



Listening to the experts

Getting beyond the headlines
to hear what young people
want and need to stay safe
from violent crime

July 2020

RECLAIM

**“Professionals don’t
listen to young people.
We are the ones on
the streets, not them.”**

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01

Thank you

We are incredibly grateful to all the young people who participated in this project and shared their views. We really hope you feel the report reflects your experience and the issues you raised earlier in the year. As we promised, we will work to ensure your views and expertise are part of the debate in a more ongoing way.

Many thanks to the professionals who participated in the project events, and to those in the youth work sector funded by the Manchester Community Safety Partnership who provided the case studies included in the report. We hope you found the process as worthwhile as we did.

We also want to express our thanks to the Manchester Community Safety Partnership, Young Manchester and the Co-op Foundation for backing this work. Your support for this approach and guidance along the way has been fantastic.

Finally thank you to the RECLAIM team and associated colleagues for all your hard work, especially Becky Bainbridge, Issy Martini, Nia Mack, Jenny Ross, Cecillia Makonyola and Roger Harding.

Funded by



In partnership with



See page 26 for details on the wider projects funded by the Manchester Community Safety Partnership as part of this programme.

“My community has a reputation of violence and people have to live up to it. It’s a massive problem in my community”



02

Executive Summary

In this project we set out to put young people at the heart of the debate on how we create a Manchester where young people can live free from fear and violence.

This report summarises what they told us earlier this year before the March lockdown. It also details discussions where we brought young people and the various professionals who work with them together. People from all corners – sometimes publicly, sometimes privately and quietly – expressed an appetite for Manchester to be braver in its response to violent crime and embrace the ideas that really deliver.

We hope this work offers not just a new analysis of the problem but a new shared path to tackling it.

Our approach builds on and learns from

Manchester's history. At the end of the 19th century there was a rise in violent crime involving young people. Community leaders, businesses and philanthropists realised that more arrests and harsher sentences hadn't stopped the violence despite prisons overflowing with 12 and 13-year olds. They asked young people what they thought would help, and in response the now famous Lads Clubs were set up across the city.

We can learn from our past and the present to develop an approach that is fit for the future.

We asked young people what is going on now. They told us that we need to listen more and make the most of their expertise. Violence is not a 'young people's issue'. Young people are after all more likely to be victims than perpetrators of violence. To develop an effective approach we have to understand how young people become involved in cycles of violence and what makes them feel unsafe.

The report **amplifies the voices of young people and reflects the discussions they had with committed professionals.** It concludes that **any strategy to tackle serious youth violence will fail if it doesn't involve the young people it affects.** It may even make things worse. For example, young people told us that they see the response to violent crime as superficial, stigmatising and too often based on race, class or gender-related stereotypes rather than their lived reality. This work was conducted before the recent Black Lives Matter protests in the city and beyond but the young people foreshadowed some of issues these have drawn attention to. Responses to violent crime too often paint young people as 'the problem' to be fixed and feed fear and foster distrust between young people and professionals. This report highlights where we can do better and where change is needed.

Manchester has an opportunity to pioneer work that is youth-centred and responds to young people's right and desire to feel safe, respected, supported and hopeful (see pages 12-19). Tackling the negative dynamics that breed fear, despair and isolation among young people – the root causes of serious youth violence – will take a coordinated and long-term approach. Our discussions with professionals highlighted a willingness to move away from short-term, siloed approaches. The committed individuals we spoke with acknowledged young people's strengths and the role they could play in addressing serious youth violence.

It won't be easy. We need professionals, policymakers, commissioners and funders to listen to young people and reflect honestly on the power that they have to shape whether young people feel safe. **But the goal is clear: to focus on approaches that meet young people on their terms and within their lived realities and builds their feelings of hope, respect and support.**

The discussions with young people and professionals were conducted before the COVID-19 March lockdown. The disproportionate impact of the virus and the economic fallout on communities of colour, working class communities and young people sadly gives us every reason to believe the issues discussed in this report will become more, not less, important. There is a major risk that the response could make matters significantly worse. **We instead hope the recovery from this terrible moment provides a greater opportunity to think differently about how we ensure young people feel safe and supported and is one that Manchester takes.**



03

Introduction

Violence affects many young people's lives – either directly (as victims or perpetrators) or indirectly by creating a climate of fear and mistrust and by reinforcing negative stereotypes about particular groups or communities.

Despite good intentions, many initiatives on serious youth violence do not succeed or they give the impression to young people that people in positions of power don't understand their lives. This project was conceived in response to a willingness in Manchester to try a different approach – bringing together young people with commissioners, service providers and other key professionals – to build collective understanding of how to keep children and young people safe in the city. The report argues and demonstrates the value of involving Manchester's young people – the chief experts on this issue – in finding solutions. The report's findings draw on the personal experience and perspectives of young people and also a review of relevant research and evidence.

The approach

This process was facilitated by RECLAIM with funding from the Manchester Community Safety Partnership¹ (which was managed by Young Manchester) and the Co-op Foundation. It involved the following:

- A review of relevant policy and research (see bibliography annex).
- A review of podcasts and blogs by young people, youth workers and youth-violence focused practitioners (see bibliography annex).
- A facilitated session in January with young people and youth workers which produced the iceberg analysis and identified key dynamics and the vision of a Manchester where young people are safe, respected, supported and hopeful.
- A facilitated session in early March with young people, youth workers, commissioners, funders, service providers and other key stakeholders to explore what needs to change.
- Collation of case studies of youth work that is funded by the same Community Safety Partnership funding stream (also overseen by Young Manchester) as part of its efforts to tackle serious youth violence (see appendix on page 26).
- Interviews and focus group discussions in January-March with young people from Manchester, to deepen understanding of their experience and feelings about what can be done.
- Draft report and findings shared with young people for their feedback and comments before finalisation.



¹For my details on the MCSP please see here: https://secure.manchester.gov.uk/info/200030/crime_antisocial_behaviour_and_nuisance/720/manchester_community_safety_partnership

What young people told us drives violent crime

04

In our initial facilitated session with young people and youth workers we asked young people to share their analysis of the dynamics that are driving serious youth violence. This is summarised in the Iceberg figure on the next page.

In terms of what was happening, young people told us that the carrying of weapons and serious violence were part of wider dynamics that make them feel unsafe. A lot of the responses from 'the authorities' were seen to be at the surface level and dominated by the police/criminal justice system – increasing stop and search, restricting sale of knives and longer sentences for carrying weapons.

Young people believe that efforts to tackle serious youth violence have to be part of a wider response to crime, exploitation and grooming. And the response has to go beyond the criminal justice system – to address deeper drivers (inequality, racism, classism, toxic masculinity, misogyny, consumerism).

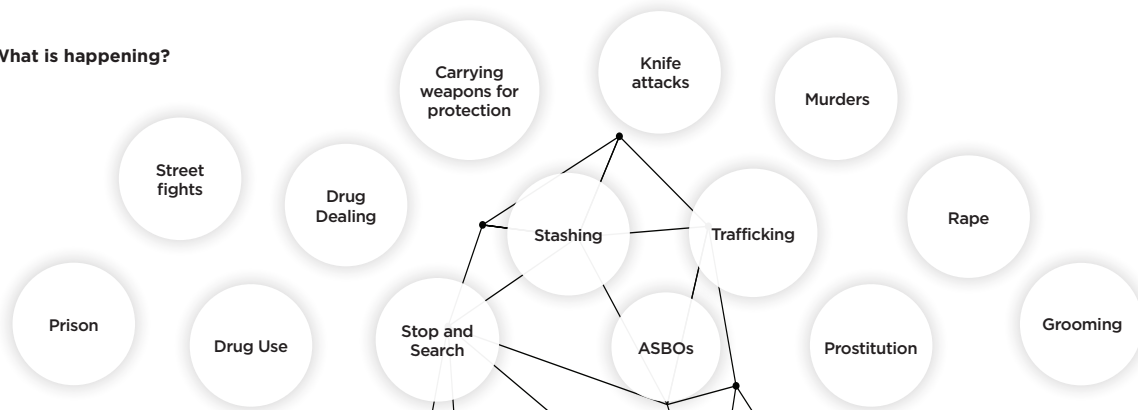
Whilst young people did feel that music with violent lyrics and social media can feed fear and escalate conflict, they felt that these get far too much focus and the impact of cuts to services, school exclusions and limited good opportunities to make a decent living are overlooked. Media coverage was seen to sensationalise what was going on and feed fear and anxiety and reinforce prejudice (especially against young black men). The music industry was seen as promoting particular forms of music and youth culture that glamourise violence, crime and gangs, and failing to champion a wider range of talent and outlooks from people of colour and working class young people.

The discussion highlighted that school exclusions and criminalisation feed and are fed by a view that certain young people's behaviour is 'the problem' rather being a symptom of wider issues at home, or in the community or in wider society. Young people felt blamed and judged rather than supported. Aside from youth workers they felt that a lot of adults/professionals didn't care or understand their experience.

We recognise that in some instances young people may be experiencing a response from professionals which is directed by national policy or targets (for example, some professionals suggested that school exclusions and increased police use of stop and search might be partially driven by national government), but it is nonetheless young people's local experience. Similarly, some responses may have occurred elsewhere (for example, the use of knife awareness adverts on chicken boxes in London) but these can be widely shared locally and shape young people's views of how they are seen by professionals.

Based on the discussions in the first workshop we developed four key dynamics that shape young people's experience of serious youth violence. These are detailed in the following pages with references to relevant policy and research reports and direct quotes from young people from our interviews and focus group discussions.

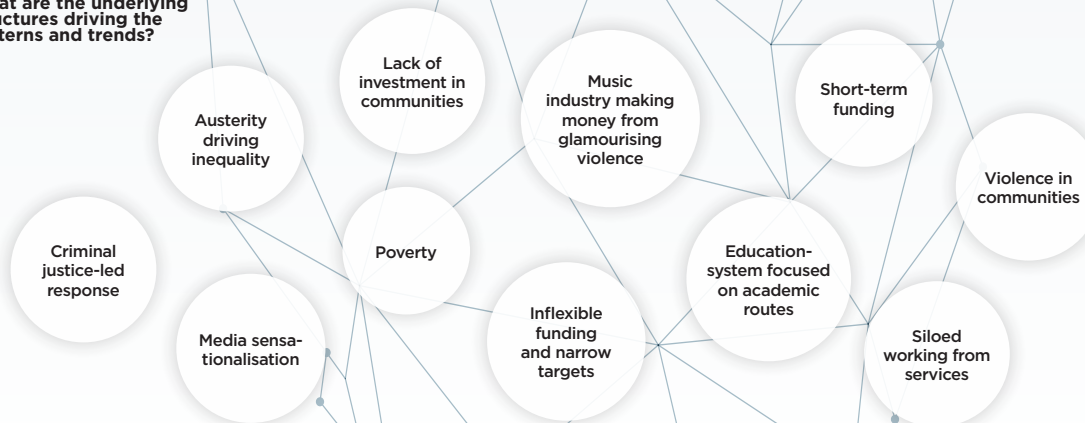
What is happening?



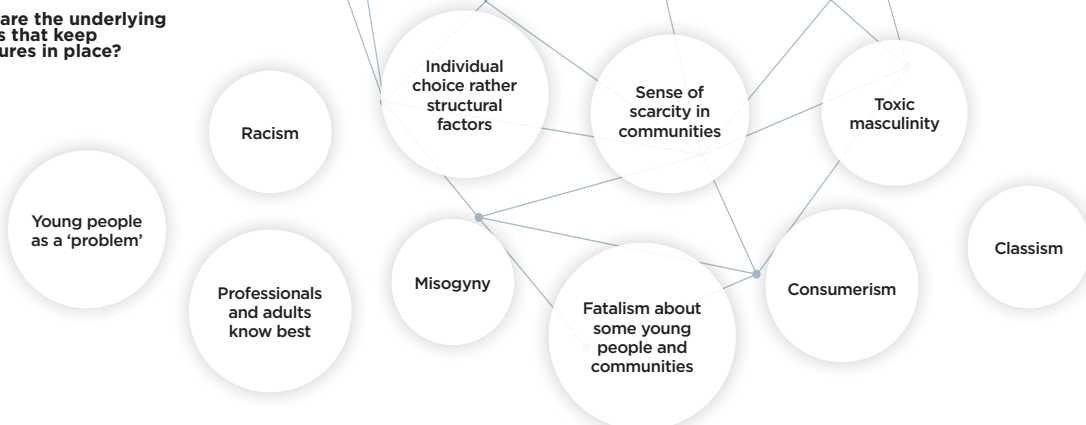
What are the patterns and trends?



What are the underlying structures driving the patterns and trends?



What are the underlying beliefs that keep structures in place?



05

What young people told us about safety

Young people said:

'I don't feel safe on my streets. We are all in the same community but everyone is scared that's why no one says anything. I can't trust the police after I was groomed and they failed me.'

'I am scared walking home when I have read something in the paper. If I see a massive headline then I stay in my house.'

'I have been stopped and searched for no reason. I think it was because of the race card. It is like the police have something over you. But at the same time we need the police.'

Supporting evidence:

- Studies consistently show that young people carry weapons when they feel that they need to protect themselves. (*Bateman, 2018*).
- A quarter young people surveyed by the Prince's Trust responded that they feel unsafe. Most of them said media reporting of violent crime made them more fearful, and misrepresented young people (*Prince's Trust, 2018*).

Young people want to feel safe

Fear is widespread in particular groups of young people

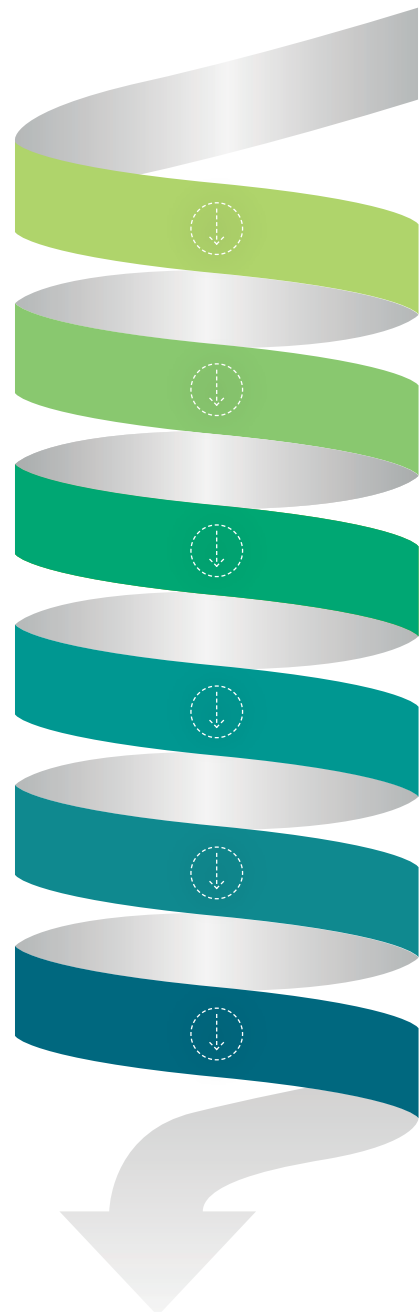
Sensationalist media reporting and awareness campaigns can feed fear

Lack of safe places to go and trusted adults to talk to

Some young people feel targeted by the police and/or are excluded by schools and other services

Young people feel isolated and alone – don't feel able to tell adults about their problems

Fear can lead young people to carry a weapon



06

What young people told us about respect

Young people said:

'I wanna be a police officer, I like the police, but then I hear about friends getting stopped and searched and it's like 'you fit the description of someone in the area' when I think it's just an excuse to search them. It's like racial profiling.'

'My community has a reputation of violence and people have to live up [to it]. It's a massive problem in my community.'

'I think the majority of youth carry knives because they want to look hard. They say it's for protection but it's just to be at the top. I think they have to live up to their communities.'

Supporting evidence:

- The Future Men 2018 Survey found that 2 in 3 (67%) 18-24-year-old men believe they are pressured to display hyper-masculine behaviour, which was significantly higher than their 45+-year-old counterparts (30%).
- The Need for Physical Defence, Need for Respect, Limited Trust in Authorities and Limited Control over Status were found to be inter-correlated and predictive of Aggressive Masculinity, which was then predictive of Knife Tolerance (*Palasinski, 2019*).

Young people want respect and recognition

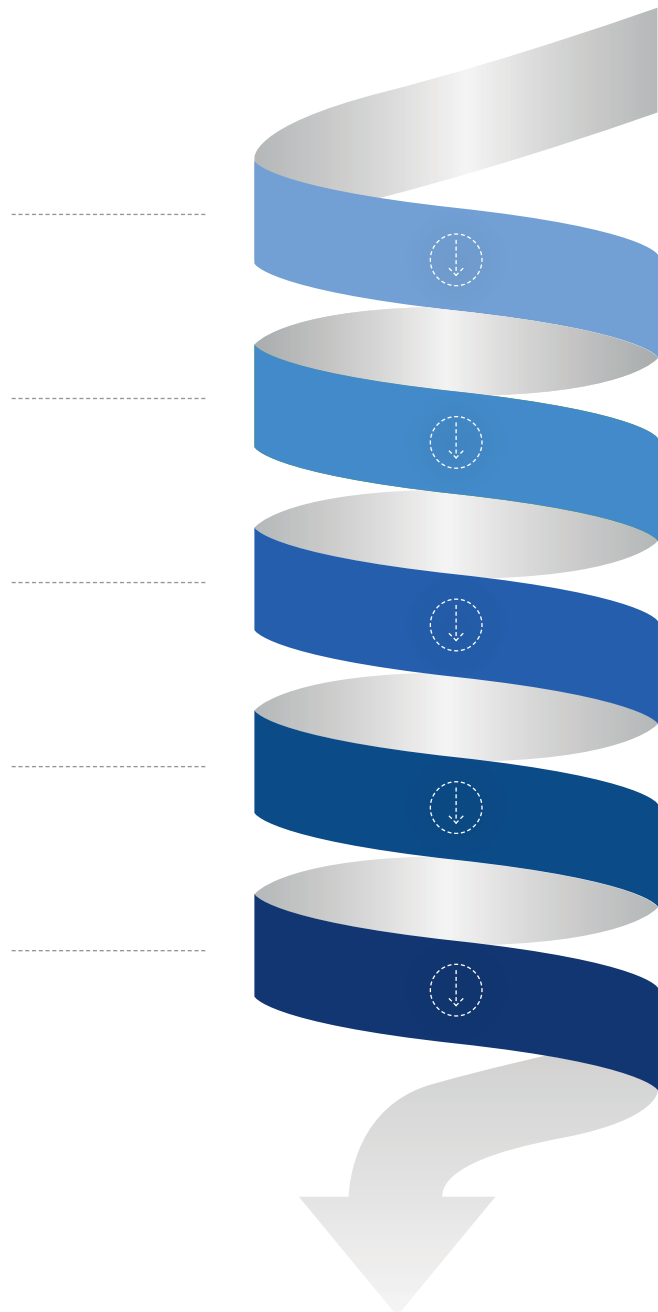
Young people want the respect of their peers. They don't feel respected, listened to or understood by 'professionals' and other adults

Some approaches to tackling youth violence feel disrespectful (e.g. stop and search) or like they are based on stereotypes (e.g. awareness campaigns on chicken boxes)

They feel that the response of professionals is about being seen to be taking action rather than engaging and listening to young people

Fear of being disrespected by or in front of their peers can lead to an escalation of conflict

Young people don't want to lose face or be called a snitch if they engage with professionals





What young people told us about hope

Young people said:

'There is no inspiration in our communities, so they have to resort to the streets.'

'When they are involved (in crime) - people think that they are popular, powerful, protected.'

'Grime doesn't help the situation - kids in school chatting about trapping. They think it's a good life and an easy way of making money. Social media doesn't help either - but they are not the reason this is happening.'

Supporting evidence:

- There is a 'poverty of hope:' two thirds (67 per cent) of young people surveyed believe their generation will be worse off than their parents (*Barnardos, 2019*).
- Local authorities who have significantly cut services to young people are linked to high levels of knife crime (*APPG on Knife Crime, 2018*).
- In the past 5 years, Barnardo's frontline staff have reported increasing cases of children with complex vulnerabilities, including experiences of early trauma, neglect, criminal exploitation and gang violence (*Barnardos, 2019*).

Young people want a positive future

Young people want respect and to be proud of themselves

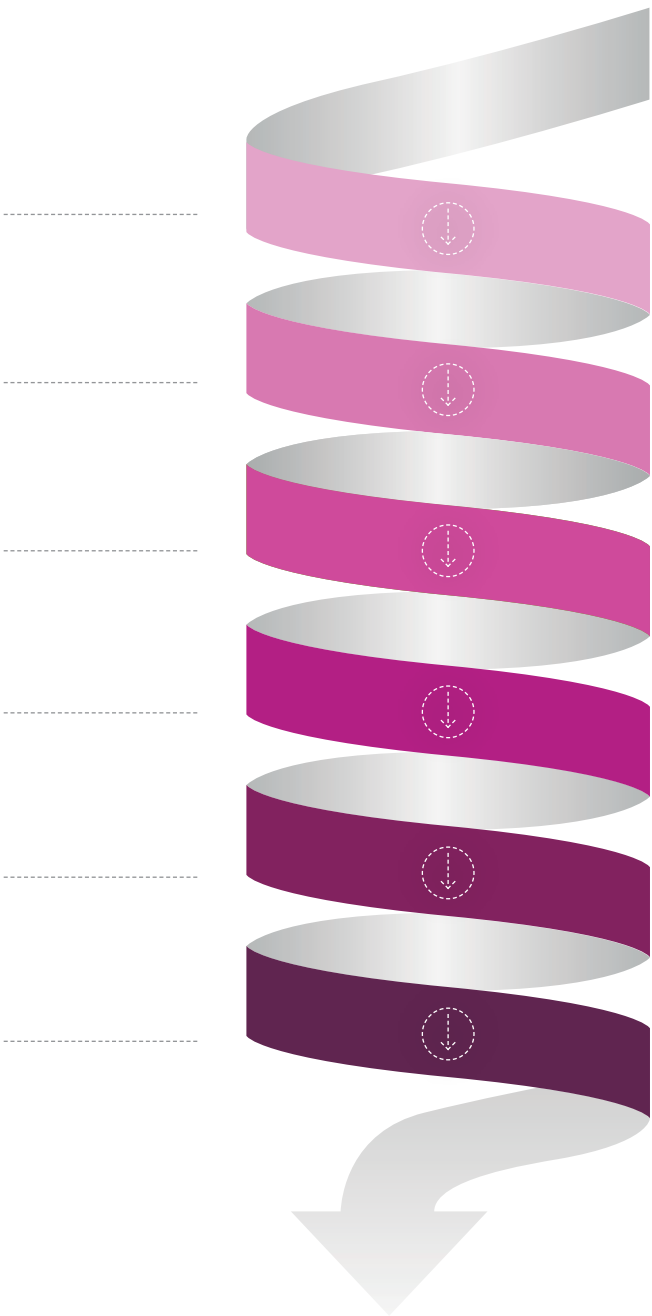
Few credible examples of people from their backgrounds or communities in positions of power

Succeeding at school and work isn't offering a visible and viable route to money and respect

Low pay and insecure work are widespread and local areas lack investment

Young people are not getting good advice about their options

Drugs and crime appear to offer glamour, quick and easy money and respect



What young people told us about support



Young people said:

'Trust is the main thing for young people and professionals, apart from youth workers, I don't trust. School just kicked me out and I was failed.'

'Professionals don't listen to young people. We are the ones on the streets, not them.'

'Knife crime is an issue within my community, but it isn't just young people carrying knives – but the professional people just want someone to blame so they stereotype young people.'

Supporting evidence:

- An inquiry into the relationship between the police and children found that children and young people's attitudes towards the police are often characterised by feelings of mistrust and sometimes fear. (*APPG Children, 2013-2014*).
- The absence of trusted relationships is consistently cited in reviews of failures around child exploitation and abuse (*Early Intervention Foundation, 2018*).
- "Disparity [in use of stop and search] is at least in part a result of discrimination / stereotyping on the part of officers and forces carrying out searches" which could negatively impact relationship between black people and the police (*Home Office, 2019*).

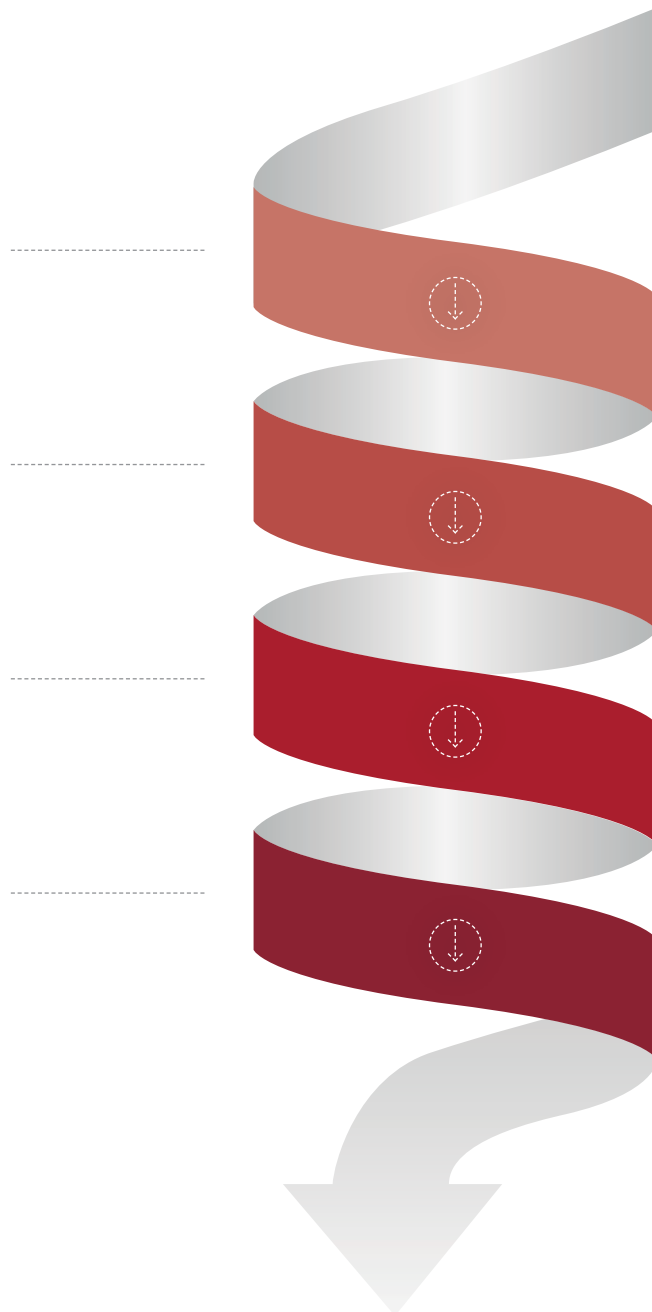
Young people want to feel supported and to be listened to

Many services have been cut in local communities or funding/ programmes are short-term

Services and support are not coordinated and can be difficult to access

Young people who are involved in criminality and violence are traumatised and distrustful – often when they ask for help they are turned away e.g. when fleeing a violent home or being groomed

Young people feel they have nowhere to turn to and try to resolve issues themselves





What does a Youth-Centred Approach to Keeping Children and Young People Safe Look Like?

During the second workshop with a variety of service providers, funders, commissioners, youth workers and young people we shared what we had gathered in the first workshop and from our interviews and focus group discussions.

We also facilitated a conversation about the Manchester that we want to see for young people – a city where they are safe, hopeful, respected and supported.

During the conversation the participants identified some ideas about how Manchester could shift its approach and some specific ideas about where improvements could be made.

Recommendation 1:

We need a youth-centred approach

Services, commissioners, funders and policy makers must have young people's needs and experiences at their centre and recognise:

- **Young people are experts and agents of change:** Young people's experience, perspectives, opinions and aspirations must be at the core of efforts to improve their safety.
- **Young people have strengths/resources:** Young people bring a valued perspective and their own strengths and resources to any process and discussion.
- **Young people's realities are complex and multi-dimensional:** A youth-centred approach needs to consider the whole of young people's lives and needs and their place within families, friendship groups and communities.
- **Young people's realities are diverse:** A youth-centred approach respects young people's identities, preferences, needs and culture. It actively considers how some young people's experience is shaped by racism, classism and/or toxic masculinity.

Young people observed that service-providers, commissioners and policy makers aren't often from their backgrounds and communities and so don't understand them (which feeds a sense that they don't care about them).

In order to bridge this gap, service-providers, commissioners and policy makers need to:

- Listen non-judgementally.
- Focus first on understanding and relationships before jumping to solutions and interventions.
- Share power and resources with young people.
- Learn and reflect together with young people and across services.
- See young people as equal partners in defining goals, creating solutions and measuring progress.
- Become more inclusive of adults with similar backgrounds to the young people they are trying to work with.
- Recognise that working side-by-side with young people will be very difficult and involve a lot of practice change but is also the only way these issues are resolved.



Recommendation 2:

We need to shift from interventions that undermine support, respect and hope to approaches that build on young people's strengths, create relationships of trust and make them feel safe.

APPROACHES THAT CAN UNDERMINE

APPROACHES THAT POSITIVELY REINFORCE

DYNAMIC > RESPECT

- Interventions that appear to be based on stereotypes not evidence (e.g. chicken box awareness campaigns – an intervention done in London but widely seen in Manchester, schools talks focused on risk).
- Excessive and heavy-handed use of Stop and Search which disproportionately targets young people of colour.
- Awareness campaigns can feed fear and make weapon carrying seem more prevalent than the reality.
- Excluding/harassing young people in public spaces.

- Young people involved in design, commissioning and policy making.
- Ensure listening and participatory action research to better understand dynamics are regularly part of work in this area.
- Work with media & cultural bodies to replace negative stereotypes with positive images of young people from working class communities and communities of colour.
- Celebrate young people's achievements.
- De-escalation and conflict management skills e.g. either stand alone or as part of sporting activities.

DYNAMIC > HOPE

- Media coverage and sensationalising awareness campaigns.
- Police/PCSOs in schools which feeds fear and suspicion.
- School exclusions and related activity that doesn't try to understand young person's behaviour.
- Limited alternatives to academic routes.

- Provide services/support run by and/or involving relatable adults that support young people to find alternative livelihoods and realise their aspirations.
- Network of community mentors who are relatable adults.
- Invest in local communities to provide good quality local jobs.

DYNAMIC > SUPPORT

- Concerns about sharing issues/concerns with adults – triggering safeguarding considerations and institutional risks.
- Short-term, inflexible, siloed funding.
- Targets across public sector and VCS which undermine joint-working and young peoples' support, respect, hope and safety.
- Labelling young people and interventions (e.g. gangs or CSE).
- Cuts to services (that lead to turning young people away or being unable to build long term relationships with youth workers or other professionals).
- Exclusive focus on serious youth violence (which is more likely to involve boys as victims and perpetrators) which can underplays the lack of safety of girls and young women.

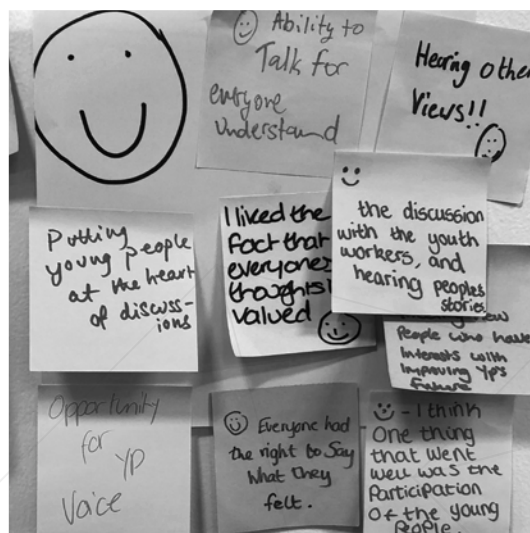
- Early intervention, preventative and community-wide approaches.
- More grassroots projects with local support.
- More pastoral and family support via schools.
- Safe spaces for young people to go (including separate provision for young women).
- Long-term and coordinated services.
- Youth work or other relationship-based services.
- Ensure that the response (services, policy, funding) looks at the lack of safety and risk in communities and how it affects girls and boys differently.

Recommendation 3:

We need to be open to adopting with new approaches and we need ways to continue this dialogue.

During this process young people and professionals proposed concrete ideas about how to be more youth-centred and shift our approaches to promote young people's sense of safety.

Tackling serious youth violence is not straightforward and there aren't simple solutions – these ideas are offered up as a starting point for further discussion and to create greater openness to thinking about what a good response would look like.



CHALLENGE:

Gap in understanding and empathy between young people affected by serious youth violence and 'professionals'. Young people feel professionals are responding to stereotypes rather than their reality.

POTENTIAL SOLUTIONS:

- Drawing on experience from other inter-generational dialogues to hold sessions between young people and professionals – where young people are able to explain or show the reality of their experience and professionals or older people are asked to listen non-judgementally.
- Feedback sessions where professionals/funders/commissioners test their ideas and approaches with young people before they take decisions – a 'groundtruthing' exercise.
- Drawing on tools from design thinking holding empathy mapping sessions where young people and professionals map their lives or diary studies to explain their realities to each other and explore how they interrelate.

CHALLENGE:

Prejudicial attitudes towards young people from particular communities (particularly of young people of colour and working class young people) fed by their representation in popular culture and the media and a feeling of being stereotyped and judged.

POTENTIAL SOLUTIONS:

- Engage cultural and media organisations in Manchester to promote alternative and positive images of young people and the communities that they live in.
- Use advertising space in the city to promote positive images of young people and the places where they live.

Recommendation 3:

EXAMPLES OF EFFORTS TO SHIFT NARRATIVES AND CHALLENGE STEREOTYPES

The 56 Black Men project² seeks to shift the narrative and challenge stereotypes – displaying photos of 56 black men in hoodies looking straight at the camera and then showing their jobs and achievements.

Also a similar project portraits of ‘Smile-ing Boys’ – saw portraits of smiling young men displayed in London’s City Hall - as part of a wider project aimed at addressing the mental health needs of teenage black boys³.

In London the Mayor ran an advertising competition⁴ to shift the portrayal of women and girls (in response to the use of objectifying images) and provided free advertising space to the winners.

www.56blackmen.com



CHALLENGE:

The escalation of ‘beef’ between young people which is amplified online and offline.

POTENTIAL SOLUTIONS:

- Involve faith leaders and elders in communities as well as mentors and other relatable adults to support dialogue to de-escalate situations.
- Provide support to families and peer groups following events of serious youth violence.
- Provide de-escalation and/or active bystander training to young people and key community members.
- Create safe spaces and encourage development of network of community guardians where young people can go for support.

CHALLENGE:

The rigidity of national targets, current commissioning and funding models can get in the way of more coordinated, compassionate, community-led, flexible and creative responses to serious youth violence.

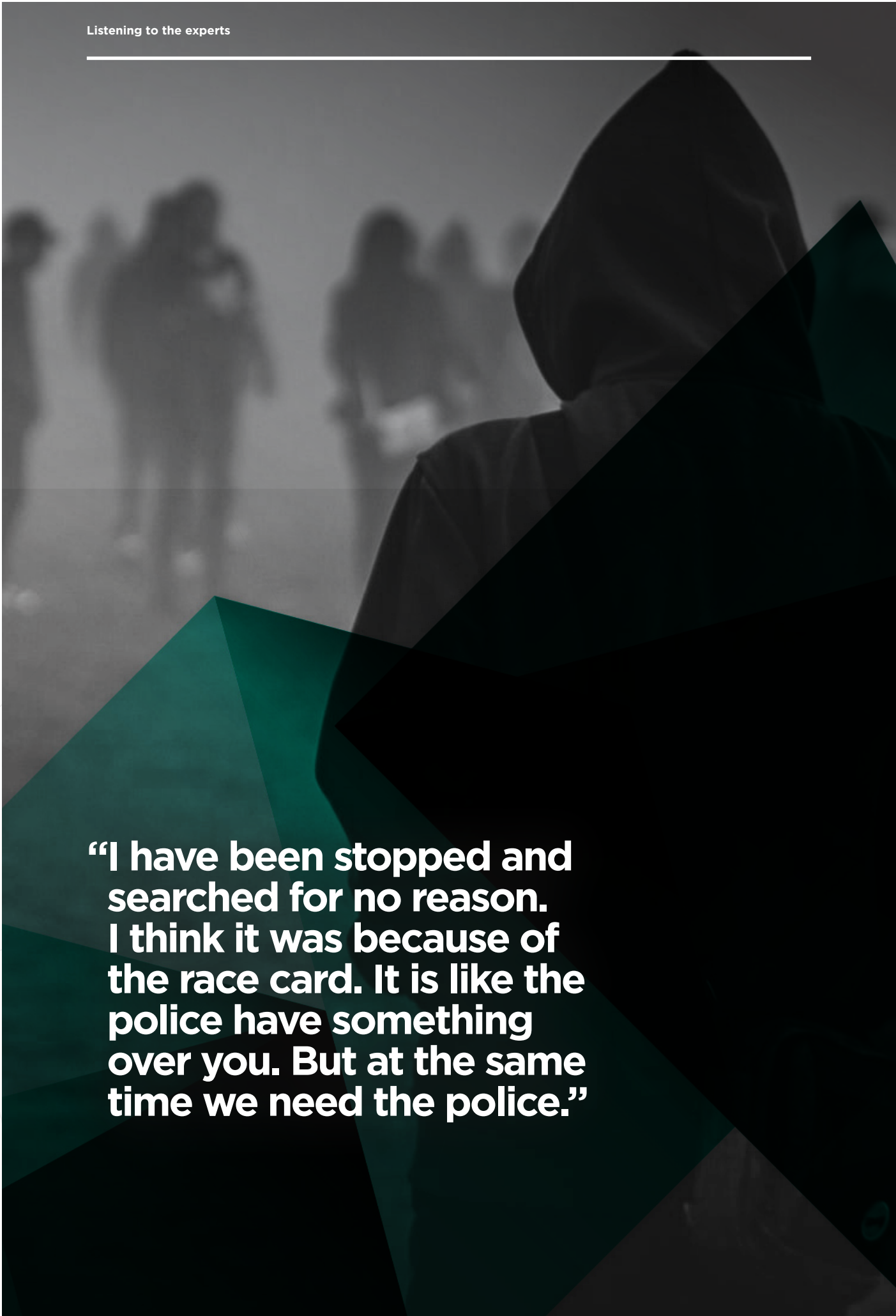
POTENTIAL SOLUTIONS:

- Undertake research about how current national targets for education, criminal justice, policing can impact on attempts to create local solutions. effective responses.
- Develop a campaign led by young people, service providers, funders and commissioners to push for greater flexibility in national targets, policy and funding practice to allow for a more effective response to young people’s needs in Manchester..
- Map serious youth violence stakeholders in the city and current initiatives that are ongoing and establish a mechanism to regular exchange information.
- Encourage joint initiatives with flexible pooled funding.

² www.56blackmen.com

³ www.theguardian.com/global/2020/mar/18/photographs-black-teenage-boys-prejudice-stereotypes

⁴ www.london.gov.uk/press-releases/mayoral/city-hall-and-tfl-launch-new-ad-competition

The background image shows a person in a dark hoodie in the foreground, looking away from the camera. In the background, a group of people is walking, but they are out of focus. The image has a dark, moody feel with some geometric shapes overlaid in shades of green and black.

“I have been stopped and searched for no reason. I think it was because of the race card. It is like the police have something over you. But at the same time we need the police.”

10

Appendix

Details about the wider projects funded through Keeping Children and Young People Safe programme created by the Community Safety Partnership.

Below are brief descriptions of the projects provided by those running them.

GROUNDWORK – KEEPING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SAFE PROJECT

This project supported young people identified as being at risk of becoming victims or perpetrators of violent crime. Over 6 months, young people were engaged with a mentor to develop new skills and behaviours that both built resilience and reduced the likelihood of them being involved in serious youth crime. As a prevention programme it helped young people to identify risk factors and behaviours that may lead them to become perpetrators and / or victims of violent crime and create solutions to work against this happening.

Through 1-2-1 mentoring and coaching the project supported young people to create action plans to develop new skills to help them to become more resilient, make better choices and be more informed. The approach was young person-centred, putting their needs at the heart of the intervention. It used real-life examples, lived-experiences and a range of other tools to help the young people and mentors create and achieve targets that are relevant and important to them.

The interventions were once a week at a time and place of the young person's choosing. They normally lasted an hour and were delivered with an experienced mentor. Every intervention was different as every young person requires something specific. Impact was measured through the 'Groundwork youth star', the achievement of the targets in the action plan and testimonials from the young people themselves.

The most immediate result from the work was the strong relationships developed between the mentors and mentees. Young people reported feeling positive about having somebody who believes in them and wants to genuinely make a difference "you don't do this because you get paid to do it, it's because you genuinely care".

To give one example, one 14-year-old young person, who was easily led, was engaging in ASB with others on the estate. Although a natural leader, he had low self-confidence and aspirations for his future. Through mentoring, staff were able to work with him to identify his strengths and assets. They developed an action plan building on his talents to deliver tasks and get a sense of achievement. This included planning trips for others, using money management and being resourceful – skills he feels he can use in all aspects of his life.

The project engaged 6 young people in east Manchester. Each developed an action plan and a set of targets to achieve and showed very encouraging results on the 'youth star' measurement.

PREMIER LEAGUE KICKS – KEEPING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SAFE PROJECT

The other partners involved included: Manchester Youth Zone, Families Against Violence, Complex Safeguarding and Greater Manchester Police.

The Kicks project delivered sessions across Manchester consisting of footballing activities, swimming, gym access, boxing and multi-sports. Each session was delivered within communities with limited opportunities for young people, mostly in the evenings and at weekends. All of the sessions were delivered within secure environments, in community centres, leisure centres and schools, and all staff members are trained and qualified in sports and youth engagement. The emphasis is on staff delivering consistent messaging to young people around life choices and positive mindsets and behaviours, whilst also being role models to them.

Although the sessions were structured around a specific sport, the staff are able to build rapport with participants and become trusting figures for them in the local community. In addition to the

weekly sessions, young people were given wider opportunities to participate in, such as educational workshops, tournaments against other football clubs, attending MCFC and MCWFC games and progressing into the CITC volunteer programme.

Across the sessions in Manchester, most of the venues used have coaches that are from the community they are working in and therefore come with an awareness of local issues. This is one of the most important elements of the work, as well as keeping consistency in staffing as the young people felt safer with people they can relate to and trust.

The project engaged over 400 young people in Manchester each week in a range of activities, which effectively diverts those young people from negative activity. The coaches at the sessions also acted as informal mentors and helped the young people to work through issues and conflicts.

WYTHENSHAW YOUTH FORUM - KEEPING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SAFE PROGRAMME

The partners involved were the Wythenshawe Youth Alliance, Manchester-based charity Thrive and detached youth work organisation N-Gage.

The Youth Forum created Hackathons – small interactive workshops to engage young people in conversations around issues of knife crime and youth violence. The young people decided they would need to ask wider young people in the community three main questions in order to gather honest and valuable feedback: do young people think it is ok for other young people to carry knives? Why do young people not trust the authorities? And how can Wythenshawe be made safer for young people?

The Youth Forum used street stalls, advertising and a raffle to gather views. The result was a high level of voluntary participation from all the young people the project spoke to. The way the Youth Forum designed the hackathons allowed the project to be flexible in approach and take the workshop into schools, youth centres and other community facilities. The Forum also raised awareness amongst young people and professionals about the issues of youth violence and social action.

The young people really welcomed having a fun way to engage in dialogue about the issues that matter to them. The main messages coming from the young people were:

- Young people do not condone other young people carrying knives
- Young people have some real concerns about the impact of youth violence on their communities
- Young people also have concerns about how they are represented in society
- Young people felt violence is not the best way for young people to resolve conflicts
- Young people must be involved in the planning, delivery and evaluation of social action projects that impact on the communities in which they live.

KEEPING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SAFE PROJECT INVOLVING:

MAD THEATRE

ACTIVE COMMUNITIES NETWORK (ACN)

MANCHESTER YOUTH ZONE (MYZ)

NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH OF GOD (NTCG)

GROUNDWORK

YPAC

These partners established priority needs, areas and target groups together and bi-monthly meetings were used to plan work and share learning, resulting in a central learning and development report. The specific activity each partner undertook is listed below:

Mad Theatre

Ran 12 x 2 hour-long workshops exploring themes around youth violence. These were facilitated by 2 drama workers and 6 young mentors from Mad. 27 young people, predominantly girls, were referred to the project and built great relationships with the workers and mentors. The young ultimately people helped in the production of a play.

ACN

Basketball, football and boxing sessions at the Whitemoss Centre were used to engage over 20 young people per session. Coaches embedded in the community were vital to developing good relationships with the young people. The young people were referred to ACN's universal provision and other provisions in the local area when appropriate.

MYZ

Ran a 12 week-long cohort of the Junior Choices Project working with 10 new young people meeting relevant criteria and referred by external agencies. The project involved two families in the work and the young people were referred to universal provision where relevant.

NTCG

Worked with 3 families with children between 8-13 years of age referred by external agencies. The project built strong relationships helping the families to explore issues they wouldn't with social workers. This included families' fears about being treated according to how authorities perceived them rather than their reality.

Groundwork

Provided mentoring for 7 young people for an hour a week from the moment of external agency referral until the end of funding period. School attendance and positive behavior increased for those involved in the project and great relationships have been developed between the mentors and young people. There was a high number of referrals, showing a clear need.

YPAC

Ran one 3 hour-long detached session per-week in Collyhurst, Moston and Tavistock Square in Harpurhey to engage 60 young people. They also carried out light touch intervention with 36 young people and the relationships created have been very positive.

All of the projects were oversubscribed and reported families being more comfortable to engage when they knew the workers were not from the police or social services who many had low trust in.

5 X 5 – WATER ADVENTURE CENTRE - This project involved:

WATER ADVENTURE CENTRE – CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE IN A RANGE OF SETTINGS (BOTH MIXED AND SINGLE GENDER) AND YOUTH CLUBS BASED AT WAC OR IN THE COMMUNITY

NEWTON HEATH LIBRARY

TROYDALE RESIDENTS AND TENANTS ASSOCIATION

CLAYTON SURE START CENTRE

CLAYTON PARK

TAMESIDE YOUTH SERVICE

2/230TH MANCHESTER SCOUT GROUP

FREELANCE CREATIVE ARTIST MICHELLE UDOGU – “ROOTS OF EMOTION”

CANAL AND RIVER TRUST

BBC LIFELINE PROGRAMME

STREETGAME

This project met with groups of young people to have initial discussions about how safe young people felt in their lives and in the wider community. Common threads were stranger danger, cyber safety and the risks of sharing images online, county lines, street violence and knife crime, water safety and safety in the environment near the canal.

The project then worked with the young people to get their ideas on how these issues could be tackled and how they could feel safer. The results of this included:

Young Women's Evening

creative writing and art, workshops focused around cyber bullying, cyber safety, the risks of sharing images and talking to strangers online.

Clayton play clubs

stranger danger and community safety focused quizzes, puzzles, advice, and guidance, including information about safe places to go in the community.

Newton Heath

supported a community health day in the library focused on water safety, delivered a kayaking session on the canal and encouraged young people to become more active to support their holistic health and wellbeing.

WAC Youth Club

quizzes and discussions on forms of oppression and exploitation, county lines, knife crime and the consequences of criminal behaviour. Following the tragic death of a young person on the lock gates near to WAC in January, a key focus was also the dangers of the environment near to the canal and supporting young people around bereavement and their mental health.

Sunday Funday

self-expression and creative writing to explore feelings and emotions, using the written word and illustrations to produce a “Staying Safe” brochure.

As a result of these activities, the young people involved felt they had more of a voice, were better supported, more informed and had a safe place to go to try new activities. Over the longer term the project hopes to see sustained good levels of engagement and the young people continuing to feel they have more of a voice as they help plan the forward programme. For many involved, the project highlighted the importance of young people having access to decent youth and play services which allow, amongst other things, them to build relationships with trusted adults.

MANCHESTER YOUNG LIVES - JUNIOR PLAY WORKER PROJECT

Manchester Young Lives (MYL) trained 6 Junior Playworkers (young volunteers) to attend MYL play provision at the Moss Side Adventure Playground take a lead role in their Keeping Children and Young People Safe project.

The Junior Playworkers spoke to other children attending the play provision and helped them to complete surveys with the aim of finding out what concerns younger children have regarding their safety within the community. The top four concerns raised by the children aged 8 to 13 years were:

- Intimation from older young people
- BB guns
- Bullying
- Knife crime

Following the survey, MYL delivered a number of sessions to establish the real risk associated with these issues. For example, were they driven by personal experiences or fear stemming from media stories?

After these workshops the Junior Playworkers and staff put together a presentation on the findings with tips on how to avoid conflict and risky situations and where to go for advice.

The workshops worked well and resulted in a massive confidence boost for the 6 junior playworkers leading the project who have gone on to deliver presentations back in schools.

“Trust is the main thing for young people and professionals, apart from youth workers, I don’t trust. School just kicked me out and I was failed.”



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