

# To begin at the beginning

*A funders response to serious youth violence.  
Where are we now and where do we go next?*



# To begin...

The Public Health Approach, as practised in Glasgow from 2005, and explored in more depth on p.2, is rooted in the belief that violence is a disease and treating it as such produces results. This approach has been at the forefront of the Mayor of London's response and a background to and current plans for the Violence Reduction Unit can be found on p.4.

This has also informed the response taken so far by London Funders and our attempt to map members' work against public health interventions is outlined on p.23. A key driver for us in focussing on serious youth violence was the strong desire of our members to engage with and understand better the underlying causes and current responses. Building on intelligence from our member networks and involvement in cross sector partnerships we began to convene meetings on the issue from early 2018. These provided a space for funders and investors in London's civil society to explore further how they could best add value to this multi-layered issue.

From this work came a set of draft principles which were created to inform how Funders could approach work in this space. These and case studies of work that begin to explore them in practice make up the main body of this report. As you read through you will see that these principles advocate for a systemic approach to funding work that aims to reduce serious youth violence with the voices of young people and communities at its heart.

The questions and challenges which arose from conversations with our members made us examine what role we as London Funders need to be taking to rise to the demands exacted by serious youth violence. We hope that this report is a first step in placing the work of our members within a broader context and bringing together examples of practice to provide inspiration and encourage connections. We also hope that it will act as a catalyst for the next step of a coming together of funders who are committed to working purposefully to root these principles in action.

*We are at the beginning of a much longer journey together in the knowledge that this is a long-term challenge needing long-term thinking and solutions.*

Serious youth violence is not new, but it is important, complex and tragic.

In the first four months of 2019 eighteen young people<sup>1</sup> were killed in London<sup>2</sup>. For every one of them

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there are the people left behind. The mothers, fathers, brothers, sisters, friends and communities who are living with the trauma every day. And then there are the perpetrators. Often young people too. Often living lives that have been adversely affected by their childhood experiences. More lives marred by violence.

So what can be done? A huge amount of time and energy has gone in to trying to work out how to stop this 'epidemic of violence'<sup>3</sup>. To divert and prevent young people, to stop them coming to harm. Data, from a wide range of sources, point to the 'hotspots' where serious youth violence is taking place and the characteristics of those involved. But data only tells part of this intricate story. Communities are saying, repeatedly, *"You need to talk to us, we know what is happening, we are seeing it on the ground."* And underpinning the voices and the data are what many believe to be the systemic causes of serious youth violence: poverty and inequality which must be part of the narrative for any long-term solution.

*What is clear is that there needs to be a collaborative, joined up approach to serious youth violence which considers all the available evidence.*

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<sup>1</sup> Aged 25 and under <sup>2</sup> www.murdermap.co.uk, accessed 03/05/2019 <sup>3</sup> Grierson, J., (2019) Warnings of 'public health emergency' as violent crime surges, The Guardian, 19/07/2018, available at <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2018/jul/19/knife-crime-up-16-per-cent-england-and-wales>

# Public Health Approach to Reducing Violence

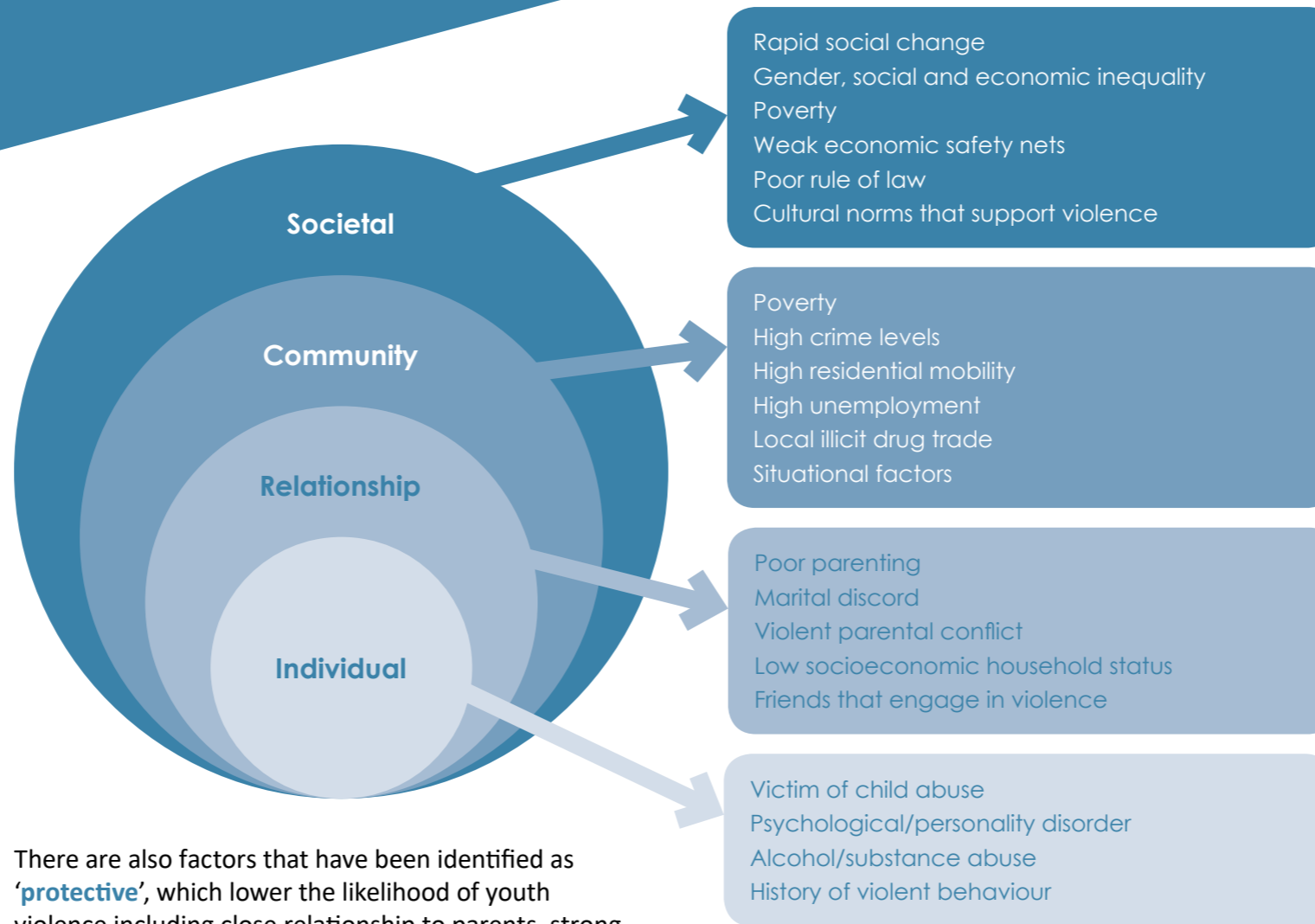
A public health approach to tackling violence means looking at violence not as an isolated incident or solely a police enforcement problem. Instead, this approach looks at violence as a preventable consequence of a range of factors, such as adverse early-life experiences, or harmful social or community experiences and influences<sup>4</sup>.

A public health approach takes a strategic, coordinated, long-term and evidence-based approach across a range of agencies, including cross sector partnerships spanning voluntary, statutory and private sector organisations working with communities. There is a focus on a defined population, often with a health risk in common e.g geography, common experiences, a health condition, or demographic characteristics, like age.

*'It seeks to improve the health and safety of all individuals by addressing underlying risk factors that increase the likelihood that an individual will become a victim or a perpetrator of violence.'*<sup>5</sup>

Risk factors<sup>6</sup> that are commonly identified as contributing to involvement in youth violence include:

- **individual** factors such as past exposure to violence;
- **relationship** factors included limited parental supervision;
- **community** factors such as housing instability; and
- **societal** factors including norms about the acceptability of violence.



There are also factors that have been identified as **'protective'**, which lower the likelihood of youth violence including close relationship to parents, strong ties to school and living in a non-deprived and non-violent neighbourhood.<sup>7</sup>

Central to the public health approach is the implementation of interventions that successfully address risk and protective factors in individuals, families and communities.

*"That means trying to make it not just about what happened with the stabbing on that day, but looking at the life story of the person in front of you, and the whole of the community in which that one day happened. It means looking at all the ways you can modify things in that life story, and that community, to make that day less likely to come."*

Dr Emer Sutherland, King's College Hospital<sup>8</sup>

These interventions can operate at different levels, sometimes described as primary (before violence happens), secondary (immediate response on identifying early signs) and tertiary (interventions targeted at obvious and harmful violence). These interventions can be universal; targeted selected (those more at risk) or targeted indicated (those who use violence)<sup>9</sup> - illustrated on the next page.

*"The exact way that the public health approach is implemented varies around the world, but the unifying thread is the idea of believing that people are capable of change and backing up this belief with investment. To be effective, it requires a degree of strategy and top-level input to accompany grassroots work."*<sup>10</sup>

## Scotland's Violence Reduction Unit (SVRU)

In 2005 Strathclyde Police set up a Violence Reduction Unit in Glasgow. The aim was to take a public health approach to reducing violence in a country which, according to a UN Report of the same year<sup>11</sup>, was the most violent in the developed world. In the early years of the VRU 15 young people were killed with knives in the city; between April 2011 and April 2016 none were.

Expanded into a national unit in 2006 the SVRU is directly funded by the Scottish Government with an annual budget of around a million pounds. Their team is made up of serving police officers, civilian police staff, experts and people with lived experience who work closely with partners across health, education, social work and many other fields.

*"The evidence from Scotland suggests that while knife crime, like most crimes, can never be eradicated, it need not be understood as an intractable, cultural feature of urban life. To successfully tackle it, however, there needs to be a shift in understanding of the root causes of the problem and, therefore, what a durable solution might look like."*<sup>12</sup>

[www.actiononviolence.org](http://www.actiononviolence.org)

## The Youth Violence Commission

In 2017 a Cross Party Commission was launched to examine the root causes of youth violence in Great Britain. The Commission, chaired by Vicky Foxcroft MP, has the support of MPs from across political parties but it is not funded by Government, nor is it an All-Party Parliamentary Group. Over the last two years the Commission has consulted with young people and worked with academics and practitioners to better understand how serious violence manifests itself in young people's lives.

In July 2018, the Commission produced its interim policy report<sup>13</sup> with recommendations on how to address serious youth violence. The key recommendation was to develop a Public Health Model with supporting recommendations on focussing on the early years and early intervention;

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.london.gov.uk/what-we-do/mayors-office-policing-and-crime-mopac/violence-reduction-unit-vru/public-health-approach-reducing-violence>

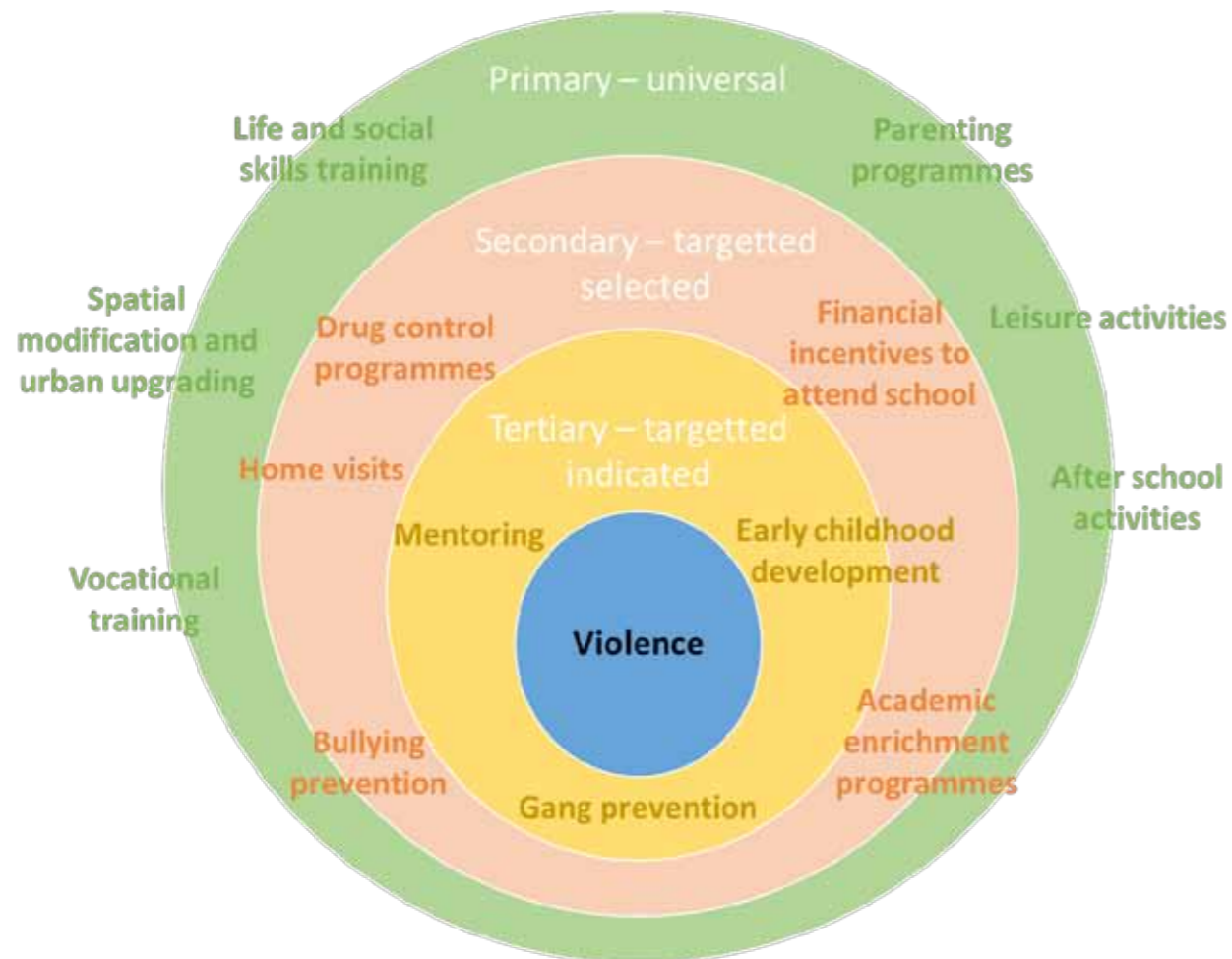
<sup>5</sup> World Health Organisation (2019), The Public Health Approach, [Online], at [https://www.who.int/violenceprevention/approach/public\\_health/en/](https://www.who.int/violenceprevention/approach/public_health/en/)

<sup>6</sup> World Health Organisation (2019), The Ecological Framework, [Online], Available at <https://www.who.int/violenceprevention/approach/ecology/en/>

<sup>7</sup> McNeish, D. & Scott, S., (2018), Tackling and preventing serious youth violence; a rapid evidence review for the Royal Foundation, DMSS

<sup>8</sup> Younge, G., (2019), Teenagers are being killed. But more policing is too simple an answer, The Guardian, 06/03/2019

<sup>9</sup> Chanon Consulting and Cordis Bright (2018), Public Health Approaches to Reducing Violence, Local Government Association



fundamentally reforming youth services; boosting support in schools; increasing employment opportunities and investing in community policing.

*“For a public health approach to be successful, it is crucial for the whole community to be consulted and for all relevant sectors to have a genuine voice at the table...There is no point consulting on any of this without Government commitment to more resources across our public services – from youth centres to the police, and from schools to hospitals. A public health approach to violence requires long-term, cross-governmental commitment and a focus on very early intervention.”* Vicky Foxcroft, MP<sup>14</sup>

Following City Hall’s announcement of the creation of the London Violence Reduction Unit in September 2018 the Commission has focussed much of its resource and effort on supporting its initial development. However, the Commission has national reach and will continue to develop recommendations that affect the whole country. A final report is due to be published in Autumn 2019.

[www.yvcommission.com](http://www.yvcommission.com)

### London’s Violence Reduction Unit (VRU)

The London VRU is currently in the mobilisation phase, work steered by a Partnership Reference Group including representatives from City Hall, policing, health, education, probation, the SVRU, Borough Councils, London Funders and from London’s communities. Lib Peck has been appointed as the Director and a staff team is being recruited. Work is underway to engage with London’s communities, stakeholders, practitioners and funders to explore collaborative opportunities. A Strategic Needs Assessment on violence for London and a review of Homicides has been commissioned to develop the evidence base for the Unit.

*“Violence has been increasing in London and nationally since 2014, taking a tragic toll on individuals, families and communities across the city. Bringing it down has been the urgent priority for this Mayorality and for the Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police. Huge investment from the Mayor, combined with a concerted collective effort from partner agencies and communities, has gone into strengthened efforts on enforcement, diversion and*

*prevention. However, we recognise that the roots of violent crime run deep and that efforts to tackle the immediate problem give no guarantees of long-term reductions. Over the last 15 years in London, we have seen violence peak, trough and peak again. It is clear that a different, much longer-term view is needed if we are to make a lasting change for the better.*

*We believe that violence is preventable – and that to do so, public bodies, voluntary groups and communities must work more closely and take a public health approach - getting ahead of the problem, identifying and addressing the factors such as: poverty; mental health needs; drug and alcohol abuse; adverse childhood experiences, domestic abuse and social alienation that can increase an individual’s risk of perpetrating or victimisation.*

The Unit has developed three strategic aims:

- *Stabilising and reducing violence across London – violence is a concern for us all; we will all play our part to reduce it.*
- *Empowering Londoners to stay safe, united and inclusive – London’s strength lies in its young people and their contributions to the city, it’s diverse and vibrant communities, and the willingness of those who live in London to work together.*
- *Aligning attitudes and perceptions of violence with reality – recognising that London is one of the safest cities in the world. We will take an asset-based approach, building on and learning from what is working here.*

*The Unit is adopting a public health approach to identify the causes of violence, to use evidence and data to inform activity, and through effective partnership to develop and implement a series of interventions to interrupt and prevent cycles of violence.”*<sup>15</sup>

[www.london.gov.uk/what-we-do/mayors-office-policing-and-crime-mopac/violence-reduction-unit-vru](http://www.london.gov.uk/what-we-do/mayors-office-policing-and-crime-mopac/violence-reduction-unit-vru)

# Principles

Amongst this detailed and dynamic context and in recognition of the complexity of serious youth violence members agreed that it would be helpful to develop a set of principles to guide their work and underpin a shared ethos. A small working group formed of the National Lottery Community Fund, Children in Need, the London Community Foundation, The Royal Foundation of the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge and the Duke and Duchess of Sussex (TRF) and London Funders worked together to craft these draft principles which will continue to evolve as we learn more.

- 1. Listen:** Embed the voices of young people and communities at the heart of our approach by engaging at every stage of the process
- 2. Co-produce:** Facilitate the genuine participation of young people and communities working as equals with power alongside other professionals, academics and policy makers
- 3. Cooperate:** Seek out opportunities to work in partnership, and support others to do this too, building on insight about what works.
- 4. Consider:** Understand the context, needs and assets of people, communities and organisations before committing investment.
- 5. Learn:** Develop work based on existing evidence and be responsive to new learning
- 6. Commit:** Recognise that the issues young people and communities face need long-term support and investment combined with immediate action
- 7. Share:** Contribute intelligence about future plans, the impact of current funding and learning from past work
- 8. Support:** Know that the people delivering this work need investment in their wellbeing and resilience too and this should be acknowledged in our funding programmes
- 9. Recognise:** Acknowledge that current funding practice is disjointed and can add to complexity tasking us to develop approaches that create transparency and clarity

These principles signal a desire to significantly shift the power balance, think strategically and work as reflective partners. Over the next 17 pages we detail the experience and practice of our members who have begun to explore how to work in this way. For some, a particular principle has informed the way they have operated for years, for others the exploration of a principle marks the beginning of a new way of working.

# Listen

Embed the voices of young people and communities at the heart of our approach by engaging at every stage of the process

*“It’s a problem as we are at least one removed from the work. I’m also not sure we have the expertise or experience to do this meaningfully but I’m sure there are others who are better placed. We rely on the organisations we fund to have those voices at the heart of their work and that is part of our assessment process.”*

The need for funders to be clear about who is involved and why was also strongly made. Who are the voices that are being listened to and who are they speaking on behalf of?

*“One 16-year-old doesn’t hold all the answers. Who are the young people you are talking to and are they the ‘right’ young people? We need to be really careful about this.”*

The demand that young people and communities are listened to and the frustration when these voices are not heard is a constant factor in the ongoing conversation on serious youth violence and how to tackle it.

This is a challenging issue for members, aware of the pressing need to have these expert voices at the centre of decision making but grappling with the best way to enable that voice.



Photo from Young Westminster Foundation

## Young Westminster Foundation (YWF)

In April 2018 YWF published their 'City Within a City'<sup>16</sup> report which was a needs analysis of children and young people aged from 8-25 in the borough.

*"This was our attempt to understand the areas of concern and opportunity for our young people.*

*Seventeen peer researchers consulted with young people through one-to-one interviews, focus groups and surveys. Four key themes emerged including 'Crime and Safety' with one in three of the young people involved saying they did not feel safe. The most commonly held fear was gangs (30%) and the threat of being attacked (26%).*

*Based on this direct learning from young people we saw we had a role to play in raising awareness and enabling diversionary activities, delivered in partnership with local schools and youth clubs as well as working with The Safer Westminster Partnership. Our first step was in the distribution of our small grants programme designed to support grassroots member organisations with 'Accessing Opportunities' and 'Staying Safe' two of our four priorities.*

*Our CEO, Phil Barron, also sits on the Westminster Serious Youth Violence Taskforce, a cross sector group made up of a variety of agencies across the Borough. As part of supporting this work and building on the listening undertaken in our report we undertook a series of conversations with young men aged 12-16, predominantly from Beachcroft Academy, a pupil referral unit in the borough.*

*"Young people have become used to the gang culture that surrounds them. They see it as a normal aspect of their life and it is something that they have learnt to live with. The situation with youth violence and knife crime are understood by young people. They are well aware of the outcomes and know that it will affect their futures when they want to build a career and have financial security. We discussed with young people the solutions for making Westminster a better place for young people to feel safe. The main answer that stood out was to keep youth centres open."*

*Responding to the outcome of our needs analysis, as part of the #MyWestminster Programme Westminster City Council commissioned us in 2018 to run the*

*Staying Safe Programme, designed to raise awareness of the impact of crime on young victims. The aim is both to support young people who are victims of crime but also to break the 'victim to perpetrator' cycle. As a result two youth clubs working in areas of Westminster disproportionately affected by crime will receive specialist training from Victim Support and Redthread and work with young people from 8 to 25.*

*More recently, the Taskforce have agreed to explore the potential of a small scale Public Health Approach to serious youth violence pilot with year 5 and 6 primary school children and their parents working in the Church Street area, which is in the 10% most deprived wards in the UK. This project will involve a community-led approach working with teachers, youth workers, police officers, community champions and the local authority.*

*We are committed to giving children and young people a voice in leading the YWF model, through our young ambassadors' peer research, consultation and service design. This ensures that our strategy and programmes are current and respond well to their needs."*

## The Royal Foundation

*"We began working in St Ann's, Nottingham in 2014 following a year of discussions with young people and community groups. Young people were clear about what the issues were and ambitious about how to make significant, long-term change happen. The resulting programme is called Full Effect and is delivered by two local organisations: Epic Partners and the Community Recording Studio. Together they provide careful support and a range of activities and opportunities for children aged eight to 25 years old, both in school and out.*

*We know that we have learnt a huge amount from Full Effect and wanted to use these lessons to help us consider whether to extend our youth violence programme to a different setting. And so, we have been listening to a panel of young people from London who have experience of youth violence. They have talked about the issues they are facing, moments when they needed help (whether or not they received it), and what they value most about the support they have received – mostly from a number of excellent charities. We responded to the panel's frustration with*

*the pace of change by organising a meeting between the youth panel and funders who are already actively supporting work on youth violence. This allowed the panel to set the agenda, to lead the conversation and to speak directly to funders about solutions.*

***What we are hearing loud and clear from the panel is that they want to see change and they want to be part of delivering that change.***

*We know from Full Effect that letting young people lead – albeit with careful support – allows other young people to join confidently. We hope to continue working with the youth panel in order to learn how best to support existing efforts in London, to co-create local solutions to youth violence and to open doors to opportunities that they wish to pursue."*



# Co-produce

Facilitate the genuine participation of young people and communities working as equals with power alongside other professionals, academics and policy makers

Co-production is built on relationships of trust and respect creating ownership and the potential to develop truly sustainable work. It takes significant time, commitment and energy. It is also often very difficult to find funding for as it's not possible to determine clear outputs and outcomes from the start.

*"Because you are working with people who have been personally implicated by the issues the stakes are raised. There is a strong sense of not wanting to let people down. This increases the need to be transparent about what is feasible within the process and to manage expectations. It is also important to acknowledge the experience and expertise that practitioners bring and that all the people in the room have an equal stake."*

Camden Council has begun this process, exploring ways to work collaboratively with the community precipitated by the deaths of four young men in the borough.

*"Since December 2016 there have been four murders of young people under 25 in Camden. In the last year, there were one hundred victims of knife crime with injury in the borough. Camden residents have expressed their deep shock and distress about what is happening in their local area, and the Somali community in particular has felt the devastating impact of this increase in youth violence, with three of the four most recent murders being young Somali men."*

The Youth Safety Taskforce was created in response to this increase in youth violence incidents in the borough. Its aim was to study the underlying causes

and identify what more could be done to keep Camden's young people safe. Youth offending is not an isolated issue and overlaps with many other things that people see and experience every day. The Taskforce carried out extensive engagement with young people, parents and residents, health professionals, the police and public sector partners, and the voluntary sector including faith and community groups, as well as studying detailed research to learn from what has worked elsewhere. Hundreds of individuals were spoken to directly, or engaged with online, in order to develop the final report<sup>17</sup>.

**What we have observed as part of this process is that the community sector is really robust and resilient. Groups have been able to collaborate and take a lead on key implementations. Community centres were able to work with residents; schools with students and parents. Faith groups provided venues and residents were able to mobilise effectively. This occurred organically and we were able to facilitate and support as opposed to lead.**

The learning from this work directly informed the creation of our Youth Safety Fund. This programme, the first round of which closed at the end of March 2019, is intended to support a whole community approach to tackle youth violence. The projects funded must be a partnership between at least two organisations and young people will be involved in the grant making panels awarding the funding. Another round will open later in 2019 or early 2020. This is a new way of funding - that the council has to apply for funds in the same way as the voluntary and community sector which is indicative of changing the power dynamic in relation to funding. This, alongside the work of Camden Community Impacts which works with local voluntary and community organisations to tackle some of the most complex issues in Camden, has resulted in an investment of up to £1million going in to support community responses to serious youth violence and youth offending in Camden.

*We strongly believe that working together with the community will make us better at tackling some of our biggest problems in the borough. The Council is increasingly looking at ways to work more collaboratively, building on the strengths of local people and growing the capability of communities to achieve their ambitions."*



# Cooperate

*Seek out opportunities to work in partnership and support others to do this too, building on insight about what works*

*“This work is so dependent on relationships and personalities. We also need to be totally honest about how our organisations work and be transparent from the beginning.”*

There was a huge amount of support for cooperation and collaboration during conversations with members but they also emphasised how hard it could be with competing agendas, perspectives and priorities standing in the way.

*“There is an ongoing conversation about what working together could mean and the difference that this could make. We are trying to walk the walk but it is hard to go in to a process with a blank sheet of paper, checking preconceptions and biases and not retreating behind organisational structures and protocols.”*

**The Hyde Foundation** and **Battersea Power Station Foundation (BPSF)** started working together in 2016 after meeting at a Lambeth Funders Forum hosted by London Funders.

*“We shared a joint concern around the rising levels of youth related violence in the Borough of Lambeth. BPSF had completed a community needs assessment which evidenced that youth related violence was a particular issue in Lambeth. The Hyde Foundation, the community investment arm of the Hyde Housing Group, had seen an increase in youth related violence and crime in and around its large social housing estates in Stockwell and Kennington.*

*Over the next two years we worked together to better understand the causes of youth related violence. We jointly funded an outreach project that was delivered*

*on the Kennington Park Estate to build trust with the young people involved in or at risk of violence and hear from them directly. We also worked strategically with a range of partners including the Youth Violence Commission to inform our understanding and approach. Through this process both organisations built a greater level of trust and a strong relationship based on a shared vision to reduce youth violence in the borough.*

*By 2018 we had developed relationships with a range of local delivery partners and the local community. We*

*worked together with these partners to generate a hyper local place-based programme that would address the complex issues associated with youth violence. We took on board the public health approach advocated at a strategic level that demonstrated that seeing violence through a health lens can better inform how you treat it. Based on this we have now initiated a range of inter-linked projects that have as their building blocks - local community and youth voice, multi-stakeholder engagement and a three-year funding commitment including additional funding from the Mayor’s Young Londoners Fund and Optivo Housing.*

*Currently we are in the process of establishing regular multi stakeholder quarterly meetings, exploring more innovative evaluation processes and we have just commissioned a specific youth voice and participation*

*project to ensure we continue to listen and respond to young people.*

**We believe there are times when individual efforts simply are not enough to address complex social problems, collaboration can yield results beyond what any one funder could accomplish alone.**

*Putting aside our own organisational identities and working for a common purpose has been important for our success. Taking a partnership approach has fostered passion and commitment and a willingness to work differently. For both funders we see the benefit being that we can generate new ways of working, achieve more together, maximise resources, learn from one another and create community led solutions that we trust will lead to greater sustainability.”*



Photo from The Hyde Foundation and Battersea Power Station Foundation



# Consider

Understand the context, needs and assets of people, communities and organisations before committing investment

*“As a funder you should have a grounded experience of what is going on: get out there and talk to people and community organisations. We need to take more risks, looking way beyond finances and application forms - what is the context that these people are working in.”*

For place-based foundations this felt like a natural approach but was significantly more challenging for those funders who operated pan-London or nationally. Many members echoed the widely held view that what is needed is a ‘hyper-local’ approach to serious youth violence using data and evidence to identify those areas where support is needed most and then taking a holistic approach to funding work within those areas.

The **London Community Foundation (LCF)** believes in supporting communities to identify and deliver solutions to the problems and need that they see locally.

*“For many years LCF has supported organisations working with young people who are struggling and at risk of negative lifestyles due to a wide range of factors; from poverty to lack of educational support to lack of prospects. Community organisations have the trust, knowledge, compassion and expertise to deliver intense front-line work to address the causes and cures for violence among young people in the community. However, they are hugely under resourced. **We believe that LCF’s role in supporting a community response to youth violence is to build the capacity and resilience of the community organisations who are directly responding to youth violence, linking them in to a wider pan London response while keeping community at the heart.**”*

*We have been working on this issue since 2015 with multiple partners.*

*In 2018 through our partnership with MOPAC, we awarded grants to 43 community organisations through the MOPAC Knife Crime Seed Funding initiative. After months of research and interviews with community organisations, in March 2018 we published *The Violence Virus*<sup>18</sup>, which took recommendations from the community and advocates for a joined up, long term, community-based response to youth violence.*

*As a result of our knowledge and research, we identified four immediate priorities for addressing youth violence: 1) Providing trauma support 2) addressing increasing levels of school exclusions 3) providing support for families and 4) providing meaningful alternatives through employment and enterprise opportunities. The Evening Standard Dispossessed Fund Save London Lives initiative advocated for a public health approach and highlighted the importance of supporting community led responses in London. Through the partnership with the Evening Standard, the initiative attracted donations from corporate partners and individual donors. We designed and delivered two rounds of funding awarding two-year grants to local organisations responding to the priorities above. We also fundraised to deliver a capacity building programme to run alongside the grants programme, to build the operational capability and resilience of the organisations as well as to enable them to network and share learning.*

*Since March 2018 we have awarded 43 grants through the MOPAC Knife Crime Seed fund and a further 41 grants via two rounds of Save London Lives. We have a third round of Save London Lives due to open in the Spring 2019.*

*Across London we are seeing disturbingly high levels of violence in our young communities. There appears to be consensus across sectors that something needs to be done. LCF will continue to support and advocate*

*for a community response to support those actively dealing with the complex range of issues associated with violence.”*

## Youth Endowment Fund

In March 2019 it was announced that the Home Office funded Youth Endowment Fund would be delivered by youth charity Impetus in partnership with the Early Intervention Foundation and Social Investment Business.

*“The Youth Endowment Fund is a bold new attempt to put early intervention at the heart of efforts to tackle youth offending. It will support programmes and community partnerships working with children at risk of being drawn into crime and violence and build up our knowledge of what works to prevent that. Focusing on 10-14 year olds across England and Wales with a total fund of £200m over 10 years it aims to prevent children and young people from getting caught up in crime and violence by making sure that those at most risk get the best possible support, as early as possible, to get on a positive path and succeed.*

*The Youth Endowment Fund will do this by:*

- Finding, supporting and evaluating programmes working with young people most at risk of involvement in crime and violence - providing funding, capacity building and evaluation support*
- Generating and promoting new knowledge and practice to transform local and national responses to tackling youth offending, and supporting the best evidenced programmes to have an even greater impact*
- Developing an approach to working with local communities to prevent youth offending - driving long term, sustainable change in those communities*

*The Youth Endowment Fund will run three to five grant rounds a year, which may be themed around types of intervention, like mentoring; groups of young people, such as children in the care system; or specific*

*outcomes, like exclusion prevention. However, the first grant round, to be launched late Spring 2019, will be an open call round.*

***As the role of the fund is to develop knowledge of what works, all programmes will be evaluated, with the most promising funded to undertake randomised control trials and where they show impact, to grow to reach more young people.***

*The Youth Endowment Fund is currently in set-up phase, hiring staff, setting up governance structures and preparing to launch its first funding round. They are undertaking a review of existing evidence on preventing youth offending, and analysis to identify the cohort of children and young people, and the desired outcomes, that the Youth Endowment Fund will target.*

*The Youth Endowment Fund will also be actively seeking to work in partnership with other funders and organisations, to ensure the work both builds on the experience and expertise of others and also complements existing initiatives and programmes.”*

Develop work based on existing evidence and be responsive to new learning

The concept of learning and building work on evidence felt very comfortable to many members. Support around where to access the best learning, including the most relevant data sources, was seen to be a key area for London Funders.

**The Berkeley Foundation's** Community Investment Fund is aimed at supporting innovation and building evidence of what works. The team is currently in the early stages of designing a funding programme which will support young people at risk of serious youth violence, taking a preventative, skills-based approach. This will fall under one of the Foundation's four themes: 'The Skills to Succeed'.

*"A number of the Berkeley Foundation's existing charity partnerships work with young people considered to be at risk of serious youth violence. Since 2012, it has been working with The Change Foundation to deliver Street Elite, which uses sport to get young people on the edge of gangs and crime back into education or employment. The team's learning from existing programmes, and developing knowledge of current social challenges, has been a catalyst for developing a specific funding programme to address the issue of serious youth violence."*

*The Foundation is using existing evidence to build up its knowledge base and help focus its programme. Members of the team have actively engaged in the London Funders' Serious Youth Violence Network as well as the GLA's community engagement workshops. Discussions with other funders have also added to the learning journey, helping them to identify gaps in funding and consider opportunities for collaboration.*

*The Public Health Approach has been particularly helpful in identifying soft skills development as a valuable intervention.*

*Although in the early stages of programme design, the team's learning to date has encouraged them to actively consider adapting their approach to grant-making for the serious youth violence space, including considerations around:*

- *the length of grant;*
- *collaboration with other funders; and*
- *how to incorporate youth voice into their processes.*

*Becoming a learning organisation is a key priority under the Foundation's 2018 – 2021 strategic plan. As part of this, it has committed to creating and piloting a learning programme which will provide space for its partners to share, reflect and develop their work."*

## Clothworkers' Foundation

Like The Berkeley Foundation the Clothworkers' Foundation has a background in supporting young people affected by issues aligned to serious youth violence. Their £1.25m proactive Better Futures initiative was set up in 2013, largely in light of and in response to the economic recession which had had a disproportionate effect on many young people, and the 2011 riots which highlighted the need for more services for those young people most affected by the downturn.

*"The overriding aim of Better Futures was to support work which aimed to address some of the underlying causes of the riots, and which offered effective, long-term solutions. Its geographical focus was on urban and/or inner city areas where there was clear evidence of deprivation and projects were funded across a range of areas including education, training and employability; young offenders and/or ex-offenders; young people affected by alcohol/*

*drug misuse and young people with mental health issues. Four of the seven Better Futures grants awarded were awarded for work involving London including the Stephen Lawrence Charitable Trust; Making the Leap; ReachOut and YMCA England.*

*In 2018, we commissioned an independent evaluation of Better Futures which found that the initiative had succeeded in meeting its objectives but posed a key question of 'whether this is a job well done or well started?' One of the evaluation's key conclusions was that sustained funding could provide much-needed continuity:*

*"The feedback from each of the projects has been hugely positive, but something we see across this*

*research and our other work is the importance of security, and continuity in the lives of young people. More than ever, it seems important that the voices of young people are heard, and are part of forming and shaping the programmes, activities and services which serve them. But is this possible only with the support of people and organisations they trust, rather than those which are transient and uncertain? The challenge is in providing sustained support to weather turbulent times ahead".<sup>19</sup>*

*Based on this learning in July 2018, we allocated a further £1.25m to extend Better Futures with grants to be awarded in Spring 2019. In extending we will consider continuation funding for some of the work previously funded by us whilst also exploring new possibilities."*



Photo from The Clothworkers' Foundation

Recognise that the issues young people and communities face need long-term support and investment combined with immediate action

The need for long term investment was understood and supported but many members were frustrated by the cyclical nature of their funding which did not often allow them to fund outside of their normal cycles. A different way of approaching the issue of commitment was to think about it as an ethos and a mindset as opposed to a purely financial investment.

Since 2008 **Lewisham Council** has invested substantial resource in to tackling the issue of violence with the belief now that a whole system, holistic response is essential to having both a short and long term impact on violence.

*“Built on a range of evidence we have developed a collective partnership approach. This has identified a set of essential components for how we work including: the welfare of children needing always to be at the heart of our approach; understanding that a focus on deficits leads to negative perceptions and reducing fear, harm and re-victimisation is critical.*

***We now take a trauma-informed approach which recognises the impact trauma has on an individual’s development and responses; a restorative approach which recognises that language used impacts significantly on a person’s self-purpose and a recognition that unconscious bias must not impact on decision-making or behaviours.***

*We know that exposure to violence has significant, long lasting effects on our young people, families and the wider community and working alongside communities to develop local approaches is key. We know that many people in our community are worried about young people, have felt the effects of*

*violence in their neighbourhoods, and want to play a more active role in keeping young people safe.*

*We have recently developed a Community Champions programme which will bring together people motivated by this issue to understand better where and how they want to engage. This could be local people, business owners, parents, professionals and practitioners who work with young people on a daily basis. The programme will provide Champions with an understanding of some of the issues we experience in Lewisham and an overview of the Lewisham approach as well as information on local service provision, useful resources, and advice for signposting to local services. The aim is that the Community Champions are seen as people who can be talked to about violence; we see an increase in community-led initiatives and projects aimed at keeping young people safe and there is an improved awareness of the support there is available locally.*

*We believe we are seeing the early signs of the impact our work is having including reductions in serious offending and youth custody; an adoption of the model by the wider education, health and social care partnership and increased capacity and resilience in our staff through the shared ethos, high quality training and staff development.”*

## John Lyons’ Charity

John Lyons’ Charity also commit to organisations for the long term, developing deep, long lasting relationships on the ground combined and responding to immediate need, when they can, when it arises. Since 1991 they have distributed c.£150 million in grants for work supporting children and young people aged 0-25 in North and West London.

*“We do, and will, fund work that responds to the immediate issues that are at the forefront of serious youth violence, including work focussed around the*

*criminal justice system, gangs and drug use. But our ethos is firmly rooted in early intervention informed by the belief that the more care, support and opportunity a child receives as early as possible, the higher the likelihood that they will achieve positive outcomes.*

*To this end we fund a huge range of work, including parenting programmes, holiday schemes and summer holiday activities. Fun is not something that is spoken about often when talking about interventions for children and young people but we believe that providing opportunities to have new experiences, ones that they may remember for the rest of the lives, and broaden horizons is incredibly valuable in seeking positive outcomes.*

*Our belief is that good quality, local provision is essential and we support organisations and projects that build communities. We engage and visit all our grantees and feel that we have a good understanding of work ‘on the ground’. We know, too, that as well as through deep partnership working with the voluntary sector, good quality provision works. We believe the voluntary sector is part of the solution and we don’t need new evidence to tell us that.*

*A youth clubs and youth work and are core to our approach. We see youth centres as spaces - distinct from school, the streets or home – where children and young people can feel safe, enjoy themselves and make mistakes in a non-judgemental but guided environment. We invest in groups like London Youth to support development of initiatives like the Quality Mark in order that high quality provision is nurtured, achieved and maintained. We have also created Young Peoples’ Foundations to help support, develop and professionalise the sector.*

*We are mindful that issues and challenges do not resolve in three year cycles. We are flexible in our approach and will be responsive to the needs that present themselves. We will also fund core costs, allowing work to embed and develop.*

***We take a holistic view of young peoples’ lives and believe investing early is the right approach whilst remaining aware of the need to be responsive to urgent issues that require immediate focus and attention.”***



Photo from John Lyons’ Charity, credit Geoff Wilson - showing Caxton Youth Organisation

Every year the NLCF distributes over £600 million to communities across the UK, making circa 11,000 grants and they help communities to thrive by putting people in the lead. They have developed a strategic approach to tackling serious youth violence across the Fund, alongside other funders and informed by the Voluntary & Community Sector – looking at both the work that is being done and where a shift in behaviours and funding is required.

*“Our approach puts young people at the heart of developing locally based solutions to the challenges they face. Our funding operates across three stages of a young person’s life: prevention, early intervention and mitigation.”*

- *Prevention: Taking early action to prevent problems later on. Our £215m programme A Better Start aims to deliver better life chances to children aged 0-3, recognising the importance of positive outcomes during the early years.*
- *Early Intervention: In early adolescence there is the opportunity to address emerging issues. Our £58 million early intervention programme HeadStart operates in 114 schools across England exploring ways to improve young people’s mental health and wellbeing.*
- *Mitigation: Targeted activity through youth charities and community organisations can support young people at real risk of exposure to violence.*
- *Young People and Communities in the Lead: When people are in the lead, communities thrive. We are building a network of young people who can inform, advise and decide on the direction of our support as well as enable us to amplify their voices to other stakeholders.*
- *Long Term Commitment: Quick fixes cannot 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.*

*These principles shape our approach which focuses on the four action areas below:*

- *Youth Voice: Young people are too often absent from the conversation. We are meeting with young people from across the country in order to listen to and understand challenges from their perspective. We are also funding two agencies working directly with young people in England to identify what in their view works in addressing the dangers of serious violence. We will use this work to further design funding support moving forward.*
- *Strategic Partnerships: We are developing partnerships with public private and voluntary sector organisations. We are also actively working with other funders to create greater impact and share learning.*
- *Our Funding: Since 2017 we have awarded over £170 million to projects that support young people. We fund strategic interventions to employment and local programmes and we also fund specific interventions to inform policy and practice. This includes the University of Bedfordshire, led by Dr Carlene Firmin, spearheading a progressive shift in practice in child protection systems within local authorities. The development of the Contextualised Safeguarding Framework looks into the different relationships that young people develop in their neighbourhoods, schools and online - many of which often expose them to violence and abuse.*
- *Insights and Impact: In our report ‘Preventing Youth Violence- what works?’<sup>20</sup> we have gathered insights and examples from the VCS. And this is just the beginning, we are working with partners across this issue to share, data, insight and learnings so that we can all work together to make a bigger impact.”*

# Share

*Contribute intelligence about future plans, the impact of current funding and learning from past work*

Members are keen to share and contribute information about what they’re doing. London Funders ability to convene sector meetings and help disseminate learning was felt to be invaluable in supporting this principle. Members who worked for smaller organisations wanted to be meaningfully involved with what was happening in larger organisations and help to inform design and delivery. Conversely those from larger organisations appreciated and recognised the value of the deep understanding of communities and place that smaller organisations could bring.

The Mayor of London’s £45m Young Londoners Fund aims to provide a range of positive activities for young people, particularly those that are at risk of being caught up in crime. Partnership working and sharing has been integral to the Fund, both in its design and delivery.

*“The GLA has worked closely with key stakeholders, including London Councils and other youth funders, in the development of the fund. In preparation for the launch of the fund the GLA invited key stakeholders to a roundtable discussion. This helped shape the criteria, aims and objectives of the fund and ensured they were informed by local needs and priorities and aligned with other funding opportunities available across London.*

*One of the areas identified by other external funders at the roundtable was the need for additional support particularly for smaller organisations. Following this the £2m Impact for Youth programme was developed, co-funded by City Bridge Trust, which aims to support the capacity and capability of organisations. As part of this programme the Young Londoners Fund Local*

*Networks support projects to link in with existing local provision and promote their offer to young people. They also support organisations interested in applying for round two of the Fund.*

*Round one of the Young Londoners Fund was hugely over-subscribed, it was therefore vital that we selected projects that were community focused and based on good practice and evidence of previous delivery. A range of external funders were involved in the scoring and decision-making panels. Their knowledge and insight were invaluable, and it also provided an opportunity for them to see the great work happening across the youth sector in London.*

*The GLA has shared learning from the Young Londoners Fund both externally and internally and we are using this learning actively to inform round two due to launch in May 2019, examples of this include:*

- *Sharing unsuccessful applications with other funders – over 50 unsuccessful applicants agreed for us to share their applications with another funder, who has followed up with six of these applicants to gain more information on their proposed projects. Due to the success of this collaboration in round two we will be seeking permission from all applicants to be able to share their applications with other funders.*
- *Support for unsuccessful organisations – in partnership with other funders we have held three Project Development Workshops for unsuccessful applicants. These workshops focused on the areas that applicants told us they struggled with most and had representation from other youth funders who gave an update on their funding opportunities. We have also useful resources and feedback for unsuccessful applicants on our website [www.london.gov.uk/young-londoners-fund](http://www.london.gov.uk/young-londoners-fund).*

*This approach has provided us with a breadth of knowledge and experience that we will continue to build on over the lifetime of the programme. “*

# Support

Know that the people delivering this work need investment in their wellbeing and resilience too and this should be acknowledged in our funding programmes

Grantees have been reporting back to funders that increased pressures, complexity and demand at the frontline of London's civil society organisations, in their management, and in the people who are working to support service delivery, is leading to concerns about the resilience of the staff and volunteers. These concerns cut across funding themes but are of particular and immediate relevance to those organisations that are supporting communities affected by serious youth violence.

In April 2019 London Funders launched a discussion paper on the role of funders in the resilience of people in community facing organisations<sup>21</sup> with **City Bridge Trust** as a key partner.

*"The resilience of frontline workers has been very much in our thinking for the last few years. One of our colleagues was seconded to the London Emergencies Trust in 2017 to support the distribution of funding to bereaved or injured people after the Grenfell Tower Disaster and the terrorist attacks that took place the same year. This brought home the impact on people at the frontline who were working with people presenting with extreme trauma. Shortly after that, on a visit to a woman's advice and support organisation we were told that their frontline staff were being overwhelmed with the information being presented to them by beneficiaries. They were trying to find support for them, in the same way that their clinical staff received clinical supervision but could not access the appropriate support or the funding to go with it.*

*This was also an issue that began to be discussed more broadly and was the topic at a London Funder's Children and Young Peoples' network in 2018. This cemented our belief that this was a cross-sector issue*

*and with the support of London Funders and a small number of other interested Foundations we convened a meeting to explore what our collective response to this issue could be. At this point it was difficult to make a case as there was no model that we could hang any future working on and therefore no clear evidence of impact. There were also questions around what resilience is and how it overlaps and intersects with mental health, safeguarding and HR practice.*

*However, the fact that there was both a clear demonstration of the need from the sector as well as a recognition of that need from other funders provided momentum internally. It was agreed in March 2019 that a pilot programme which aims to enhance the resilience of frontline workers in voluntary organisations would be launched as one of our 'Ideas Please' open calls. As part of the five year Bridging Divides strategy we can use an open call to the sector to invite proposals on an issue that we feel needs further exploration.*

*The resilience 'Ideas Please' will launch on May 14th as part of Mental Health Awareness week. We're hoping to support up to eight organisations to explore the question of how to best support the resilience of frontline workers. Research is central to this and the programme will be supported by an evaluator who will work with each organisation to understand the difference the projects are making. We really hope to get a good mix of organisations that represent the breadth of the sector as well as different sizes of organisation and a range of approaches to tackling resilience support.*

*The projects will all run from October 2019 until March 2020 with initial findings presented during Mental Health Awareness week 2020. We hope at this stage to be able to provide enough evidence that a credible case can be made to other funders that this is important and needed work as well as providing the beginnings of an approach to supporting resilience for the sector more broadly."*

# Recognise

Acknowledge that current funding practice is disjointed and can add to complexity tasking us to develop approaches that create transparency and clarity

The truth of this principle was widely accepted. The lack of clarity was a frustration for funders, with engrained organisational requirements regularly cited as a major block to creating a more transparent approach. Often the desire to enact this principle was conflated with process and the broader sector conversation around joint tools like a shared application form or combined funding pot.

Although process is important, particularly for groups and organisations confronted with a multitude of different forms and questions, members did feel there were other ways in to this conversation. For example, the impact of a shared language and ethos was explored and how powerful it is when a sector is speaking as one.

*"When we went to Glasgow and saw a very uniform response from agencies about what they were doing everything felt joined up and that people were genuinely working together and speaking the same language."*

**This principle has been key to London Funders approach to serious youth violence. We knew that there was a lot of activity going in the sector and wanted to find a way to raise that up to make connections and increase impact.**

Our first step was to attempt to map the work that funders were already doing in this space against a range of interventions linked to the public health approach. In summer 2018 we surveyed members to see what they were funding and planning to fund against four overarching areas: parenting and early childhood development strategies; school-based academic and social skills development strategies;

strategies for young people at higher risk of, or already involved in, violence and community and society level strategies.

This survey was completed by eighteen members and gave a snapshot of which areas were receiving energy and attention and where there appeared to be significant gaps. Areas such as parenting and early childhood development; life and social skills development and after school activities had strong levels of investment compared to interventions like drug control programmes. What this did not account for was the kind of support which sat more logically in the budgets of statutory agencies.

Although an imperfect piece of work the survey did provide insights in to the range of work that our members were involved with. It also highlighted how disparate and wide ranging that was. It made us reflect on how best to capture and understand the impact of this work and how to encapsulate the diversity of work that takes place within a public health approach.

We don't yet have answers to these questions but the asking of them provided the catalyst for this report which, in its turn, we hope will provide the impetus for a coming together of funders ready to work together to make real the nine principles.

# Practical next steps

As can be seen from the case studies there are funders expending a significant amount of energy, thought and resource on exploring how to realise these principles. This has resulted in some practical learning points which provide **short-term** pointers to maintaining momentum. We will talk more about how we go about embedding these principles in the medium to long term on p.27.

**1. Listen: Embed the voices of young people and communities at the heart of our approach by engaging at every stage of the process**

*Use people's time meaningfully.* If you are utilising their expertise pay them as you would any professional and think about putting a budget line in to enable organisations to pay young people and community representatives. This practice should be taken to its natural conclusion of employing those with lived experience in meaningful positions within organisations.

**2. Co-produce: Facilitate the genuine participation of young people and communities working as equals with power alongside other professionals, academics and policy makers**

*Understand what participation really means* and be open to creating flexibility and space for organisations to work in a way that allows often messy, uncertain processes to take place. Unrestricted, core funding is very helpful when trying to realise this principle.

**3. Cooperate: Seek out opportunities to work in partnership, and support others to do this too, building on insight about what works.**

**Be transparent** about the parameters in which your organisation works and use those as a starting place to begin honest partnership working.

**4. Consider: Understand the context, needs and assets of people, communities and organisations before committing investment.**

*Know your areas.* Many members emphasised the benefit of visiting organisations, talking to people, building relationships and learning as much as possible about what is happening at a local level to inform decision making.

**5. Learn: Develop work based on existing evidence and be responsive to new learning**

*Stay abreast of key work.* A good place to start is the Youth Violence Commission website which has a collection of the key reports in this area. London Funders also publish all new research relating to serious youth violence as part of their weekly members briefing.

**6. Commit: Recognise that the issues young people and communities face need long-term support and investment combined with immediate action**

*Long-term funding:* communities need consistency and time to enable work to bed in and make change. We recommend that funding relationships should be a minimum of three years with a best practice guide of ten years.

**7. Share: Contribute intelligence about future plans, the impact of current funding and learning from past work**

*Utilise London Funders networks* to disseminate this information and publish grants data via the 360 Giving platform. Be open about things that don't go well and talk about failure as well as success.

**8. Support: Know that people delivering this work need investment in their wellbeing and resilience too and this should be acknowledged in our funding programmes**

*Encourage organisations to talk* about their need in this space; how they are already supporting their people and consider making available additional funding to support staff and volunteers.

**9. Recognise: Acknowledge that current funding practice is disjointed and this can add to complexity tasking us to develop approaches that create transparency and clarity**

*Continue to engage and contribute* your plans and consider how you fit in to the picture.



Photo from National Lottery Community Fund, showing Fight for Peace

## Challenges

### 1. The answer has always been there

Many members feel frustrated by the conversation around serious youth violence and believe the answer has always been there: invest in young people and the services that support them. This belief fuels a reluctance to 'jump on the bandwagon' with some choosing to step away from work that is explicitly linked to serious youth violence and any connection with the seeming political or public pressure that the issue exerts.

### 2. What about the bigger picture?

Many members also voiced concern about losing sight of the systemic issues, grounded in poverty and inequality, which result in a number of negative outcomes for children and young people. By focussing on just one of these, in the shape of serious youth violence, there is a fear that work will become siloed and ignore the overarching aim of transforming the lives of children and young people.

### 3. We reject a deficit approach

Building on the last point members were keen for children and young people to be empowered and for work to focus on children and young peoples' strength and capabilities. Talking about serious youth violence focusses energy and attention on tackling a negative outcome rather than recognising the inherent power of children and young people.

### 4. Isn't this just good grantmaking?

Although most of the members we spoke to liked and subscribed to the principles they also felt that they were applicable to all good grant making and not distinct to serious youth violence. Therefore why attribute them to this one issue?

### 5. Accountability

There was also the challenge that the principles were extremely hard to enact and were too aspirational. In a number of our conversations we were asked how funders could be 'held to account' using the principles: 'Are we actually doing it? How? Are we taking responsibility?'

## London Funders' response

We are sympathetic and alert to these challenges and are intent on supporting a **long term, systemic response**. However, we believe that by focussing on the galvanising and urgent issue of serious youth violence we can:

- gain immediate traction;
- be grounded in action; and
- provide the foundation for a joined up, partnership approach moving forward.

We recognise the need to take an asset-based approach to this work and want to move towards creating a vision that recognises the power and potential of children, young people and communities.

None of what is being suggested is easy and will take time, resource, energy and determination. Each member has their own internal organisational structures, culture and agendas to wrestle with and we absolutely acknowledge the logistical challenges presented by this work.

One narrative that has emerged through our conversations is, *"Those who can, should."* There are those members who have a more flexible structure, a Committee or Board who are already supportive of this approach or able to react more agilely. By working with us to take a lead on this work those members can help influence and advocate for this approach within the sector more broadly.

## Our role

Many of you have said that London Funders role in convening a space; bringing people together and maintaining a bigger vision has been important. We want to continue doing that and to help make transparent the challenges and support the change that you want to see take place. We see this report as the starting place and we want to build on the learning that has emerged. ***Our aim is to create a strategic space for funders committed to working on serious youth violence and the issues underpinning it.***

## Funders Alliance

***We recognise that what is needed to move these principles forward is purpose and action.*** Our goal is to create a Funders Alliance that will work together over at least the next three years. The aim of this group is to collaboratively test the conditions needed to embed the principles to help enable the long-term change that we understand needs to take place.

The Alliance would be formed of an active group of members who have subscribed to the principles and are intent on realising them in practice. Implicit in being part of the Alliance is a willingness to commit time and energy to being engaged in the conversation and the learning that comes from it.

It would be a space where questions could be explored; good practice shared; difficulties discussed and be a repository for learning with members taking responsibility to lead on the strands that emerge. For the Alliance to be meaningful, dynamic and to achieve its aims it must be more than a space to share updates and learning. It must be a place where we actively look for opportunities to collaborate, try new ways of working, challenge ourselves and one another and find collective ways of beginning to hold one another to account.

The long-term vision of this work will be decided by the Alliance but it will be ***rooted in the absolute belief in the power of children and young people and their right to be safe and enabled to realise their potential.*** An Alliance is the first step in creating a place for our membership to work together to help that happen.

# To end...

**This report has been written by funders for funders. This is a small world with its own conscious and unconscious individual and institutional biases. We wanted to get a sense check on what we were presenting, the recommendations and our desired next step of a proactive, committed group of funders coming together in order to form an Alliance.**

**Jamel Fraser is a Youth/Mental Health Policy Consultant who has worked in the sector for a number of years, including as a member of a youth board and within a funding organisation. He also has lived experience of youth violence. This professional and personal insight makes him well placed to reflect on this report.**

*“This report really brings to life a step in the right direction for funders. Forming a Funders alliance is a start to the systems change that is so desperately needed.*

*The part of the report that states “What is clear is that there needs to be a collaborative, joined up approach to serious youth violence which considers all the available evidence”, needs to include not just the voices but the employment of people with lived experience into meaningful roles within the funds. Roles such as being on trustee boards, grant making and management teams, as well the development of new funds that target people with similar experiences.*

*By hiring, training and sharing learning with people with lived experience I believe new funds will better meet the needs of those on the ground doing the work and hopefully reduce the number of ‘tick box’ interventions, preventions and evaluation processes that create barriers for all organisations trying to do*

*what is needed against what must be done for future funding.*

*To take it a step further, people with lived experience need to be involved in all processes from developing research questions, conducting research and analysing the data to gain a lived experience perspective of the results as data is subject to the interpreter.*

*I would recommend funders work with organisations already expert in the field like MAC-UK on how to employ and properly support a young person with lived experience. I do recognise the work mentioned in the report by The Hyde Foundation and Battersea Power Station Foundation is brilliant and a great example of two funders coming together to tackle an issue. They should also work with other organisations to find solutions to working not only together but meaningfully with communities whom they wish to fund.*

*For me, London Funders should be leading by example. Hire people with lived experience to work more closely on this piece of work to help develop and lead this with support from those who know the third sector world better. This will show others it can be done and London Funders can share dilemmas they have in recruiting, supporting and skilling up the people with lived experience with others who wish to try. This is something I think needs to be done before moving forward. Do you think it’s right to ask others to do something that you aren’t or won’t?*

*London Funders should be trying to bridge the gap within government funding. From the Prince’s Trust meeting we had in early April with Lib Peck about tackling serious youth violence but why were they held separately? London Funders should be finding a way to bring everything together and have more community voices heard at a government level.*

*The biggest issue with funding is funds that aren’t actually trying to tackle the same issue for example, the VRU is looking at tackling youth violence through the public health approach but how is the Youth Endowment Fund trying to tackle it? These funds should be allocated appropriately to tackle the big picture around serious youth violence not bits and pieces.*

*The last point I wish to make is around using only or mainly evidence based practice. This leaves the door open to do what’s already been done. More emphasis on testing new interventions and preventions should be a principle. Once upon a time we had no evidence to use to tackle these issues but we found a way. The evidence that we have today does it really reflect the people we are trying to reach? For example, did employability projects aimed at young people involved in serious youth violence get NEET young people into employment or did they get young people into employment to meet the tick box requirements?*

*When dealing with the most disadvantaged I don’t believe we have concrete evidence that works for all. Instead of looking at what worked, look at what didn’t work for those most disadvantaged and develop on those things. Speak to participants whom it didn’t work for and the workers on the ground struggling to deliver the right support against Funders evaluation processes that don’t actually capture the complex process of support, interventions or preventions.”*



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