

Written evidence submitted by Leap Confronting Conflict (BYC015)

1. In 2018, Leap put forward two policy submissions in partnership with five other charities with experience and expertise in addressing issues around serious violent crime. The first was in response to the 2018 Youth Endowment Fund – a £200 million commitment by the Home Office to tackle serious violent crime over 10 years. The second was in response to the Home Office’s Serious Violent Crime Strategy.

2. There are a lot of positives in the government's Serious Violent Crime Strategy, particularly its recognition of the importance of **prevention**. We strongly endorse the need for prevention as a key part of the strategy. In this respect, the government's investment in prevention initiatives, notably the Youth Endowment Fund, is an important step forward.

3. However, in answer to Questions 2-3 on whether the government is doing enough, and whether the strategy strikes the right balance between preventative and punitive action, our answer is that we support the aims of the strategy and the new investment, however we note that the scale of investment into prevention is dwarfed by the additional resources being used for intervention. The Youth Endowment Fund’s £200m commitment over 10 years equates to £20m invested this year into prevention. This is compared to additional investment this year in policing of £1 billion.

4. We suggest five guiding principles for how the fund should be invested and evaluated:

- **Youth Engagement:** The needs and voices of young people should be central to the fund’s aims
- **Dynamic Partnership:** There should be opportunities for local, regional, and national programmes with a collective responsibility
- **Aspirations of the fund should be weighted to harness the potential and talents of young people** and to increase their access to opportunities, rather than solely to reduce violence
- **Long-term investment,** with an emphasis on collaboration and co-production
- **Relational approaches:** All services that work with young people should develop an approach which is psychologically and trauma informed, and focused around the holistic wellbeing of the young person.

5. Relating to the strategy, and weapon related crime in particular, we argue for the need to support young people to address the challenges facing them, and to be aware of the potential consequences of knife carrying.

6. Young people tell us that they carry weapons to feel safe. This complicated decision is influenced by real risks within their immediate environment. We should avoid simplistic solutions such as knife wands, which risk ‘normalising’ knife carrying.

7. Young people talk about a lack of trust in the police and, among other problems, this leads to serious crime going unreported as young victims fear being treated as suspects.

8. In this arena, there is no one-size-fits-all solution. The Serious Violent Crime Strategy and Youth Endowment Fund together represent an important first step towards tackling serious violent crime. However, there needs to be a greater range of interventions, including support for young people who are intimidated and living in fear, and specialist interventions for those who perpetrate violent crime.

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