. Our commitment to this form of engagement will only intensify with a Young Leaders Programme and more community-led funded programmes.

It is this rich data and intelligence we've drawn on to inform our £15.8 million spending programme. In a short timeframe we've tried to prioritise funding collaborative bids, to fill the known gaps in provision and to back small, innovative projects from which we can learn.

These insights have empowered us to invest in youth workers, often the most neglected professions but one of the most important for young people. We have also added extra support for young people who have been exposed to trauma. And, we have invested in school inclusion programmes, alongside providing more tailored guidance and opportunities to those young people excluded from mainstream.

Of course, the context is as important as the person. Three-quarters of the boroughs in London with the highest levels of violent offending are also in the top ten most deprived. We have supported local authorities and local partnerships to develop borough violence reduction plans; and invested in community leaders and capacity for the grassroots sector. We want our place-based work to go deeper to tackle violence at a neighbourhood level and to make sure we extend our focus to exploring issues around vulnerability, exploitation, and safeguarding.

One of the strongest powers of the Mayoral office is its convening and influencing role. We are drawing on that to build pan London alliances. 'Working together' is a mantra that trips easily off the tongue but is much, much harder to do effectively and genuinely.

We have prioritised extending and strengthening existing networks where we can. Drawing on the public sector partnership which guides the Unit, we have forged early positive relationships with the NHS

and the Met. We are excited by the Young People's Advisory Board, the growing schools network, and the convening of our charities group. Partnership isn't always easy in a city with as much complexity as London, but we know that it's essential if London is to reduce violence and increase feelings of safety.

Over the next year, we want to do more, and do better – from data sharing and evaluation to programme development and partnership growth. We will be making the case for long-term, sustainable funding for community groups, greater joint working from the charity sector, and much more alignment from the public sector.

We need to shift the message around violence and to make an irrefutable case for greater funding for prevention. The connections and evidence that this report brings together will be a great source of support and guidance.

Sherry Peck, CEO Safer London

To Safeguard Young People we must Tackle Inequality and Social Injustice

We welcome the key messages from the Youth Violence Commission's final report – in particular, the recognition of the importance of the early years, how important families and communities are, and how they should be empowered to have a voice going forward.

Safer London is privileged to have worked with thousands of Young Londoners. What we learn from them is often inspirational, but can also be challenging when it makes us face up to some of the realities around the context we are asking them to grow and thrive in. We are clear that Young Londoners are not the issue – the context in which they are trying desperately to create their lives in is.

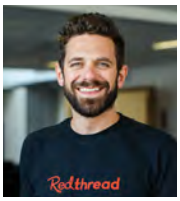
The paucity of housing, long term employment that pays adequately and social injustice experienced by many, as this report clearly demonstrates, is likely to impact on an entire generation and future generations unless we all face up to our responsibility to work to change things. We know that a clear driver of violence is inequality and social injustice – class and income inequality is without doubt key, but racial inequality also needs to be recognised and responded to as a matter of urgency.

The work we do at Safer London alongside Young Londoners goes some way to advocate at an individual level for change, our work is relationship based which helps young people strive towards their aspirations despite this backdrop. We support young people by listening to them. By building strong trusting relationships we gain insight into their world, what they need and how we can work with them in the way that best suits them. For example, we have a specialist mental health worker who meets the young person in a place where they feel most comfortable. This approach to addressing the impacts of trauma on a young person's life has yielded great results.

We are clear about the need to change the wider narrative around young people affected by violence – so that it is seen for what it is – a safeguarding issue. Historically, we saw the term 'Child Prostitute' used and quite rightly we have, as a whole society, realised this was victim blaming and clearly incorrect – the young people labelled as such were victims of exploitation, had been groomed and needed support. Now we need to change the narrative around the children who are finding themselves trapped in a cycle of violence.

The removal of services for young people which generations before would have taken for granted is advancing at a pace – the local youth club simply doesn't exist for many any longer and outstanding youth workers who operated both assertively on the streets and within those local buildings are too few and far between. Sadly, there is a need for a specialist organisation such as Safer London who work exclusively with young Londoners affected by violence and exploitation.

Arguably even more sadly, however, many of those organisations who historically would provide that essential youth provision or children or family centre spaces are having to attempt to move into this specialist 'youth violence' world to secure funding to continue to exist. This is wrong on a number of fronts and we would advocate both an increase in locally embedded youth work and support to ensure specialist services are funded to undertake the work that is still desperately needed.



John Poyton, Chief Executive and Eleanor Riley, Policy and Comms Manager, Redthread

No Young Person is an Island: Why Youth Violence Isn't a One Sector Issue

At Redthread, our work revolves around the idea of a 'teachable moment' – one that happens in the immediate aftermath of a violence-related hospital visit. Away from their usual routine and environment, a young person is often in a space where they are open to receiving help, to begin moving forward towards a healthier, safer and happier life.

The impact of the teachable moment can be seen across a young person's life, an acute intervention in hospital can send ripples across entire lives, families, peer groups and communities.

But just as the teachable moment can have a wide-ranging impact, the causes of a trip to hospital, and of youth violence incidents in general, are just as broad, and the young people we support face a range issues. A Redthread Youth Worker might liaise with a young person's school or college to prevent a permanent exclusion; be in touch with CAMHS to discuss therapy or be speaking to their social worker about moving to an area that is safer for them – often they will need to do all three. No young person is an island and the support they need is not limited to one area of their life. From the teachable moment forward, our youth workers mobilise the professional network around this young person.

Our success also hinges on our relationships with doctors and nurses and the wider NHS. We only get the opportunity for the timely teachable moment because of their willingness to invite us into their hospital departments. The mutual respect between our teams and medical teams at ground level, and the common approach we share to meet young people where they are and without judgement, means we can work together as trusted colleagues. These teachable moment interventions in health settings are beginning to be recognised and are expanding across the country. This is why existing and emerging hospital-based violence intervention programmes are growing the HIVE (Hospital Interrupting Violence Exchange) Network. While our initial services began with a link forged at a professional to professional level, the past few years have seen a shift towards commissioner recognition and adoption of the teachable moment and hospital-based youth work. Cross-sector work, and commissioning, is crucial.

We're not the only people working in this way; other schemes see similar successes by rethinking what sort of support is possible in certain places. The Divert programme for instance, places 'custody coaches' in police stations in London. Since 2018 they've worked with over 800 people and are set to expand to South Yorkshire, Thames Valley and Lancashire in 2020. Conversations between a young person who's been arrested, and a coach are confidential. The coaches are not police, and the young person can be open about what they need and their situation without fear of worsening their situation. Liaison and Diversion programmes rethink criminal justice spaces too, placing forensic mental health practitioners in courts and police stations to screen for vulnerabilities and mental health issues that people might need additional support with.

The potential of other health innovations, like social prescribing for instance, haven't been fully explored with young people. Social prescribing is a non-clinical intervention prescribed by a health professional. Often a young person presenting with an injury needs a youth work intervention, social prescribing could be the lever to make this happen.

All these examples are crucial parts of a public health approach – an often-heralded solution to youth violence. There's an evidence base for this way of working, and we've made huge progress in recent years – commissioners and politicians now understand the approach and are putting it into practice. We have taken a crucial step in the right direction with the establishment of regional Violence Reduction Units, but implementation and ongoing success will not be easy or without complications.

Putting a public health approach into action takes time and careful planning. That is why we welcome the calls in this report for longevity of funding commitment and the accompanying scrutiny and oversight of the work of the newly established regional Violence Reduction Units. But more than anything, the success of a public health approach needs us all to work together and recognise the important role we all play. All young people deserve to lead healthy, safe and happy lives and no one sector can be solely responsible for all three of these elements – none of us can be islands anymore.

Niven Rennie, Director, Scottish Violence Reduction Unit

15 Years On and Still Challenges Remain

'Violence is preventable, not inevitable'. So said Nelson Mandela and that statement has become the byword for the Scottish Violence Reduction Unit.

It doesn't sound so radical nowadays, but it was in 2004/5 when Scotland was amongst the most violent places to live in the world and Glasgow had the reputation of being the 'murder capital of Europe'. In the communities of Glasgow young people were being maimed and were dying on the streets every day. For them, violence was merely part of the struggle of everyday life. To believe of a different future, a better set of outcomes for those young people, amongst the darkness they were experiencing was truly radical.

Scotland has come a long way since those dark times and the Scottish Violence Reduction Unit has played a part in that. We have walked beside an army of determined doctors, teachers, nurses, police officers, social workers and many more who do their duty every day - putting communities and the people who comprise them at the core of their daily work. Long term change can only be achieved if everyone pulls together with a message of prevention allied to mutual respect and understanding.

The journey that Scotland has undertaken has been identified by many as 'good practice' and thus 'Violence Reduction Units' are now appearing elsewhere. Whilst it is nice to see our initiatives being recognised, I always stress to those who look for advice that our work is not yet done. We may have reduced homicide by half since 2005 but Scotland

remains a relatively violent country. 60 homicides in the last year pays testament to that fact. Too many lives still scarred by violence and too many lives lost in tragic circumstances. We may have seen significant and undeniable progress but there has been a levelling off in terms of reduction and the big drops we once saw are now harder to achieve. Further reduction will require social change.

We know that it is in some of our poorer communities violence remains a daily normality. If you are poor in Scotland you are still more likely to become a victim of violence. That is unacceptable. Added to that we know that those living in our poorer communities are more likely to self-medicate with alcohol and drugs to blur the reality of their daily lives. Indeed, their children are more likely to grow up with significant childhood trauma and the likelihood of poor life chances with limited expectation. Thus the cycle repeats.

In the last year, Scotland has recorded the highest number of drugs deaths in Europe per capita, our levels of suicide are a cause for concern and homelessness and foodbank usage appears to be on the rise. These issues are related and whilst a 'public health approach' is within the current lexicon of the public sector, we still appear to tackle each issue in isolation rather than addressing the underlying causes of poverty and inequality. I constantly reaffirm my belief that the structures of our public services were created for the problems of the 1950's and may no longer be suitable to address the challenges being presented to us in the 21st century.

Many of the key services dealing with drug addiction, alcoholism and homelessness are delivered by the third sector for low levels of remuneration and subject to constant competitive tendering where cost savings often appears to be the driver. A true 'public health approach' would recognise the importance of these vital services and prioritise them accordingly.

Added to that, our historic approach to drug and alcohol misuse have not addressed the problem. Perhaps there is a need to take a wholly fresh approach, one which addresses the chaotic needs of the individual rather than seeking to punish them for their shortcomings.

With this in mind, I am delighted to read the conclusions of the Youth Violence Commission. They reflect the understanding of violence that we have gained over 15 years of operation and the need to provide properly funded and sustained services if we are truly to address the impact of poverty and social exclusion in all its forms. I believe that employment offers the best solution to these issues, but our young people require equality of opportunity and the removal of often unnecessary barriers if that is to be achieved.

In Scotland, the VRU will continue to work with partners to develop solutions to the violence that still infects us. Our strength has been in our ability to innovate without being held to the normal public sector demand to meet targets and produce outcomes. We don't believe in quick fixes – it takes time to develop interventions that work. Soundbites are not solutions!

Determination, graft and a commitment to follow the evidence (not the ideology) have been the hallmarks of the SVRU approach. There can be no bystanders in addressing the issue of violence in our communities. There can be no excuses if we are to prove that violence is preventable and not inevitable.

I sincerely hope that the recently established regional VRU's in England and Wales provide such a vehicle for change and that the recommendations of the Youth Violence Commission report will be welcomed and implemented.

John Sutherland, Former Chief Superintendent, Metropolitan Police

Saving Lives: A Police Officer's Greatest Duty

I was a police officer in London for more than twenty-five years and I have stood in far too many of the haunted places where boys and young men have lost their lives.

We are facing a humanitarian crisis on our streets and in our homes - and the easiest thing in the world is to look for someone to blame, whether it be politicians, police officers, parents, perpetrators, or whoever else happens to come to mind. The much harder thing to do is to try to understand what's really happening out there - and what's actually required by way of a response.

Here is a list of the five things I think we need to do if we are to have any hope of avoiding the continual madness of history repeating itself.

(1) A Long Term Plan

We need a long-term, nationwide violence reduction plan – at least ten years, preferably twenty. We have got to get beyond the relentless demand for quick fixes - understanding the simple truth that, where problems have been a generation or more in the making, they might just take a generation or more to mend.

From a policing perspective, there is an urgent need to get back to the absolute basics: the acknowledgement that the police are the public and the public are the police. Substantial reinvestment in effective neighbourhood policing - built on relationships of trust, established over time within local communities - ought to be the starting point for everything else we attempt to do.

At the same time, we need to understand that whilst the professional and effective use of police Stop & Search powers undoubtedly saves lives, it is not the long term solution to anything.

(2) A Public Health Approach
We need to re-frame our understanding of violence, recognising that it is at least as much a public health issue as it is a crime problem. Violence is a disease that can be caught and transmitted. But it can also be diagnosed and treated.

(3) Young People as the Answer
The current wave of concern tends to define young people as the problem. In fact, they are a very large part of the solution. And we need to involve them in designing and delivering every single aspect of the response to violence.

(4) Operational Independence from Political Control
The delivery of the violence reduction plan needs to remain completely independent from any form of political control. When politicians are in charge, experience suggests that the reaction to any pressing concern remains vulnerable to partisan priorities and shifting political winds. And we simply cannot allow that to keep happening. Some things are far too important to be left to politics. Violence is one of them.

(5) Policing at the Heart, but not the Head
Policing will always be first in line to respond to violence, and that is exactly as it should be. There is no greater duty or privilege for a police officer than to save a life. But the police should not be in overall charge of the plan. Violence is – and has always been – a whole society problem that demands a whole society solution.

The publication of the Youth Violence Commission's final report is both timely and immensely significant. The report seeks to change, for the better, the conversation we are having about youth violence - not least in deepening our understanding of the underlying causes of youth violence. More than that though, it seeks to change, for the better, our actual response to youth violence. I have no doubt that, if we treat the report with the seriousness and urgency it deserves, and if we determine to act on its recommendations, lives will be saved.

Ciaran Thapar, Freelance writer and youth worker

Drill Music: An Opportunity for Understanding and Empowering

The Youth Violence Commission's final report treats youth violence as a product of societal failure. It is grounded in the realism of testimony sourced from experts and victims, and driven by a practical motivation to challenge the status quo. In the face of confusion on the subject of youth violence, institutional dysfunction and visible socioeconomic inequality, the YVC has served a major public good by publishing these findings.

Since 2014, my youth work and journalism has led me to trace the inception of UK drill – a thriving local genre of violent rap. This music form is inherently digital. Its violent lyrics, provocative music videos and wider ecosystem of secondary content (e.g. artist broadcasts, marketing campaigns, comments and likes etc) circulate on social media platforms like YouTube, Instagram and Snapchat. Drill music exploded in Chicago in 2011 as a way for impoverished young gang members to communicate with one another and turn the outside world's fascination with the bleak extremes of inner-city life to their own financial advantage. UK drill artists have copied this model because it works with remarkable efficacy. More than ever, music has become a way for the most marginalised British young people to gain popularity, self-affirmation and livelihoods. As more UK drill artists get record deals, enter the music charts and gain brand partnerships, the genre must be viewed in terms of its growing audience, and the industry that helps to monetise it, as much as the success of its artists.

To study UK drill music is to study the impact of social media on human life. Understanding this equation is essential to understanding rising youth violence. Like adults warring or congratulating on Twitter, young people in Britain have at their fingertips a powerful opportunity that did not exist even fifteen years ago: the chance to like, listen and see others; to be seen, liked, and listened to at the click of a button. Equally, they have the chance to engage in negative forms of provocation. The rise of UK drill music reflects this spread of opportunity where it has been granted to young men affected by the overwhelming social forces outlined in the YVC report (poverty, domestic abuse, school exclusion, unemployment, etc).

However, treating UK drill and social media as synonymous in conversations about youth violence is problematic. Where social media technology should be the core focus, music has taken centre-stage. This distraction is misguided and dangerous, resulting in the criminalisation of creativity (and ultimately forced survivalism) amongst poor communities of colour. Evidence of this everywhere. Some of the most demonised and restricted UK drill artists (e.g. Skengdo & AM) are categorically *not* criminals, and yet they are treated and framed as such, which communicates frowning judgment to young people who might relate to their music or be inspired by their success. In my youth work I have held hundreds of conversations with vulnerable teenage boys who feel like they now cannot express how they feel to adults because of the way drill music is being blocked and dismissed by policymakers, police and educators. My fear is that an unnecessary preoccupation with music is further entrenching an entire generation's shared anger and disillusionment.

Much more useful and just would be a rational focus on how technology is used and abused by all people. I view social media platforms much like a car: it is a technology that is potentially dangerous. Its autonomous use should require training to demonstrate ability and maturity. If not, people who are incapable of using it, or who are sensitive to its

problematic use – those with low self-esteem and anxiety; those who are traumatised by normalised violence in their communities – are most likely to use it irresponsibly, to provoke and be provoked. They are the ones who are most likely to hurt and get hurt when digital interactions spill into real life as violence.

We must treat UK drill music's preoccupation with violence as a product of the socially unequal and technologically advanced state of the world. This means accepting that it is problematic, and that in specific circumstances it fuels gang rivalries and a propensity for youth violence. But it also means refusing the temptation to see music as the problem, per se, and instead focusing on the way vulnerable, disenfranchised, actively excluded young people are partnering with technology to communicate and express themselves. UK drill – a rich, visceral, unforgiving cry for help with a mass global audience – provides an opportunity to learn about the roots of violence, as well as tap into solutions for empowering those who have been left behind. Solutions to violence can and must operate by harnessing such modern forms of cultural production for the better, not banning them or pretending they don't exist.

Roadworks, an inclusive music education charity I founded in 2019, seeks to do exactly that. We deliver training for adult educators and work directly with excluded young people, using UK drill and rap as a point of engagement. We treat subcultural phenomena as tools to develop critical thinking, provide safe spaces for participants to speak their mind, collaborate in research, and ultimately make music that is true to their life experience without being dangerous to others or criminalised by the state. We teach academic subjects such as philosophy and sociology, and facilitate careers-skills workshops with experts from across the contemporary music industry. A responsible, savvy and fun use of social media practically underpins our entire method of fighting social inequality and providing meaningful opportunities to marginalised young people. We believe this methodology urgently requires critiquing and upscaling to respond to the current demands of youth disenfranchisement.

Jon Yates, Executive Director, Youth Endowment Fund

Funders: Finding Out 'What Works' and Helping to Put it into Practice

I heartily welcome this Final Report of the Youth Violence Commission. The Commission has done an excellent job in understanding and speaking out about the lack of safety that so many of our young people feel each day. For those of us listening regularly to young people affected by the threat of violence it is easy to become despondent. Young people frequently tell me that 'nothing can make a difference'; that this is 'just the way it is'. The Commissioners have managed to communicate frankly and honestly the level of pain that many young people feel while also creating a message of hope; a message that says 'it doesn't have to be this way'. Those of us with power to make a difference – including us funders - have a responsibility to ensure this comes true.

Leading the Youth Endowment Fund, I feel this responsibility acutely. What then do we do? Our first responsibility should be to get clear on what actually works. We owe these children real solutions; that means solutions that we know work. That is why I wanted to stand up and clap when I read the section in the report stating the importance of evidence and the need for independent evaluation. At times, evidence and evaluation can seem a bit irrelevant. When I am sat listening to young people about friends they have lost, threats on social media, areas of town they can't go to and 'beefs' they can't shake, banging on about evidence can feel like missing the point. When I am talking to young people about something as emotive as their own safety, obsessing about evaluation can feel like a bit soulless. Surely – my heart says – what we need is more empathy not more measurement.

But in the cold light of day, I always think again. Why? Because these children deserve our best. We wouldn't dream of giving our children medicines that haven't been properly tested and the same should be true of the help we give our most vulnerable children. In our country last year, our food companies spent £900m working out what works when it comes to selling food. £900 million. I don't want to live in a country that cares more about knowing how to sell ice cream than it does about keeping vulnerable children safe. We have to be prepared to spend proper money working out how to protect our children. If we are prepared to research ice cream, we must be prepared to research their safety.

That is why I am excited to work for the Youth Endowment Fund. Founded last year, the Fund has a simple mission: to spend £200m working out what keeps young people safe and spread the news. Those who are commissioning and delivering local services also deserve the very best, they should have the evidence they need to guide their decision making. Over the next ten years, we are committed to spending our efforts and our money to this end. But how should we focus the work? The report brilliantly suggests some key areas: how do we best support children in care?, how do we help children who are at risk of exclusion?, how do we best support vulnerable children in the early years?, what is the best place-based approach to take?

Over the next ten years, the Fund will do all it can to answer these questions. But alone - we will make no difference. Together, though, I believe we have a chance not only to find out what works but to ensure it is put into practice. Why must we do this? To answer the key challenge this report brings home to all of us – to ensure that our young people are truly safe.

Appendices

Appendix A: The Commissioners, Commission Team and Experts

Co-Authors

Keir Irwin-Rogers is a Lecturer in Criminology at The Open University. Keir's work explores the many and varied forms of violence in young people's lives. His most recent research unpacks the links between illicit drug markets, socioeconomic inequality, consumer capitalism, and serious violence between young people. Keir has also conducted research and published papers on the subjects of sentencing, social media, racism and racial discrimination in the criminal justice system, and community sanctions.

Abhinay Muthoo is a Professor of Economics at the University of Warwick. He is also the Dean of Warwick in London and the Director of the Warwick Policy Lab. His research interests include Political Economy, Conflict & Violence, Negotiations, Game Theory and Public Policy..

Luke Billingham is a youth and community worker for Hackney Quest, a long-running youth and community centre in Hackney, where he is involved with mentoring, exclusion prevention, youth voice and community development projects. Alongside this, he is Head of Strategy at Reach Children's Hub, an innovative new charity based in Reach Academy Feltham providing cradle-to-career support for children and young people in Feltham, South-West London. Luke is also involved with criminal justice charities Haven Distribution, the Longford Trust and New Bridge Foundation in voluntary capacities.

Commissioners (Past and Present)

Vicky Foxcroft is a Labour Party politician who has been the Member of Parliament for Lewisham Deptford since 2015. Following the deaths of five young people from Lewisham Deptford and the rise of knife crime in the area, she arranged for a debate to take place in Parliament on youth violence. That debate called for the Youth Violence Commission to be established. In June 2019, Vicky was promoted to become Shadow Minister for Civil Society.

James Cleverly TD is a Conservative Party politician and Territorial Army Officer. James has served as the Member of Parliament for Braintree since 2015. He was a member of the London Assemble for Bexley and Bromley from 2008 – 2016. He currently holds the Government post of Minister of State (Foreign and Commonwealth Office) (Joint with the Department for International Development).

Chuka Umunna is a Liberal Democrat politician and former Member of Parliament for Streatham from 2010 until 2019, originally elected as the Labour Party candidate. Chuka has been a long term advocate for increasing awareness and understanding of serous youth violence and has previously chaired the London Gang Forum.

Mark Field is a Conservative Party politician and former Member of Parliament for the Cities of London and Westminster from 2001 to 2019. He served as the Minister of State at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office from 2017 until 2019.

Chris Stephens is a Scottish Trade Unionist and a Scottish National Party politician. Chris has been the Member of Parliament for Glasgow South West since the 2015 general election. Chris is a Senior UNISON activist in Glasgow, acting as a lead negotiator and has represented members on issues such as disability and racial discrimination, equal pay and pension protection.

Sir Norman Lamb is a Liberal Democrat politician and was the MP for North Norfolk between 2001 and 2019 and the chair of the Science and Technology Select Committee from 2017 to 2019. He served as the Minister of State and Care Support in the Department of Health, and previously as Minister of State for Employment Relations in the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills and earlier as Parliamentary Private Secretary to Nick Clegg in the Conservative-Liberal Democrat Coalition Government.

The Core Team

Keir Irwin-Rogers

Abhinay Muthoo

Luke Billingham

Gary Trowsdale is Lead Advisor to the Commission. He was Managing Director of the Damilola Taylor Trust from 2009 to 2013. He also founded the Spirit of London Awards during this time and then created the One Big Community project to tackle the causes of youth violence in 2013 and engaged hundreds of young people in solution workshops and debates.

Maddie Dinwoodie is the Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Youth Work for UK Youth. She joined the charity in 2015 as Director of National Programmes and has over 18 years' experience in the charity and youth sectors.

Jo Hart is Head of Student Experience, Marketing and Communications for Warwick in London. Jo has twenty one years' experience in marketing, communications recruitment and events management in Higher Education having also worked at De Montfort University and Loughborough University.

Alex Atherton is an experienced secondary school head teacher and senior leader. He has had three headships in large and diverse inner London schools over a twelve year period including a short stint in alternative provision. He achieved his first headship after only ten years in the profession. Born in Yorkshire, his career started in Manchester before moving to the capital. He is now working across a range of schools within primary, secondary and alternative provision.

Duncan Bew has extensive experience in major trauma and leadership in the response to major incidents. He is a passionate advocate for trauma prevention and in addition to his role with the youth violence commission has advised local councils, the Home office, the APPG and the select committee. He cofounded the charity *Growing Against Violence* which has delivered public health education in almost 1000 schools. He been awarded a points of light award and is listed in the Evening Standard Progress 1000.

Ciara Brodie is a final year PPE student at the University of Warwick. She has previously served as a member of the UK Youth Parliament, sat on the Youth Board for Barclays LifeSkills and also been a young advisor for the EY Foundation and acts as a Warwick Widening Participation Mentor.

Contributors to Expert Reflections and Policy Advisors

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Alex Atherton, Educational Consultant, Atherton Consultancy
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Helen Clark, Policy Advisor, Children First Alliance
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Stephen Greene, Founder, Appentice Nation
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Lib Peck, Director, London Violence Reduction Unit
Sherry Peck, CEO, Safer London
John Poyton, Chief Executive and **Eleanor Riley**, Policy and Comms Manager, Redthread
Niven Rennie, Director, Scottish Violence Reduction Unit
Anne Smee, CEO, Youth Futures Foundation
John Sutherland, Retired Chief Superintendent, Metropolitan Police
Ciaran Thapar, Youth Worker and Writer, Co-founder Roadworks
Jon Yates, Executive Director, Youth Endowment Fund

Former contributors to the Interim Report (and roles at the time)

Siobhan Benita, Chief Strategy Officer, Warwick in London, University of Warwick
Alex Dobson, Senior Teaching Fellow in Economics, University of Warwick
Zoe Leadley-Meade, Lecturer in Education, London South Bank University
Leroy Logan, Retired Police Superintendent, Metropolitan Police
Simon Talbot, Advisor, Active Communities Network
Gary Stannett, CEO, Active Communities Network

Appendix B: Overview of Evidence Sessions and Regional Visits

Evidence Sessions

16 October 2017
Youth Services and Community Work

From the Commission:
- Vicky Foxcroft - Chair
- James Cleverly
- Chuka Umunna
- Siobhan Benita
- Keir Irwin-Rogers

Participants:
- Steve Webster, Head of Research, NCS.
- Beth Murray, Director of Communications and Engagement, Catch 22.
- Richard Parkes, Managing Director, Young Lambeth Co-operative.
- Gary Hutton, CEO, Product of a Postcode.
- Temi Mwale, Director, 4Front Project.
- Rhammel Afflick, Communications and Media Officer, British Youth Council.
- Tekisha Henry, Deputy Young Mayor, Lewisham Young Mayor's Team.
- Steve Drowley, Youth and Community Work Consultant, Cardiff Metropolitan University.

11 December 2017
Mental Health and a Public Health Approach

From the Commission:
- Vicky Foxcroft - Chair
- Chuka Umunna
- Abhinay Muthoo
- Zoe Leadley-Meade

Participants:
- Karyn McCluskey, Former Director, Scottish Violence Reduction Unit. Currently Chief Executive, Community Justice Scotland.
- Mark Bellis, Director of Policy, Research and International Development, Public Health Wales and UK Focal Point to the World Health Organisation for Violence and Injury Prevention.
- Mathew Shaer, West Midlands Police Superintendent and Co-Chair of the Strategic Board responding to guns, gangs and organised criminality.
- Dr Duncan Bew, Consultant Trauma Surgeon, Kings Hospital and Co-Founder of Growing Against Violence.
- Dr Emer Sutherland, Emergency Medicine Consultant, Kings Hospital.
- John Poyton, Chief Executive, Redthread.
- Sinem Cakir, Chief Executive, MAC-UK.
- Jamel Fraser, Youth Consultant, MAC-UK.
- Alika Agidi-Jeffs, Rethink Mental Illness.
- John Sutherland, Chief Superintendent, Scotland Yard.

26 February 2018
Early Years, Education and Employability

From the commission:
- Vicky Foxcroft – Chair
- Keir Irwin-Rogers
- Siobhan Benita
- Zoe Leadley-Meade

Participants:
- Edward Melhuish, Academic Research Leader, Oxford University and Director, National Evaluation of Sure Start.
- Ann Graham, Director of Operations, Barking and Dagenham Council.
- Jessica Streeting, Executive Committee Member, School and Public Health Nurses Association, Queen's Nurse and Named Nurse for Looked After Children in Hammersmith and Fulham.
- Christine Goodall, Academic Oral Surgeon and Senior Lecturer, Glasgow University and Co-Founder, Medics Against Violence.
- Jamal Khan, Writer and Performer, Author of 'Words Within Walls' and Youth Mayor, Waltham Forest.
- Kiran Gill, Former Inner City Teacher, previous Head of Policy at the Social Mobility Commission, Policy Writer, IPPR and Founder, The Difference.
- Andy Briers, Former Teacher and Police Officer, Metropolitan Police (Trident Gang Crime Command).
- Seamus Oates, CEO, TBAP (multi-academy trust providing alternative provision schooling) and Board Member, Youth Justice Board.
- Nina Champion, Head of Policy, Prisoners' Education Trust and Western Europe Representative, European Prison Education Association.
- Euan Blair, CEO, WhiteHat.
- Oliver Hypolite-Bishop, Head of Digital Communications, Confederation of British Industry and Board Member, Spirit of London Awards.
- Liz Williams Director, Tech Literacy and Education Programmes, BT Group.

26 March 2018
Housing, Communities and Faith Groups

From the Commission:
- Vicky Foxcroft - Chair
- Abhinay Muthoo
- Zoe Leadley-Meade
- Mark Field

Participants:
- Matt Coe, Sergeant, Metropolitan Police.
- Jennifer Foster, Head of Housing, Centrepoint.
- Brian Hamlin, Community Specialist, Housing Sector.
- Talia Kensit, Founding Director, Youth Realities.
- Dunia Shafik is a mother, a Neuro-Linguistic Programmer and her educational background includes a BA in Childhood Studies and MA in Youth and Community Work.
- Ben Lindsay, Pastor in South East London who has worked in the field of serious youth violence for many years. He previously led the early intervention team at Lewisham Youth Offending Service, where he developed successful knife crime prevention programmes. Ben also developed Camden Council's gangs and serious youth violence strategy and previously worked for the mental health charity MAC-UK.
- Steve Chalke, Social Entrepreneur, Justice Campaigner, Author, Motivational speaker and Baptist Minister. Former UN Special Advisor on Human Trafficking. Founder of the Oasis Trust.
- Tobi Adegboyega, Senior Pastor of Salvation Proclaimers Anointed Church and Founder of SPAC Nation Foundation.

23 April 2018
Media, Music and Role Models

From the Commission:
- Vicky Foxcroft – Chair
- Keir Irwin-Rogers
- Chuka Umunna
- Siobhan Benita
- Zoe Leadley-Meade

Participants:
- Ciaran Thapar, Youth Worker, Writer and Volunteer at Marcus Lipton Community Centre.
- Kwame Safo (Funk Butcher), DJ, Music Producer, Owner of independent Record label Houseology.
- Ray Oudkerk. Assistant Principal, BRIT School of Performing Arts and Technology.
- Cameron Miller, AOP Music (online UK rap label).
- Harjeet Sahota, Adviser to the Mayor of London on night time economy and culture, women's safety and knife crime.
- Kwabz Ayim, Mixtape Madness (online platform for UK urban music).
- Gary Younge, Editor-at-large for The Guardian and author of Another Day in the Death of America, about US gun crime.
- Andre Johnson, Online Journalist, Link UP TV.
- Jasmine Dotiwala, Multi-platform Broadcaster and Head of Youth Media at Media Trust.
- Mark Prince, Former Professional Boxer and Founder, Kiyan Prince Foundation.
- Abdul Karim Abdullah, Pathway Co-ordinator, Young Lambeth Cooperative and Director, Solution Focused World, member of London Independent Youth Safety Advisory Board.

21 May 2018:
Policing and Criminal Justice

From the Commission:
- Vicky Foxcroft – Chair
- Keir Irwin-Rogers
- Abhinay Muthoo

Participants:
- David Lammy British Labour Party politician, MP for Tottenham since 2000.
- Katherine Copperthwaite, Criminal Justice Alliance.
- Patrick Williams, Senior Lecturer, Manchester Metropolitan University.
- Justine Coleman, detail of role, organisation needed
- Michael Turner QC, former Chair of the Criminal Bar Association.
- Olivia Pinkney, Chief Constable, Hampshire Constabulary.
- Lynne Owens, Director General, National Crime Agency.
- Graham McNulty Trustee, Embrace and Deputy Assistant Commissioner, Metropolitan Police.
- Will Linden, Violence Reduction Unit, Scotland.
- Stan Gilmour, Detective Superintendent Head of Protecting Vulnerable People, Thames Valley Police.
- Daniel Hurst, Freelance journalist.
- Kamahl Sami Miller, Youth Activist for Waltham Forest Council.

Visit to Scottish Violence Reduction Unit

3 October 2017
VRU Visit

From the commission:

- Keir Irwin-Rogers
- Leroy Logan
- Duncan Bew
- Camara Fearon, Presenter, Actress and Charity Worker.
- Temi Mwale, Director, The 4Front Project.

Participants:

- Graham Goulden, Cultivating Minds UK.
- Dr Christine Goodall, Medics Against Violence.
- Sergeant Danny Stuart, Royal Marines Youth Engagement Team.
- John Hendry, Young Point (Street Outreach).
- Inspector Iain Murray, Street and Arrow Police Scotland.
- Inspector Keith Jack, (Navigator Project) Violence Reduction Unit.
- Khadija Coll, One Community Violence Reduction Unit Scotland.

Regional Visits

A number of regional visits were also made during 2018 and attended by Vicky Foxcroft. Participants were from a broad range of organisations including councils, VRUs, the Criminal Justice System, Active Communities Network, Police, Youth Offending Services, Charities, Youth and Sports Organisations.

11 April 2018
Meeting with Portsmouth Stakeholders

12 April 2018
Roundtable with Liverpool Positive Futures Project and Young People

13 April 2018
Roundtable with Manchester Active Communities Network, CN and partner agencies

13 April 2018
Salford/Moss Side Visit

Appendix C: Safer Lives Survey Analysis

We developed the Safer Lives Survey to gain a better insight into the level and nature of violence experienced by young people living in the UK.

During the early months of 2017, we drafted an initial version of the survey using items informed by the extant literature on serious youth violence. The scope of the survey items included: the types and levels of serious violence in young people's day-to-day lives; where young people feel most and least safe; who young people trust and where they are most likely to go for help and support.

The first draft was piloted with a group of 24 young people in June 2017. Amendments to the survey at this stage concerned the precise wording of questions, the deletion of certain topics felt to be either irrelevant or insensitive, and the introduction of topics which young people felt ought to be included. Once we had revised the survey accordingly, we piloted the second draft with a group of 10 young people in August 2017. Feedback on this version of the survey was generally very positive, with a small number of minor changes being integrated into our final draft.

The survey went through an ethics approval process with the University of Warwick, as well as being scrutinised and approved by a number of youth work professionals who had received safeguarding training. Working with a range of delivery partners, we implemented the survey during January and February 2018.

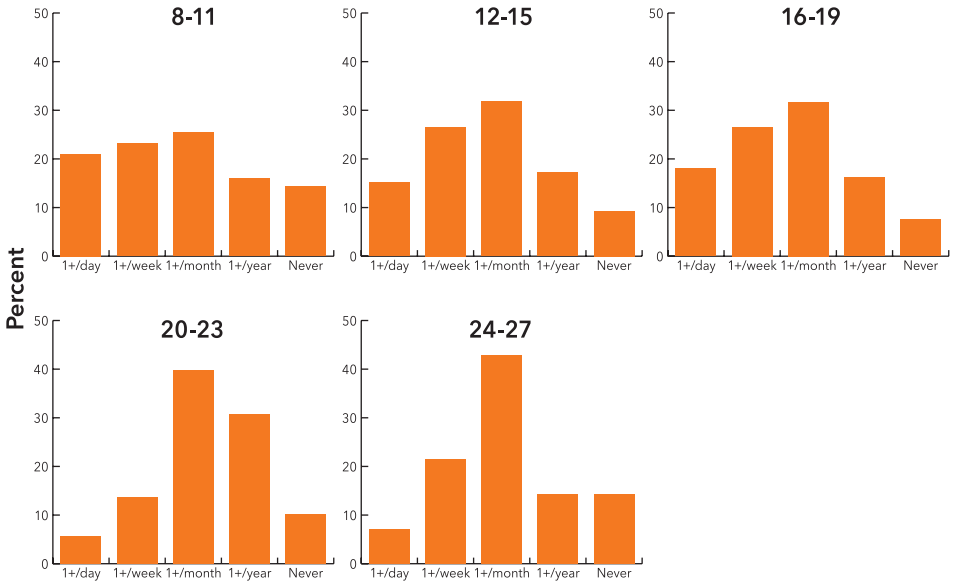
Our sampling frame was designed to maximise variation across a number of factors: age, gender, ethnicity, geographical location, and school type. The sample included young people who were serving sentences in Youth Offending Institutions. All surveys were completed under the supervision of an adult, who ensured that the purpose and nature of the survey was explained clearly to each participant, with the aid of a child-friendly information sheet. In total, we received **2,278** responses to the survey. The following sections present key findings from the survey.

Early Years and Early Intervention

Almost half of children aged 8-11 reported seeing serious violence at least once a day, or at least once a week, in real life.

Indeed, these children were more likely to report seeing serious violence in real life at least once a day than any other age group:

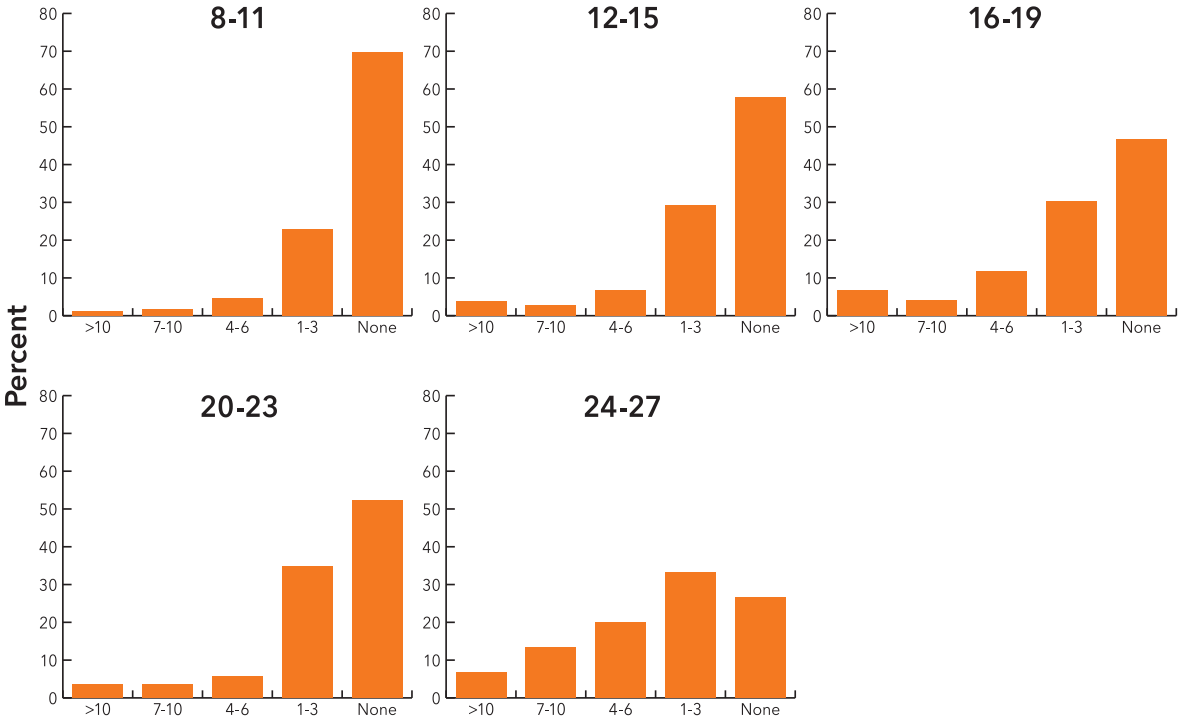
Exposure to Serious Violence in Real Life by Age (%)



It is of course possible that for this age group, 'serious violence' referred to 'punching' or 'kicking', whereas for older groups it may have been more likely to refer to 'attacking someone with a weapon' (all of these types of violence were included in our definition of 'serious violence' highlighted at the start of the survey to all participants). It is worth noting, however, that almost a third of 8-11 year olds reported personally knowing at least one young person who had been the victim of serious violence in the past five years requiring a hospital visit (see overleaf).

In short, a significant proportion of our survey participants reported being exposed to serious levels of violence from a very young age, lending support to our recommendations around the importance of early years intervention.

Known victims requiring hospital treatment by age (%)



Youth Services

In answer to the question, 'If there was one thing you could change that you think would make young people safer, what would it be?', the most popular response was the provision of more youth centres, sports clubs and other youth activities in their local areas.

Indeed, 23% of respondents stated that they would ask youth workers for help and advice if they felt worried about being a victim of violence. This provides evidence that youth workers already provide an important source of help and support, albeit increasing the provision of youth centres, sports clubs and other youth activities, as recommended by our participants, is likely to enhance the accessibility and take-up of such support.

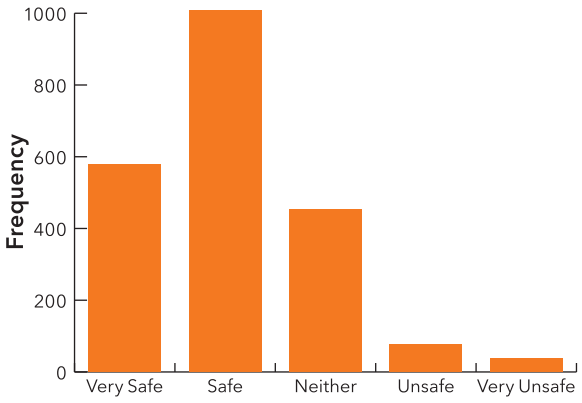
Schools

Responding to a question about who young people would ask for help if they felt worried about being a victim of violence, 34% of participants stated that they would ask their teachers.

Some of the most encouraging responses from the survey came to the question about how important it is to work hard at school and achieve good grades. Almost 90% of young people very much agreed or agreed with the statement 'Working hard on my education and getting good grades is important'. More concerning, however, were the responses to our survey question about how safe young people felt in school. While three quarters of respondents reported feeling very safe, or safe, a quarter stated that they felt neither safe nor unsafe, unsafe, or very unsafe:

Safety in place of education			
	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative
Very safe	579	26.71%	26.71%
Safe	1009	46.54%	73.25%
Neither	452	20.85%	94.10%
Unsafe	77	3.55%	97.65%
Very unsafe	51	2.35%	100.00%
Total	2168	100.00%	100.00%

Safety in place of education



Moreover, respondents were more likely to report seeing serious violence in their schools at least once a day than in their local neighbourhoods or areas

outside their neighbourhoods. Over half of our participants reported seeing serious violence in their school at least once a month.

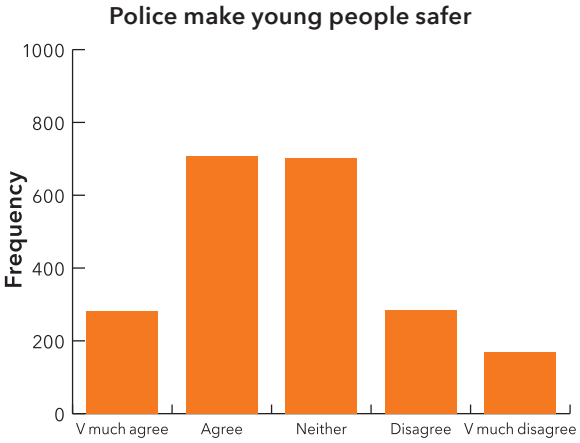
Policing

Less than half of young people agreed, or very much agreed, with the statement 'The police make the lives of young people safer' – a good indication of a perceived lack of confidence in the police's ability to keep young people safe:

Not surprisingly, respondents who personally knew ten or more young people who been hospitalised as a result of serious violence had the lowest confidence in the police keeping young people safe, with 43% either disagreeing, or very much disagreeing, that 'the police make the lives of young people safer'.

Our regression analysis[90] revealed a strong link between young people serving time in a Young Offender Institution and disagreeing (.513, p<.05) or very much disagreeing (.660, p<.05) that the police make the lives of young people safer. Echoing the findings of previous studies, we also found a strong link between ethnicity and confidence in the police, with black young people being more likely to disagree (.826, p<.01) or very much disagree (.850, p<.01) with the assertion that the police make the lives of young people safer.

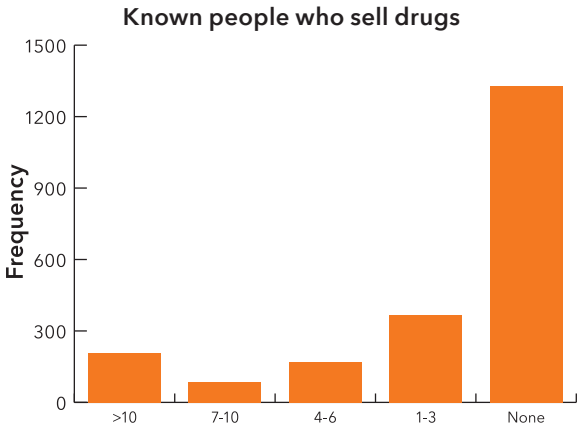
Police make young people safer			
	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative
Very much agree	281	13.07%	13.07%
Agree	706	32.84%	45.91%
Neither	701	32.60%	78.51%
Disagree	283	13.16%	91.67%
Very much disagree	179	8.33%	100.00%
Total	2150	100.00%	100.00%



Drug markets

Almost 40% of participants personally knew at least one person who sells drugs:

Known people who sell drugs			
	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative
Less than 10	206	9.52%	9.52%
Between 7-10	86	3.97%	13.49%
Between 4-6	170	7.86%	21.35%
Between 1-3	367	16.96%	38.31%
None	1335	61.69%	100.00%
Total	2164	100.00%	100.00%

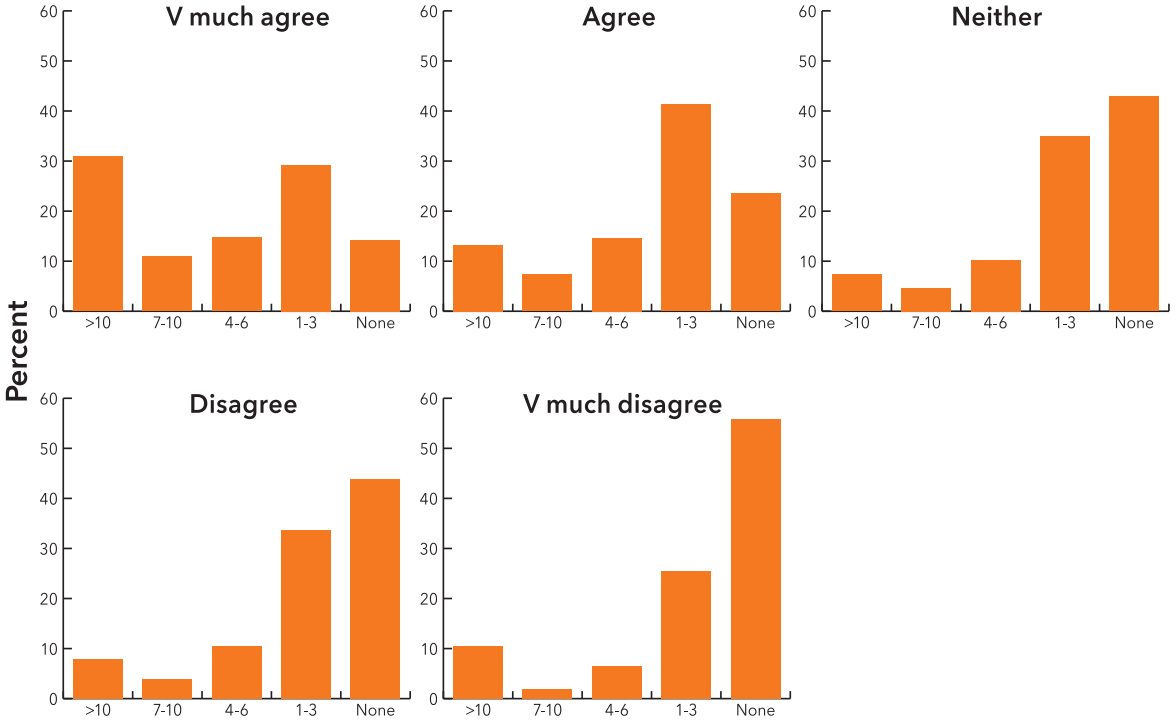


Some of the strongest links we found in our survey were between drug markets and serious violence. For example, 75% of those who personally knew ten or more people who dealt drugs also reported personally knowing four or more victims of serious violence in the last five years. In contrast, of those who did not personally know anyone who dealt drugs, only 17% reported personally knowing four or more victims of serious violence in the last five years. Similarly, over 50% of those who 'very much agreed' that it was easy to buy drugs in their local area also reported personally knowing four or more victims of serious violence in the last five years. In contrast, of those who 'very much disagreed' that is was easy to buy drugs in their local area, only 19% reported personally knowing four or more victims of serious violence in the last five years.

The links between illicit drug markets and serious violence were also strong in our regression analysis. For example, there was a strong link between personally knowing 10 or more people involved in dealing drugs and seeing serious violence daily (.772, p<.01) and weekly (.999, p<.01) in real life.

90 Regression analysis is a powerful statistical method that enables one to examine the relationship between two or more variables of interest. At the core, they explore the influence of one or more independent variables on a dependent variable. See, for example, *Regression Models for Categorical and Limited Dependent Variables (Advanced Quantitative Techniques in the Social Sciences)*, 1997 by John Scott Long.

Personally known victims of serious violence by how easy it is to buy illegal drugs in local area

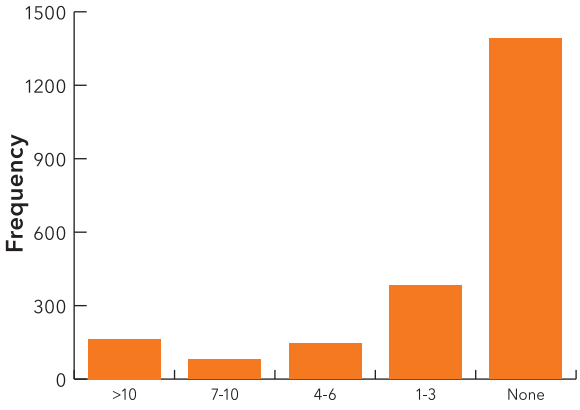


Weapon possession

A third of young people personally knew at least one young person who carried weapons, such as knives, when they were outside their home:

Known people who carry weapons			
	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative
Less than 10	164	7.56%	7.56%
Between 7-10	79	3.64%	11.21%
Between 4-6	147	6.78%	17.99%
Between 1-3	383	17.67%	35.65%
None	1395	64.35%	100.00%
Total	2168	100.00%	100.00%

Known people who carry weapons



The relationship between personally knowing high numbers of young people who had been hospitalised as a result of serious violence and knowing high numbers of people who carried weapons outside the home was strong. For example, 76% of people who personally knew ten or more people who had been hospitalised as a result of serious violence also personally knew 4 or more people who carried weapons outside their home. In contrast, of those who personally knew no one who had been hospitalised as a result of serious violence just 4% personally knew 4 or more people who carried weapons outside their home.

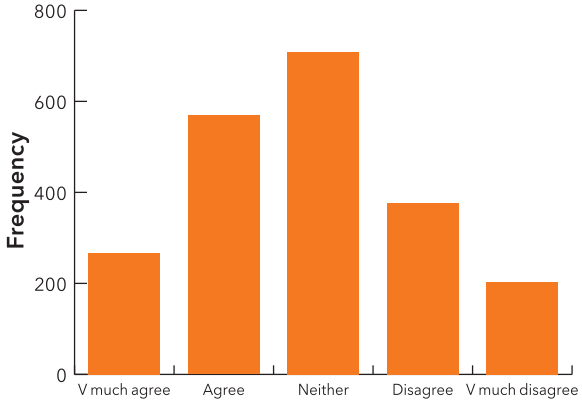
Further statistics

While our survey findings provide evidence of the relatively high levels of serious violence that many young people are exposed to, the survey highlights that certain young people – for example those in PRUs and YOIs – are far more likely to experience high levels of serious violence than others. Over 25% of young people in PRUs and YOIs reported personally knowing 4 or more young people who had been hospitalised as a result of serious violence in the last five years, compared to just 10% of our mainstream school sample.

There was a fairly even divide between participants who agreed, or very much agreed, that young people carry knives to feel safer (39%), and those who disagreed, or very much disagreed with this statement (27%):

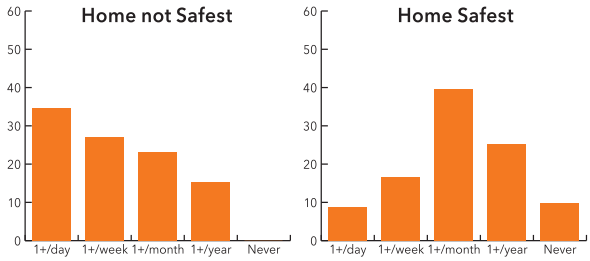
Young people carry knives to feel safer			
	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative
Very much agree	267	12.51%	12.51%
Agree	569	26.66%	39.18%
Neither	708	33.18%	72.35%
Disagree	376	17.62%	89.97%
Very much disagree	214	10.03%	100.00%
Total	2134	100.00%	100.00%

Young people carry knives to feel safer

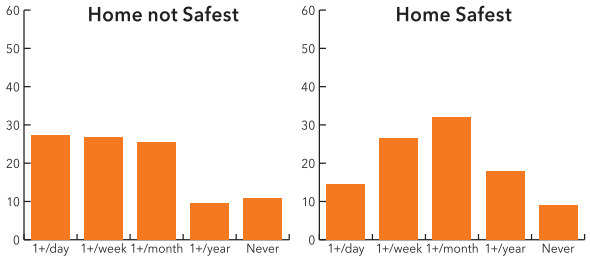


When young people were asked to rank where they felt most and least safe, choosing between home, school, in your local neighbourhood, or in areas outside your neighbourhood, 16% of participants did *not* rank home as the safest place. Exposure to serious violence was greatest when home was not ranked as the safest location:

Exposure to violence by relative location safety, age 18+ (%)



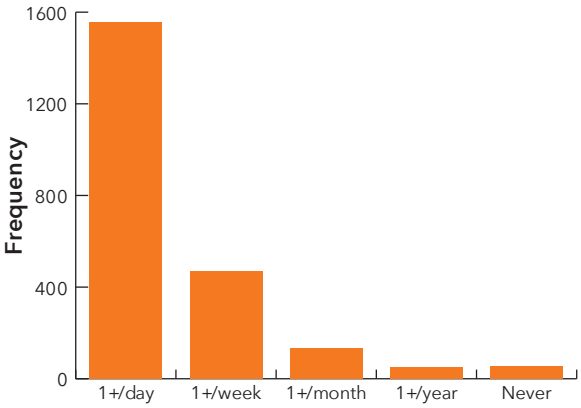
Exposure to violence by relative location safety, age under 18s (%)



The survey explored young people's exposure to serious violence through various forms of media:

Exposure to violence across all media			
	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative
1+/day	1556	68.79%	68.79%
1+/week	470	20.78%	89.57%
1+/month	131	5.79%	95.36%
1+/year	51	2.25%	97.61%
Never	54	2.39%	100.00%
Total	2262	100.00%	100.00%

Exposure to violence across all media



- 35% reported seeing videos or photographs on social media that contain acts of violence, at least once a day
- 31% reported playing computer games that contain violence, at least once a day
- 29% reported watching TV programmes or films that contain acts of violence, at least once a day
- 47% reported listening to music that contains violent lyrics, at least once a day