

# National Lottery Community Fund submission to the Youth Select Committee inquiry into knife crime

July 2019

1. The approach to preventing and tackling serious violence must be one based on partnership. For this partnership approach to be most effective, it will need:
  - a. **To draw on the lived experience of young people and local communities:** When people are in the lead, communities thrive. A deep, meaningful, long term engagement with young people is required, with young people at the heart of design and delivery of interventions.
  - b. **VCS organisations as an essential component:** Evaluation of projects we fund shows that effective interventions delivered by the VCS can have a significant impact on the lives of young people and help keep them safe. This echoes the call from young people and the families of those affected by serious youth violence for better support for community-led local projects. VCS groups have existing positive, trusted relationships in their communities and know what works locally, putting people at the heart of strengths-based interventions; the experience and expertise of VCS groups are of immense value in finding solutions.
  - c. **Long term commitment:** We cannot rely on ‘quick fixes’ to address this issue, so we need to plan for the long term. For example, ensuring that charities and community groups have sufficient stability and sustainability to focus on long term support for young people, and to ensure that trusted relationships can develop.
  - d. **To focus on prevention and early intervention:** It is important to act early to prevent problems later on, supported by targeted funding of mitigation activities.
2. We recently produced a short report, [Preventing serious youth violence - what works?](#), drawing on projects we fund and other work from across the VCS, which I have attached. Some of that work features in our submission to this inquiry.
3. We would also be happy to organise and cover costs for the YSC to visit projects across the country who we know are doing great work around serious youth violence, providing the opportunity to see these projects in action and hear from some of the people involved.

## The National Lottery Community Fund

4. The National Lottery Community Fund is the largest community funder in the UK - we are proud to award money raised by National Lottery players to communities across England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.
5. Every year we distribute over £600 million to communities across the UK, making circa 11,000 grants. This includes funding for VCS organisations to support their work with children, young people and families across the country to find ways out of crime and violence. VCS organisations can play a unique role here especially where they have existing positive relationships, trust and connections in communities, and knowledge of what works in preventing and supporting young people involved in violence.
6. Dawn Austwick, CEO of the Fund, sits on the Home Secretary's Serious Violence Taskforce and participated in the Prime Minister's Summit on Serious Youth Violence in April, which has helped shape our thinking and understanding of where the National Lottery Community Fund can add value in this complex issue.
7. We have developed a strategic approach to tackling serious youth violence across the Fund, alongside other funders and informed by the VCS, looking at both the work that is being done and where a shift in behaviours and funding is required. As an organisation, we are well-placed to address this issue:
  - a. We work and fund locally, with a network of funding teams based in communities.
  - b. Young people want to work with us; we can use our convening power to move quickly and focus their efforts.
  - c. We have an extensive track record of large-scale, long-term funding via our strategic programmes, and have learnt relevant lessons from these programmes.
  - d. We have a number of key external strategic relationships that can help bridge the gap between communities, practitioners and policymakers, locally and nationally.

## Involving and consulting communities and young people

8. Evaluation of projects we fund shows that effective interventions delivered by the VCS can have a significant impact on the lives of young people and help keep them safe. This echoes the call from young people and the families of those affected by serious youth violence for better support for community-led local projects.
9. To tackle and prevent serious youth violence, a deep, meaningful, long term engagement with young people is required, with young people at the heart of design and delivery of interventions; a traditional consultation exercise is not sufficient.

### Youth Voice - drawing on the lived experience of young people and local communities

10. At the National Lottery Community Fund we believe that when people are in the lead, communities thrive. People understand what's needed in their communities better than anyone. Using money raised by National Lottery players we award grants to projects and charities across the country, many of which are young people-centered.
11. In order to break the cycle of exploitation, crime, and violence, young people must be made a part of the solution.
12. We meet with young people from across the country in order to listen to and understand their challenges, from their perspectives. We are also funding two agencies working directly with young people in England to identify what matters to them, and what in their view works in addressing the dangers of serious violence. We will use this work to further design funding support moving forward.

### Example 1

**UK Youth**, British Youth Council, My Life My Say, Mobilise Public, Ratio, The Advocacy Academy, Centre for Youth Impact and Councillor Hamza Taouzzale have come together to collaborate in an initiative "Tackling Serious Youth Violence through Youth Advocacy". Together they will deliver an unprecedented programme of youth-led research, insight and evidence generation, empowering young people with system-thinking and design-thinking approaches to feed into our understanding of the causes of and preventative actions to reduce youth violence and ultimately design a programme to be rolled out across the country.

They are conducting six 'Democracy Cafés' between March and May 2019, using current research on serious youth violence to form a framework for a system-thinking and design-thinking discussion with young people from areas experiencing high instances of knife crime to find out 'What Matters' and 'What Works' from their perspective.

The Café format, developed by stakeholders My Life My Say (MLMS) and awarded the Government's 2018 National Democracy Award, creates a safe space where young people can talk about issues that affect them over a free cup of coffee.

### Example 2

**Diana Fund** is developing peer-to-peer and employer-led mentoring opportunities for young people. Those young people who are trained and employed as peer researchers, alongside further young people who are consulted and engaged, will:

- Aim to help other young people to change and to become positive role models.
- Engage other young people and lead national campaigns to raise awareness of youth social action, and the influence on this that effective youth consultation can achieve.
- Gather and share the inspirational and powerful stories about the things that matter to young people, and which impact on the ‘ending youth violence’ agenda.

The programme will reach a wide range of young people who have a range of abilities, aspirations, as well as social and economic needs. The areas Diana Fund are targeting have some neglected neighbourhoods with poor housing conditions, where serious youth violence seems endemic. Many of the young people they work with live in poverty or come from low income families. They have wide ranging emotional and mental health problems, behavioural issues, troubled families, and special educational needs.

13. Trusting young people as experts in their own lives – using their expertise and experience to inform and improve the design, delivery and evaluation of services – has the potential to improve reach and ensure that services respond to the needs and wishes of young people. It is possible to create a range of levels of engagement so that young people can commit their time and inputs at a level that works for them.
14. The trust required for successful engagement with young people and with communities takes time to develop; relationship building shouldn’t be rushed. This is another important reason to make **long term commitments**.
15. VCS groups have existing positive relationships with people in their communities and know what works locally, putting people at the heart of strengths-based interventions. The VCS as a whole therefore has a significant role to play in the national efforts to address youth violence and supporting young people to thrive.

## Involving the Voluntary and Community Sector is essential

16. Voluntary and community groups can add significant value to the work of statutory services in the field of serious youth violence. They are able to represent and support people who are 'hidden' or disengaged from other services – by building on their local connections and networks, existing positive relationships, and their long and comprehensive track records in engaging and supporting those who are at-risk.
17. Services provided by VCS groups add to the depth and breadth of emotional, practical and health support that people involved in violence need. This spans prevention and early action, to emergency and crisis point interventions, to rehabilitation. They also have the flexibility to innovate and try out new approaches.
18. VCS organisations work with children and young people who have experienced trauma or conflict from a very young age and their work makes a significant contribution to efforts to prevent young people from getting involved in violent lifestyles. Many work with parents and communities to give them the skills and understanding they need to manage risks. Others provide early interventions for young people, ensuring that they have good mental wellbeing, resilience, and a healthy, stable, and supportive framework, which enable them to make positive choices and divert them from criminal activities. Others help ex-offenders and gang members to leave their past behind by providing support and finding positive alternatives.
19. In our experience, when working with the VCS, where possible:
  - a. Make a **long term commitment** – the lack of long term funding hinders their ability to plan ahead and commit to the support young people need and deserve.
    - i. Providing core funding enables them to plan and deliver more effectively, and
    - ii. Building in paid time for project planning and evaluation can yield further benefits by gathering evidence to inform future work.
  - b. Partnerships should bring together smaller organisations, including grassroots groups, to produce ideas that are rooted in the experience of communities, with the combined reach and size of larger organisations. This has the potential to create a shared system needed to deliver change at scale.
  - c. Smaller groups may find it difficult to collaborate in a climate of competition for short term, project-based funding opportunities. Joint projects and bids may be helpful here.
  - d. Understand the challenges faced by small grassroots organisations which focus on frontline delivery - their capacity to get involved at a strategic level may be limited and should be supported.
  - e. They are often asked for input at a programme design stage, but are sometimes excluded from the wider strategy development, delivery or funding.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Skae, T. (2017) The violence virus. A community response to reducing youth violence in London. The London Community Foundation.

- f. Value their expertise. Many groups have cutting-edge expertise and years, sometimes decades, of experience in supporting people involved in gangs and crime, including lived experience of the challenges faced by those they are supporting.

### **Building a whole system approach**

20. A whole system approach brings together statutory services with local and community groups building on the other key ingredients identified above. Working together in this way:
  - a. Allows for holistic provision, which goes beyond standard models of support; and
  - b. Issues can be tackled collectively in order to avoid duplication.
21. Partnership-working shouldn't just take place at strategic level but should extend to joint working, communication and practice sharing between frontline workers.
22. Potential methodologies for building whole system approaches include Collective Impact and Systems Change frameworks. [Collective Impact](#) is a framework to tackle deeply entrenched and complex social problems. It is an innovative and structured approach to making collaboration work across government, business, philanthropy, non-profit organisations and citizens to achieve significant and lasting social change.
23. Systems change is about altering a current system to create a new 'normal' that works better for everyone involved. It can often be achieved by reducing siloed working and enabling partnerships and collaborations so that actors in the system work better together. Systems change involves focusing on the root causes of social issues and working to create systems that act early to prevent problems. This is taking place in Glasgow for example, where the national children's charity Action for Children is working with all key sectors to support communities in which organised crime is a way of life for many children and young people.

### **Example 3**

**Side Step - a whole system approach to diverting young people from serious organised crime.**

Side Step is a three year early intervention and diversion service delivered by [Action for Children](#), a national children's charity, together with Police Scotland, Glasgow City Council's social work department and the Scottish Government, with funding from the National Lottery Community Fund.

Side Step works with 12-18 year olds in Glasgow who are at risk of, or already involved in, serious organised crime. They may be involved in selling and distributing drugs, distributing counterfeit money and goods, violence and anti-social behaviour. Around 95% are misusing drugs and four out of ten have been in secure care/custody.

Side Step is a product of partnership-working between charities, community groups and all leading players in the field of community and youth justice. Led by Action for Children, key strategic partners have helped to shape the delivery and project content, ensuring there is no duplication of services and fit with intended outcomes. Members include One Glasgow, Reducing Offending Strand; Glasgow City Council; Police Scotland; Scottish Government; Community Justice Glasgow; the Centre for Youth and Criminal Justice and the Wheatley

Group. Action for Children also works with other charities and groups, including football clubs and Sported Scotland. In 2014, the project won a Centre of Excellence for Children in Care Award for Most Innovative Partnership.

Support is provided in a variety of formats: one-to-one, peer mentoring and group work and the level of intensity varies depending on the needs of the individual. Peer mentoring is a key component of the activity - peer mentors have relevant lived experience, knowledge of the local area/issues and are now living a crime-free life. They therefore have a unique perspective of the young person's life. Their work is mainly carried out during evenings and weekends, with a member of staff always on call. Support is also available for the whole family. The project activities take place in non-threatening environments, such as community halls.

#### ***Example 4***

**The Contextual Safeguarding Network** brings together practitioners across the United Kingdom to share and generate knowledge on contextual approaches to safeguarding young people from violence and abuse. The network promotes theory-informed practice and seeks to develop practice-informed research co-created with academics and practitioners. The network seeks to accelerate the learning from piloting contextual approaches to safeguarding by disseminating research findings and running in-person and online training and events. Members are encouraged to submit ideas for training or materials so that the research team can respond to the identified needs of practitioners.

## Emphasis on prevention and early intervention

24. Insight and learning from across the VCS suggests that the approach to tackling serious youth violence should place an emphasis on prevention and early intervention, supported by targeted mitigation activities. Below we share insights from [Preventing serious youth violence - what works?](#), a report we published in July 2018, drawing on projects we and others have funded across the country and the VCS.

### Prevention

25. Acting early to prevent problems later on. This includes shifting culture and spending towards early action to prevent and respond to adversity, and reducing the risk of young people getting involved in violent lifestyles:
- Help families and communities to give children the best start in life, i.e. through supportive, integrated early years services and cross-sector, non-judgemental, public health approaches to violence prevention.
  - Plan for the long-term and focus on achieving sustainable changes rather than quick-fixes that won't last. Don't under-estimate the level of trauma and chaos in many young people's lives and the time and services required to support them.
  - Raise aspirations and provide positive role models and alternatives through early, universal approaches in education, care and youth settings. Build the resilience of young people to cope with and bounce back from adversity. Address structural and personal barriers to employment and training.
  - Work together to identify and support at-risk children and young people in a timely manner, before problems escalate.
  - Joint working between statutory agencies and voluntary and community (VCS) groups needs to extend from collecting data, to sharing and using it to identify and support at-risk youth at the earliest possibility.
  - Train professionals and the wider community to recognise risk factors and look beyond 'challenging' behaviour to understand and work more constructively with young people. Such training needs to extend from teachers to other adults in the community (e.g. police, youth workers, coaches) and recognise the role of young people themselves in identifying those at risk.

### Example 5

**A Better Start** is a 10 year, £215 million National Lottery funded programme focused on promoting good early childhood development. The programme funds local partnerships in five areas across England to test new ways of making support and services for families stronger, so that children can have the best start in life.

A Better Start builds on research, which shows that early childhood can set the foundation for future learning, behaviour and health. From 2015 to 2025, our five programme partnerships will design, implement, deliver and test ways to support babies and very young children and their families that respond to the local context, environment and needs of the children living in their local area's community.

A Better Start is enabling systems change. It aims to improve the way that

organisations work together and with families to shift attitudes and spending towards preventing problems that can start in early life. Parents are best placed to shape potential solutions and that's why they are involved in every aspect of our programme as equal partners. They take part in decision making, designing and commissioning services, delivering and promoting activities, supporting other families and evaluation activities.

## Early Intervention

### 26. Acting on early signals and risks.

- a. Building young people's skills and confidence to manage conflict, cope with peer pressure and make the right choices: help them understand the causes and consequences of conflict; unpack myths and 'de-glamorise' the lifestyle related to crime, prisons, gangs and weapons.
- b. Recognising the value of supportive, trusting relationships and understanding that it takes time to build these: good mentors can have a life-changing effect on at-risk youth. They come from all different backgrounds - and we should value lived experience.
- c. We shouldn't rush relationship building - setting artificial deadlines or limits on support doesn't work. Enable mentors/key workers to give intensive, longitudinal support for those who need it.
- d. Ensuring support extends into the community and builds on what is already working well locally: this includes providing support in places young people regularly go to and where they feel comfortable, including music projects, youth clubs, streets, gyms and shopping centres.
- e. Making sure interventions for young people involved in violent lifestyles incorporate, or link with, specialist mental health support services: the level of need for mental health support among young people involved in serious violence is high.
- f. Trying out new approaches (i.e. whole family approaches and 'walk and talk' counselling), or providing support in different environments (youth centres, on the streets, cafes) may help to tackle stigma and barriers.
- g. Make it easier for young people to come forward to talk about mental health and gang pressure (e.g. by running young people / role model-led awareness campaigns and training people with lived experience of gangs to do preventive work in primary and secondary schools and other youth settings).
- h. Using sport and arts to engage and promote positive values.
- i. Finding the right time to intervene and offer ways out of violence - a 'teachable moment' when young people may be most receptive to making changes in their lives.

### **Example 6**

**The St Giles Trust** trains reformed ex-offenders and gang members to run programmes in educational settings (including primary schools) to talk about the realities and consequences of a life of crime. Their first-hand understanding of the lives and challenges at-risk youth face on a daily basis enables them to reach out to those who are under the radar but already involved in serious violence.

### Example 7

**Fight for Peace** uses boxing and martial arts combined with education and personal development to steer young people away from violence, gangs and crime. Fight for Peace has been running in Northern Ireland and England for many years and is in the process of being introduced in Wales and Scotland too with support from the National Lottery.

Across the 800 participants taking part in 2011, it is estimated that Fight for Peace has resulted in 165 crimes being avoided. With the cost of the project running at £580,000, evaluators believe that this model has delivered a benefit to cost ratio of £4.42 for every £1 invested.<sup>2</sup>

### Example 8

**Leap Confronting Conflict** is a national youth charity that provides conflict management training and support to young people. They support children and young people who face high, sustained levels of conflict, such as violence.<sup>3</sup> Half have a history of offending (50%) and/or have been involved in violent behaviours (53%).<sup>4</sup>

Leap give young people an insight into the causes and consequences of conflict, develop their skills and confidence to manage such situations and teach them to take responsibility for their actions.<sup>3</sup> Their interventions address topics such as danger, space and territory, status and reputation, enemies and revenge. Social media, sexual abuse and violence are also discussed.

The approach was developed in collaboration with young people with lived experience of violence and is delivered as a five-day training course using interactive methods including role play, drama, games and discussions - designed to be fun and educational.<sup>3</sup>

*“The course gave me other alternatives when I come to certain situations, like not just always fight people and follow that first instinct” - Male, 20<sup>[2]</sup>*

See also:

**Side Step** - Example 3, pages 5-6

**HeadStart** - Example 11, page 12

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<sup>2</sup> Ecorys (2012) *Sport Scores: the costs and benefits of sport for crime reduction (executive summary)*. Laureus Sport for Good Foundation. <http://fightforpeace.net/xxaltxx/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/%E2%80%9CSPORT-SCORES-THE-COSTS-AND-BENEFITS-OF-SPORT-FOR-CRIME-REDUCTION%E2%80%9D-REPORT-BY-ECORYS-2012.pdf> [last accessed 10 May 2019]

<sup>3</sup> Leap Confronting Conflict (2018) *Improving Prospects 2016/2017. Evaluating the long-term impact of Leap’s flagship community-based programme*.

<sup>4</sup> Lee, J., Batten, R., Harris, F. (2018) *Measuring the longer-term outcomes for graduates of Leap Improving Prospects programme, 2016/2017*. Brathay Trust Research Hub.

## Gathering evidence to inform decision-making

27. We recognise that the existing knowledge around what works to reduce serious youth violence is mixed. As mentioned above, we have produced an insights briefing on what works in the VCS and continue to work closely with the Home Office, Serious Violence Taskforce, the Children's Commissioner and other sector experts on gathering evidence.
28. [Preventing serious youth violence- what works?](#) shares insights and examples of both proven and promising practices gathered from the VCS and from across the UK. The report also shares our experiences as a funder about the principles that have worked for us in planning, designing and implementing funding programmes in this field.
29. We will continue to work with experts to develop common data and evidence frameworks, whilst recognising that often those with the most useful expertise are within communities who have been most affected, and thus have significant experience of the problems we are seeking to address.
30. The approach we will take will be centred on youth voice and take a strengths-based approach to tackling youth violence. We will use the information gathered by young people via a variety of methods (including peer-to-peer research, surveys, and focus groups at community-level organisations) to inform the development of our funding and the evidence base.
31. Across the Fund we employ a wide range of evaluative methods, including randomised controlled trials, test & learn (Rapid Cycle Testing), cohort studies and qualitative interviews, focus groups and surveys.
32. We would be happy to continue to discuss our insights and learning on an ongoing basis.

### Example 9

#### **Realising Ambition - Preventing Young People Entering the Criminal Justice System**

This 5yr £25m programme replicated 25 promising services aimed at preventing children and young people from entering the criminal justice system.

The programme had a diverse range of interventions and charities amongst the 25 projects.

Each organisation in the Realising Ambition programme sought to monitor the outcomes of young people prior to and after service delivery. These outcomes were selected from standardised and validated measurement tools from the programme's 'Outcomes Framework'. This framework contains five broad outcome areas (engagement at school, behaviour, emotional wellbeing, relationships and communities) with specific indicators under each area. A standardised and validated questionnaire for each indicator was provided.

The programme employed a range of evaluative approaches, including cost modelling and using a cohort study to measure impact, it also focused on action learning. The insights into this approach have been published in a [series of reports](#).

The programme focused learning on designing an intervention and planning for its implementation.

## Effective partnerships

33. To tackle and prevent serious youth violence we need a partnership-based approach that places young people, those with lived experience of serious violence and the VCS at its heart. This partnership should develop and commit to a long term response: there are no 'quick fixes' for serious youth violence, and organisations - especially from the VCS - require long term commitment and stability to enable effective activity and support for young people and communities. It is important to act early to prevent problems later on, so there should be a focus on prevention and early intervention, supported by targeted funding of mitigation activities. We have elaborated on each of these components of an effective partnership throughout this document.
34. The National Lottery Community Fund currently supports a number of partnerships, including place-based partnerships, strategic partnerships, funded through five major programmes, and funding partnerships. Here we highlight partnerships with direct or indirect relevance to tackling serious youth violence.

### Place-based partnerships - led by the community

35. From our experience, a good way to kick start the development of national and local partnerships is by bringing together partners from across sectors and communities to develop a common vision for change. These partnerships of community organisations and statutory service providers would be expected to work alongside groups of young people who meet regularly to discuss how best to support them at the hyperlocal level.
36. In order to have a genuine impact, and one that persists beyond the initial stages, we recommend a commitment to long term funding around this issue. For example we are confident our 10 year commitment to A Better Start gave this programme the best possible chance of promoting good early childhood development and preventing problems that can start in early life. In conversations we have been having with young people, they have told us time and again how they lost faith in the various commitments made by funding organisations, both government and independent.
37. The approach to tackling serious youth violence we are developing needs a long term sustained commitment, not just from funders working together, but across government and the wider VCS. At the core of this will be investment in the development of youth leadership to support this process. This will entail us funding a network of projects across the UK, rooted in specific places. Through seed and capacity building funding, we would ensure that partners have the time, headspace and capacity to engage with this work as well as maintaining engagement in their day to day service delivery.

### *Example 10*

**The Youth Sheffield Partnership** is a group of community anchor organisations who have come together to look at the growing issue of young people drawn into organised crime and inter-community conflicts linked to crime. There is

growing community and political concern over the number of knife and gun crimes in Sheffield over a relatively short space of time and in particular areas. The partnership wants to collaborate to develop a different model of tackling this issue and to develop new relationships with other key agencies in the city to work together more effectively.

### **Strategic partnerships**

38. Through our Strategic Portfolio we are currently investing £567 million in 58 partnerships across England through five major programmes. These partnerships are testing innovative approaches to tackling some of the most serious social issues people face throughout their lifetimes.
39. These programmes were set up by the National Lottery Community Fund to trial new approaches to service design, which aim to make people's lives healthier and happier, from babies and very young children through to those in later life.

### **Example 11**

**HeadStart** is a five-year, £56 million programme. Working in six diverse communities across England, it aims to explore and test ways to improve young people's mental health and wellbeing.

The National Lottery Community Fund believes that strong communities are built by those who live in them, and that people with first-hand experience of living with an issue are best-placed to identify and shape potential solutions. Young people, who identified mental health as a key issue in their lives, were at the heart of designing HeadStart.

From 2016 to 2021, six local authority-led HeadStart partnerships will be working in Blackpool, Cornwall, Hull, Kent, Newham and Wolverhampton.

### **Funding partnerships**

40. No single organisation or indeed funder can address this issue. Recognising this, we have convened and attended a series of meetings with funders from which a set of shared funding principles have been developed.
41. These include a commitment to young people, sharing knowledge and seeking out opportunities to work together. Our ambition is to develop the networks and platforms which enable greater co-ordination and collaboration of resources from independent funders and wider partners. As part of these discussions, we have been actively engaging groups of young people in the design of our emerging strategy.

### **Example 12**

**Early Action Taskforce**, This is a three year project in which Community Links Trust Limited (CL) will aim to embed a culture of preventative services among charities, funders, public sector bodies. The project aims to increase understanding, gather evidence to support and promote the idea that preventing problems from occurring in society is preferable to coping with the consequences.

This will be done by building networks and forging links across sectors. It

intends to produce a robust case for early action using research and evaluation. With the examples of good practice, research and widened networks and relationships, it is intended that the work produced will influence policy, spending and become embedded within organisations.

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### **Further information**

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