London's VRU

MyEnds extension evaluation. Thematic report 1: MyEnds model

October 2023

CordisBright

1 Introduction

1.1 Overview

MyEnds is an ambitious programme from London's Violence Reduction Unit (VRU) of hyper-local and place-based approaches to violence reduction, stabilisation, and prevention in London. The programme will run from April 2021 until 31 June 2024.

Now in its third year, MyEnds has delivered a range of activities and made progress in tackling challenges across the eight London neighbourhoods in which it is being delivered.

It has also garnered useful learning about the programme model, and how the principles and approaches that it embodies come together in practice. This may benefit similar future programmes which focus on community-based approaches to violence reduction.

This report explores this learning about the MyEnds model. It includes a one-page version of the model that was co-developed with programme-level and site-level stakeholders, then explains the context around it and lessons on how it works in practice. Please see the 'Key terms and definitions' section below for definitions of the terms used.

1.2 About MyEnds

Where?

MyEnds is targeted at **eight neighbourhoods across London** which have experienced high and sustained levels of violence (referred to as "sites" throughout this report).

What?

MyEnds aims to **provide support, capacity, and funding** to help sites to:

- Develop and deliver locally tailored interventions.
- Strengthen their local networks including the community, voluntary and community sector (VCS), and statutory organisations, to work collectively on the area's response to violence.

How?

In each site a **consortium of VCS providers** was awarded funding to collaborate to develop and deliver the local MyEnds programme. MyEnds consortiums have been funded in part of: Brent, Croydon, Hackney, Haringey, Lambeth, Newham, Southwark, and Tower Hamlets.

It is **non-prescriptive** and intends to empower VCS providers to develop locally **tailored approaches to meet the needs of the local community** and tackle the causes of young people becoming involved in violence.

1.3 About the MyEnds evaluation

MyEnds is being independently evaluated by Cordis Bright via a mixed methods approach. The evaluation explores process, impact, and lessons for the future.

This report, thematic report 1, is based on desktop review of documentation and consultation with key stakeholders between June and October 2023.

It is the first of a series of five thematic reports produced as part of the final year evaluation. Thematic report 2 examines strengthening community networks activity, including community and youth-led co-design and engagement, and strengthening collaborative network approach. Thematic report 3 focuses on supporting and building capacity in the grassroots sector through onwards grants programmes. Thematic report 4 explores targeted hyper-local interventions. Finally, lessons and implications for MyEnds are brought together in thematic report 5.

Thank you to VRU and site-level stakeholders for your time and input into the evaluation.

2 MyEnds model

2.1 Overview

Figure 1 below presents the co-developed MyEnds model. The rest of this Section unpicks the model, exploring:

- **Section 2.2**: How it operates in practice, including key people and key features.
- **Section 2.3**: The context underpinning the model and its development.
- **Section 2.4**: The assumptions underlying the model's logic and mechanisms of systems change.

Lessons about how the model has been implemented in practice are found in **Section 1**.

Key terms and definitions are explained in **Section 4**.

Figure 1: Co-developed MyEnds model

See accompanying report for the following detail:
- Context
- Risks & assumptions
- Activities & the model in practice
- References

Key components & ethos

- **Public health** approach
- **Adaptable, learning approach to complex systems,** building on progress step-by-step and adapting based on learning
- Locally embedded **VCS organisations**
- **Hyper-local** strategy
- **Sharing power** and creating 'a seat at the table' at all levels
- **Cultural competence**
- **Community co-design**
- **Tailored** to local strengths, opportunities, needs, challenges
- **Contextual safeguarding**
- Targeted focus on **young people** across need levels
- **Multi-year funding, collaborative support and guidance** from the commissioner
- **Trauma-informed** approach

Multi-strand approach targeting individuals, communities, and systems

Feedback loops and mutually reinforcing strands

Set-up

- **Understanding** the local area: services, intelligence, needs
- **Developing a consortium** of local VCS organisations to collaboratively co-design and deliver the programme
- **Engaging a wider local network** including VCS, statutory, and grassroots
- Implementing **continuous monitoring**, **reflecting, improving**
- **Sharing access** to the resources, knowledge, and skills required to make change at multiple levels across the local system

Activity strands

Community and youth-led co-design and engagement:
- Raising awareness and community outreach
- Involving young people in design, planning, and delivery
- Developing routes for community engagement and building on existing assets

Supporting and building capacity in the grassroots sector:
- Grassroots grant funding
- Community decision-making panel
- Capacity-building support

Targeted hyper-local interventions:
- Funding a mixed profile of support in terms of need and intervention level (primary / secondary / tertiary)
- Expanding promising practice
- Fostering innovative practice
- Locally informed practice
- Adapting to emerging need and critical incidents

Strengthening collaborative local network approach:
- Incident response
- Strategic thinking
- Joined-up working
- Sharing intelligence
- Sustainability

Mechanisms of change

- Increased awareness of opportunities to get involved
- Increased participation amongst the community and young people in programme activities, including contributing to plans and ideas
- Increased awareness and support amongst the community and young people for local violence reduction initiatives

- Increased funding and improved capacity for organisations traditionally excluded from mainstream funding or who may lack capacity to apply
- Funding appropriate organisations via community steer / input

- Intervening at key points, involving parents, schools, communities, peers
- Violence prevention, stabilisation, and reduction happens via:
  - Reducing harm and exploitation and risk thereof
  - Improving access to positive opportunities
  - Stronger and more resilient families
  - Healthy relationships in education and reduced exclusions / disengagement

- Strengthening trust and relationships, shared beliefs and goals
- Sharing knowledge, resources, and intelligence to improve capacity and practice amongst the partnership
- Developing effective processes, structures and forums for more joined-up and collective ways of working
- Bringing collective weight to bear on system blocks / challenges

Shorter-term outcomes

- Improved conditions for equity in decision-making between partners, local organisations and the community and young people
- Improved trust and buy-in to local network approaches amongst the community and young people

- Capacity-building support and application processes are accessible to grassroots organisations
- Increased grassroots capacity

- Support is delivered to those who need it
- Young people and community members experience intervention-specific outcomes reflecting the VRU's Outcomes Framework, which centre on:
  - Reduced risk
  - An increase in protective factors

VRU's Outcomes Framework contains outcomes in more detail

- More joined-up local partnerships and services
- Local networks better able to monitor and adapt to emerging needs
- Improved incident response
- Shared commitment, understanding, and vision for reducing violence
- Sustainable local networks

Ongoing reflection and learning through experience

Capacity-building support and minimum standards guidance from funder

How systems operate:
- They are ever-changing and complex
- Changes don't happen in a straight line
- Actions can have 'feedback loops' and unintended consequences

Mechanisms of systems change

- Investing in the time and resources for partnership working to develop
- Trust and faith help collaborative working to grow
- Systems changes ripple out from collective approaches
- Partnership learning and community needs feed into action
- Outcomes build credibility with community and wider system organisations and stakeholders
- Practice, resource flows, culture, and strategic norms all improve

Longer-term outcomes and impacts

- Creating **the conditions for local approaches to stabilising and reducing violence** that are: creative, innovative, effective, locally-led, and reach those who need them most
- Increased **long-term capacity** across the local system to deliver these approaches
- More **inclusive decision-making** in local systems
- Stronger and more consistent **trust and collaboration between local community and agencies**
- A **reduction in violence** in areas affected by high and sustained levels of violence

2.2 How the MyEnds model operates

2.2.1 Key people

Key stakeholder groups implicated in the model are: local young people, their community, and community groups; local VCS and grassroots organisations; statutory organisations with a role in supporting communities and/or violence reduction; and London's VRU as the funder who also facilitates capacity-building and guidance to sites.

Key functions in the role of the funder

- Multi-year funding, to reflect the ambitious and multi-faceted nature of the programme and the timeframe that would be expected to see meaningful progress towards short- and medium-term outcomes.
- Building in guidance and capacity-building support to consortiums. MyEnds involves some ways of working and activities that are likely to be new for the kinds of local VCS organisations that it aims to empower. Key examples are building consortiums and their governance, delivering an onwards-grants fund for grassroots organisations, and collectively monitoring the implementation and impact of funded activities. Therefore capacity-building support delivered or arranged by the funder is key. In MyEnds, this has included best practice guidance in youth participation, minimum standards for grant-giving, regular programme management meetings, and some bespoke capacity-building support and training. This is enabled through frequent communication with sites to understand their needs and challenges, as these may emerge only via delivery.
- Providing a framework and distilling the evidence base. Via its Outcomes Framework (detail in Section 2.3.2 below;) the VRU provides sites with a framework of outcomes to target to support violence reduction via interventions.
- Access to key networks and levers. MyEnds requires consortiums to engage and align/partner with wider local organisations with a role to play in violence reduction, including some statutory organisations (e.g., partners in housing, youth justice, probation, community safety, education). The networks of London's VRU have helped them support sites to engage with statutory partners if needed; without these kinds of networks, it may be tricky to support sites.

2.2.2 Key features

Flexibility

The MyEnds model has evolved over time as the programme has developed, adapting based on action learning. It is also non-prescriptive and tailored to each site's local context. For example, sites can vary in terms of the activities that they develop and deliver within each strand, and which strands they prioritise and dedicate most resource towards. This enables sites to focus on local needs and recognises that what is possible within the timeframe may look different in different contexts.

Principles-led:

Whilst the model includes key inputs and activity strands, the main focus is on *how* the activities are developed and delivered, rather than *what* is delivered in each strand (see 'key ingredients and ethos' in the model). There is a recognition that this principles-led approach is ambitious and not all activities will be successful, but investing in the approach and gathering learning about it is worthwhile.

Key principles 'built in' to MyEnds are (Weishmann et al., 2020; London's VRU, 2021b):

- **Place-based working**, through focussing on hyperlocal areas, seeking to understand and address local needs and causes of violence, and working with local stakeholders.
- **Public health**, emphasising prevention, early intervention; and multi-agency working.
- **Close working with communities** to inform the local approach, develop buy-in, improve feelings of safety, and build capacity to sustain community-led approaches.
- **Addressing violence at multiple levels**, seeking to reach those most in need given violence levels, alongside prevention and early intervention.
- **Building in and building on evidence,** including: (1) understanding 'the problem' and local needs in order to design the solution; (2) drawing on evidence of 'what works' and promising practice;[1] (3) iterative learning and continuous testing, and (4) providing resources, incentives, and connections to enable innovation. This latter component works at several levels, i.e., by resourcing VCS consortiums, and in the grassroots grants strand by further passing on some of this resourcing to grassroots organisations.

Multi-directional:

The model is not strictly linear in terms of how it is implemented nor in the relationships between planning, activities, outcomes, and impacts. In particular:

- Sites will continuously **'cycle' through implementation, learning, and adaptation**. The role of needs assessments is a key example of this: while consortiums should consider local needs in the set-up phase as part of initial planning, they will develop a deeper understanding of local needs through delivering the different activity strands (particularly intervention delivery and youth participation and community engagement) and feed this back into their strategies, which are 'live' instead of rigid.
- Sites may choose **different 'starting points**' in terms of their activities depending on their local strengths, opportunities, challenges and needs. The momentum and learning from early activities can then inform how other strands are approached, and in what order. For example, delivering interventions to target groups could lead to networks and lessons that help with engaging those groups in youth participation.
- The consortiums and key partners driving local MyEnds programmes must **interact with wider local organisations, groups and initiatives** as they seek to achieve

[1] E.g., sites are encouraged to include trauma-informed, whole-family, culturally competent, and peer-to-peer interventions.

collective impact by developing a shared approach and leveraging each other's resources and knowledge. In this way, actors are dynamically 'bouncing off' of one another and mutually informing each other's work.

2.3 Context

2.3.1 Programme aims and rationale

The aim of MyEnds is to reduce violence in local areas affected by high and sustained levels of violence, via approaches that: are local and community-led; are appropriate to the needs of the local area; and reach those in most in need.

It seeks to achieve a range of outcomes and impacts (see model above) which focus mainly on the make-up, connectedness, behaviour and capacity of local networks and communities.

The rationale for the programme includes:

- **The potential of a public health approach to violence reduction**. The World Health Organisation, based on a 2002 review and analysis of violence, proposed applying public health principles to the problem of violence (Dahlberg, 2002). This has filtered into policy, for example the Government's Serious Violence Strategy (see below), and practice. Examples of implementation in the UK, particularly Scotland's VRU,[2] indicate the potential of this approach but also highlight the need for further evaluation.

- **The important role of partnership working.** The Government's (2019) Serious Violence Strategy emphasises partnership working as key within a public health approach and highlights local authorities, VCS organisations and young people as important partners.

- **Increasing violence levels and uneven distribution in London**, with London's VRU's Strategic Needs Assessment reporting an increase in violent crime in London since 2014 and positing that violence is often concentrated in small geographic areas (Weishmann et al., 2020).

- Overall, **evidence is still emerging on 'what works'** to reduce violence in hyper-local areas, especially via system-based approaches such as public health and multi-agency approaches (O'Connor and Waddel, 2015; Branas et al., 2019; White et al., 2021) and community-based initiatives (McNeish et al. 2018). MyEnds can contribute to the evidence-base by trialling a principles-based model, and also by catalysing delivery of a range of interventions and activities within this model, which can also be tested.

[2] Scotland's VRU (initially Glasgow's VRU) adopted a public health approach to violence involving multi-agency delivery, attitudinal change, and prevention – it also focussed on enforcement (although this is not a traditional feature of the WHO's public health approach). Scotland saw reductions in violent crime and hospital admissions due to assault in the 10 or so years following the establishment of the VRU in 2005. However, there is a recognised lack of robust evaluation meaning that it is not possible to link the reductions to the work of the VRU. Source: HM Government, 2019.

2.3.2 Programme design

MyEnds was designed as an ambitious programme in the early stages of London's VRU. Some key pieces of research that have informed its design are:

- **A strategic needs assessment** for tackling violence in London undertaken by the Behavioural Insights Team (Wieshmann et al., 2020), based on stakeholder and expert consultation; rapid evidence review; and review of data on violence in London.
- **A briefing on collective impact** outlining its use in the VRU (London's VRU, 2020).
- **London's VRU's Outcomes Framework** for programmes to reduce violence (fed in from the Year 3 MyEnds extension), based on evidence and learning available to the VRU plus consultation with key stakeholders in violence reduction[3] and young people.

2.3.3 Local contexts

MyEnds sites are varied in terms of the make-up, challenges, and opportunities of their local system and population. However, some common characteristics describe the 'local challenge' that they typically face at the outset of the programme: (1) relatively **high levels of violence** with some hyper-local concentration; (2) a legacy of **poor relationships and trust** between communities and services; and (3) a range of **local VCS and grassroots providers** who are:

- Delivering activities which may support violence reduction.
- Working in relatively siloed or competitive ways with scope for improved join-up and strategic alignment to maximise collective impact.
- Not yet seen as 'key players' or equal partners alongside statutory organisations within the local system.

2.4 Logic and assumptions

2.4.1 Assumptions

Several key assumptions underpin the model and its ability to deliver activity and change as intended:

Key assumptions underpinning the MyEnds model
Assumptions about programme design
• Evidence supports ongoing delivery / exploration of MyEnds principles.[4] • Partnerships have sufficient time and capacity to explore and develop new ways of working (Dart, 2018) and balance delivery across MyEnds strands.

[3] This included stakeholders across health, education, local authority, Youth Endowment Fund, the Home Office, Greater London Authority, other VRUs, the Mayor's Office for Police and Crime Commissioning.

[4] As discussed above in Sections 2.3.1, 2.3.2 programme design is based on evidence gathered by London's VRU which indicates the potential and support for key MyEnds principles, whilst recognising that the evidence base is still emerging.

Key assumptions underpinning the MyEnds model

- Violence reduction, stabilisation, and prevention can be achieved by a range of intermediate outcomes across: harm reduction and positive opportunities for children and young people; families; educational settings; communities and place; and systems and sectors. These are outlined in the VRU Outcomes Framework (2022).
- Changes put in motion during the programme lifespan will continue to have ripple effects to create longer-term changes (Dart, 2018).

Assumptions about partnership working and collective impact

Violence reduction in hyper-local areas is better achieved by VCS, community, and statutory bodies working in partnership (McNeish et al., 2018; HM Government, 2019; London's VRU, 2020). Related to this are the assumptions that:

- Collective impact is achieved by organisations developing shared objectives and co-ordinating action, and by the leading organisation (here, from the VCS) having the skills and resources to effectively lead and to drive change (London's VRU, 2020).
- VCS and grassroots organisations bring strengths in being embedded within communities affected by violence (London's VRU, 2020). This may support them in understanding the needs of individuals and communities, meeting needs holistically and engaging with and advocating for individuals from marginalised groups.
- Community members, including those closest to the issues, can meaningfully engage in shaping plans and ideas for approaches to violence reduction.[5] Building community members' capacity to continue doing so will support a sustainable long-term approach to reducing violence (Youth Endowment Fund, 2021).
- Strategic buy-in supports sustainability (London's VRU, 2020).
- Different kinds of information can usefully inform approaches to violence reduction, including community input, professionals' views, and service user feedback, as well as evidence of effective practice and quantitative indicators of different kinds of need.

Assumptions about inputs and resources

- Consortiums and wider local networks have the skills, influence, passion, and access to community networks needed to drive change (London's VRU, 2020) or can develop these via programme management and capacity-building support.
- Consortiums and wider local networks have the capacity to develop sustainable and effective partnerships, new ways of working, and innovative approaches.
- Funders have the resources, capacity and networks to effectively support sites.
- Expert support builds skills and enables challenge, reflection, and understanding.
- Local system landscapes do not change to the extent that local strategic priorities and available resources no longer align with and enable the delivery of MyEnds.

[5] London's VRU (20201b) posit that local people often know what's best for improving the area they live and work in, and the energy and effort to tackle violence is often held by those communities that are most affected by it. Additionally, McNeish et al. (2018) and HM Government (2019) both highlight the potential of 'working with communities' in violence reduction initiatives.

2.4.2 Mechanisms of systems change

Systems thinking

Systems are a useful lens to help think through complex issues. They can be characterised as operating in dynamic and non-linear ways; they are emergent and adaptive, subject to ongoing change that is influenced by many actors; and they experience feedback loops and unintended consequences (Bicket et al., 2020; Egan et al., 2019).

These dynamics result from the fact that systems are made up of many different components which interact with each other, hence why they are often described as complex. These actors include organisations and people, but systems also contain boundaries, practices, resource flows, cultures, and strategic norms.

These concepts are useful for thinking about efforts to create change within local systems around issues which multiple different sectors play a role in (like violence reduction); and for how to monitor that change. They mean that there is an inherent tension in conceptualising MyEnds' intended impacts as changes that become embedded or sustainable in a constantly changing system (Egan et al., 2019). Therefore, it is perhaps more useful to think of changing systems as a trajectory or continuum of work.

Within the timeframe of MyEnds, it would be challenging to fully "achieve" the intended longer-term outcomes and impacts for local systems and communities (such as 'inclusive decision-making' or 'trust and collaboration between communities and local agencies'). Instead, the model foregrounds the role of MyEnds activities in *creating the conditions* for, and *contributing to*, longer-term outcomes and impacts. It emphasises that these changes are not achieved directly, but rather through mechanisms of change which:

- **Build and compound over time**. For example, as consortiums demonstrate impact, confidence and trust from communities and stakeholders may grow, who then may invest more time and resources, enabling greater impact (Calancie et al., 2021).
- **Involve feedback loops and ripple effects** as opposed to direct and proportionate impacts (McGill et al., 2020).
- **Rely on the influence of a range of actors**. To enable this collective impact, early work may focus on creating the conditions for change, such as building relationships and trust, adapting governance to enable collaboration across organisations and sectors, and building capacity for community engagement (Dart, 2018).
- **Can operate through a range of different levers**. The literature describes these in a variety of ways but some common examples are: norms; goals; resources and information and their flows; policies and structures; and operations (Foster-Fishman, 2007; Johnston et al. 2014; Kania et al., 2018; Nobles et al., 2022).

3 The MyEnds model in practice

3.1 Overview

This Section outlines common approaches MyEnds sites have taken to implementing each activity strand of the model, so far.

3.2 Set-up

Establishing consortiums

Each local MyEnds programme is led by a consortium of VCS providers, who collaborate to plan and deliver the local MyEnds programme. In practice, sites have generally formed consortiums comprising around five partner organisations, building on previous partnership working arrangements if in place. They typically establish regular whole-consortium strategic meetings (sometimes involving key wider network partners such as statutory organisations) plus more streamlined meetings related to different aspects of delivery, sometimes through sub-groups.

As part of the set-up, consortiums develop governance and reporting mechanisms; and design locally co-produced strategic plans and intervention models (recognising that these are often 'live' and evolve over time as learning is gathered). They also develop wider local networks, engaging local organisations from different sectors to support delivery and collaborate as part of the 'strengthening collaborative local network approach' strand.

Building wider local networks and a shared vision

To build wider local networks, sites have linked consortium partners into wider strategic and operational forums (and vice versa) and reached out directly to key partners not engaged in this way. Establishing signposting and referral routes between MyEnds funded interventions and wider support in the area, has also helped with building links.

Sites have iteratively developed their strategies and plans over time, drawing heavily on the professional insight and experience of partners and learning gathered through delivery. At times they also draw on data relating to local needs (e.g., crime statistics from community safety partners) and primary research carried out via community consultation (e.g., at community engagement events or via online survey).

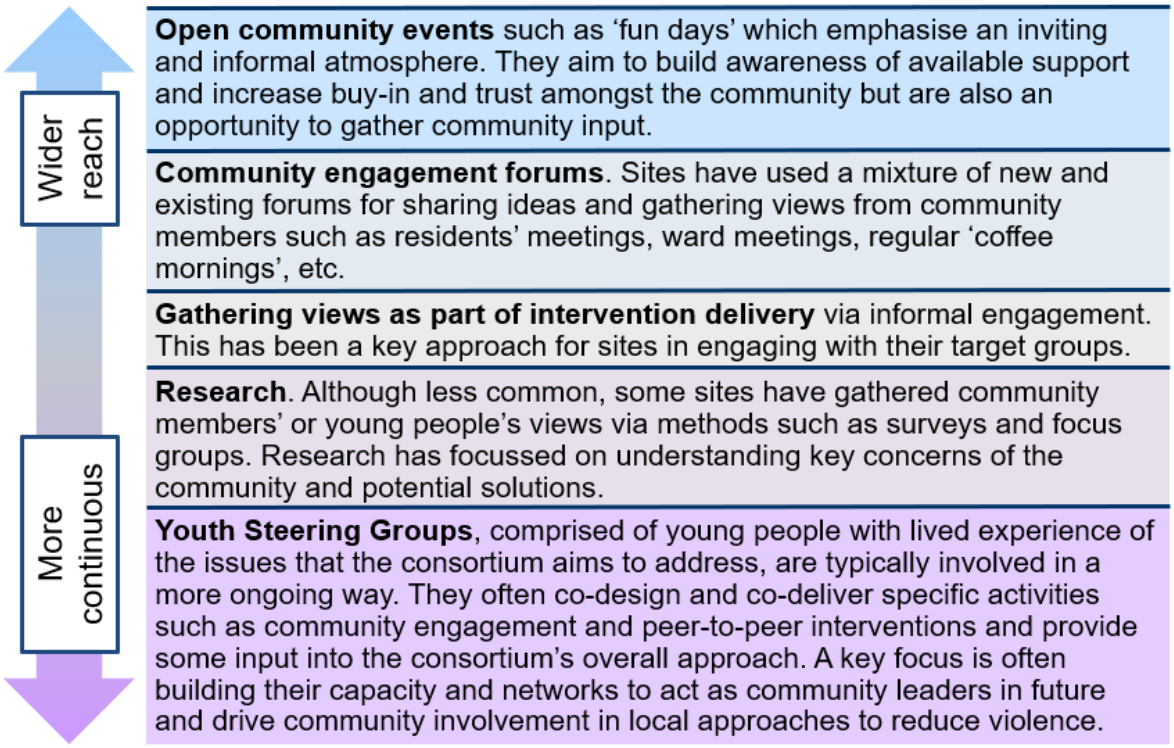
Sites' visions for their programmes have usually included: improved partnership working; better use of the VCS, especially to support the aims and functions of statutory organisations; providing routes for community members to get involved; and delivering positive and diversionary activities for young people. They have not generally emphasised a core theory of violence reduction at the outset but have worked towards building this out over time with the support of programme funders.

Monitoring, learning and evaluation

To enable data to be amalgamated across sites, the programme funder has implemented a standardised monitoring form which all sites complete each quarter. Consortiums lead on managing the data collection across delivery partners for this form to be completed.

3.3 Community engagement and youth participation

Sites have typically delivered community engagement and youth participation via a mixed set of activities ranging from less intensive one-off events to more intensive continuous engagement. The main mechanisms have been:



To deliver meaningful community engagement and youth participation, sites have found it important to go at the pace of community members and spend time to build trusting relationships, supporting their skills and capacity to input into plans and ideas. To do this in the programme timeframe has often meant carrying out community engagement and youth participation alongside – and intertwined with – other strands, rather than as a 'starting point' to all subsequent activities.

3.4 Onwards grants funding

Designing grassroots grants funds

Sites are required to dedicate a portion of funding to grant funding and supporting local grassroots organisations. Whilst they can tailor their approach to local needs, a set of minimum standards is in place as guidance. In selecting grantees, sites have sought to fund grassroots organisations whose priorities align with those of their local programme: they are focused on the needs of the local community, in particular young people, and some already target the same hyper-local areas or estates.

Community involvement in decision-making

Sites assess applications according to the extent to which the applicants and their proposed activities meet these priorities and the quality of their delivery plans, plus based

on the input of community members. This process varies slightly by site but typically community members including young people are involved in decision-making panels for awarding grants. These panellists generally receive training to support them in their role, including to assess and score applications. In some cases, they are drawn from existing community engagement forums, or Youth Steering Groups.

Delivering grassroots grants funds

Sites have taken different approaches to building awareness including: promotion on websites and social media; sharing information at multi-agency and Youth Steering Group meetings; engagement events with community members and young people; providing open information/Q&A sessions; and pre-application support sessions for potential grantees, including support with application forms and run throughs of project ideas. Some sites have offered support to unsuccessful applicants, such as one-to-one feedback, capacity building, and encouragement to apply in future rounds.

All sites with a small grants programme offer a range of grant sizes, which across sites ranges from £1,000-£15,000. Sites also offer support to successful applicants including help with project planning and implementation; connecting with and receiving referrals from the local community; advertising and social media; and monitoring and evaluation.

In addition to this training and support with administering grants, some sites have also provided wider capacity building support, including organisational health checks; governance and policy writing; support to set up as a Community Interest Company (CIC); budgeting and invoicing; and fundraising and bid writing skills for ongoing sustainability.

3.5 Direct intervention delivery

Approaching the design of intervention profiles

Developing and delivering interventions has been one of the main areas of focus for sites, who have typically prioritised mobilising quickly and drawing on local assets, whilst also seeking to deliver a varied profile of respond to respond to different needs.

To do this, sites have iteratively developed their approach to interventions and their overall profile over the course of delivery – changing, adding, or removing interventions as they learn more about local needs, support gaps, and assets. This also allows them to incorporate intelligence gathered via community engagement and youth participation.

They have also worked opportunistically within their local system and the existing support landscape, for example tailoring interventions to the local context in terms of their target group (for example, towards young people from the target neighbourhoods) or content (for example, towards protective factors against violence).

Delivering interventions

Sites' main target groups for intervention have been young people at potential risk of involvement in violence, ranging from primary school age children to young adults up to 25 years old. Slightly less commonly, they have also focused on parents of young people at potential risk of involvement in violence.

They have mainly focused on primary interventions (focusing on prevention and targeted universally), and secondary interventions (focusing on early intervention and targeted at those at potential risk or lower levels of risk). They generally focus on strengthening protective factors and reducing risk factors, although some sites have delivered more tertiary interventions.

The most common types of interventions are largely consistent across sites. These are:

- Outreach and detached youth work.
- Positive diversionary activities including youth work, sports, creative activities.
- Awareness-raising workshops and programmes.
- Mentoring.
- Education, Training, and Employment support.
- Excursions and trips.
- Interventions with parents and carers such as skills programmes, peer-to-peer support, and awareness-raising.

3.6 Strengthening collaborative local network approach

Developing the foundations of collaborative network approaches

Sites have delivered activities focussed on building awareness and buy-in amongst the wider local networks and co-developing ideas to strengthen their collective approach to violence reduction. This process of developing the aims of the wider local network has typically been organic and iterative, building on a foundation of stronger relationships which take time to embed, plus learning from other activity strands.

Working together as a local network

The overall aims of sites' activities in this strand are building the capacity and sustainability of local networks and creating the conditions and early stages of longer-term system change. Often, sites have begun by focussing more on operational join-up, for example aligning service provision across the system; improving information-sharing, referring and signposting; and collaborating on the delivery of individual activities such as outreach. Over time, sites have moved more towards strategic join-up, for example by hosting summits or events with a focus on progressing a collective strategy on a particular issue such as school exclusions.

The topics of focus within this strand vary depending on the needs and opportunities in the local system, however a common area of focus is strengthening the local approach to incident response. Sites have done this by creating a commitment amongst partners to communicate more quickly and readily in the wake of an incident and use each other's resources and networks to connect with and support affected communities. Some sites have co-developed processes for how stakeholders will co-ordinate in incident response.

4 Key terms and definitions

4.1 MyEnds programme components

Violence reduction: MyEnds focuses on addressing violence at all levels, including reduction, stabilisation, and prevention. Throughout this report we have used the term violence reduction as an umbrella term for this interpretation.

Site: An individual local area's implementation of MyEnds (including consortium members, delivery partners, grassroots organisations, and stakeholders).

Local system: The wider systems in local target areas including organisations, stakeholders, and processes beyond the MyEnds network. 'Wider local system organisations' is used to refer to organisations not part of the local network.

Intervention: The structured delivery of support with the primary aim of improving outcomes for participants. In this report, 'intervention' refers to support for community members such as parents and young people, rather than for professionals/volunteers (which is described as a capacity building activity).

Primary, secondary, and tertiary interventions

These terms relate to different tiers of intervention intended to correlate to need level. Their application to violence reduction has been described by the Home Office in interim guidance to VRUs (Home Office, 2020). The VRU shared slightly different definitions with sites involved with MyEnds. Both interpretations have been included here:

- Primary services provided for a whole population. Home Office description: in violence reduction these refer to preventing violence from happening in the first place. VRU description to MyEnds sites: this is expected to typically be universal interventions.
- Secondary services for those 'at risk'. Home Office description: in violence reduction the focus is on preventing violence from escalating to serious criminality. VRU description to MyEnds sites: this is expected to typically be interventions for those at risk of problem behaviours.
- Tertiary services for those who have experienced or caused injury. Home Office description: in violence reduction these relate to preventing violent offenders from reoffending. VRU description to MyEnds sites: this is expected to typically be interventions for those with problem behaviours.

Consortium: The official partnership of organisations in a site who were awarded the MyEnds funding and are responsible for delivering the site-level programme. In each consortium, there is a lead organisation who directly employs key MyEnds staff. However, they take a facilitating role within the consortium rather than having any strategic or operational precedence.

Delivery partner: An organisation which has received funding from a local MyEnds programme to deliver its activities or interventions. Delivery partners are often also consortium partners.

Grassroots grantee: Grassroots organisations which have received grant funding from the local MyEnds programme.

Local network: Local MyEnds networks which are comprised of consortium partners, delivery partners, and wider local organisations with an awareness and some level of involvement in MyEnds activities. The boundaries of networks are dynamic. Awareness of local networks and their membership may vary between local organisations, including network partners, depending for instance on the level of branding of the network.

Programme stakeholder: A stakeholder with expertise in the whole MyEnds programme across all eight sites. Typically, these are people working with or for the VRU who either engage with the whole programme at a strategic level or support activities across all sites.

Local stakeholder: A site-level stakeholder. They may have a more central role in the local programme, for example consortium or delivery partners, or could be part of the wider local network or otherwise have insight into the local MyEnds programme and/or context, including statutory or voluntary and community sector (VCS) organisations or community leaders.

4.2 Key ideas and approaches

Public health approach to violence reduction

Public health has become a mainstay concept and popular approach in recent years at the policy, commissioning, and practice levels for tackling violence at a local level. A key driver is the emphasis placed by Dahlberg et al.'s (2002) report for the WHO (which sought to comprehensively review violence on a global scale) on public health approaches to violence, and emerging evidence of the promise of this approach, for example from the Scottish VRU.

Public health emphasises prevention and early intervention and seeks to address underlying risk factors that increase the likelihood that an individual will become a victim or perpetrator. It also focuses on a defined population and/or location.

The strategic drive to adopt this approach in local efforts to reduce violence is also clear in Government's (2018) Serious Violence Strategy and subsequent (2019) guidance to local system leaders. The latter also emphasises the importance of a whole-system and multi-stakeholder approach to putting these ideas into practice.

Risk and protective factors: A range of other outcomes and factors are associated with the likelihood of someone becoming involved in violence, the literature suggests. These are often called 'risk and protective factors', and efforts to reduce violence (particularly public health approaches) may try to target these as ways to affect violence levels. These factors can be at the level of the individual, family and peer relationships, school/education,

community, or society.[6] They interact to influence situations in different ways, and can compound or mitigate each other. Their level of influence on risk of involvement in violence is varied, with some theorists distinguishing between primary and secondary factors.[7] For examples of these factors, see the Youth Endowment Fund's (2023) Outcomes Framework and Measures Database.

Contextual safeguarding: Contextual safeguarding focuses on addressing safeguarding from multiple angles and in multiple contexts, with different stakeholders having a role to play. Within MyEnds, key contexts include children and young people, families and the home, peers and friends, and the community and neighbourhoods.[8]

Collective impact: A 'collective impact' approach asserts that 'large scale social change comes from better cross-sector coordination rather than from the isolated intervention of individual organisations.' [9] The approach relies upon organisations with shared objectives, with the coordination of action being led by a central organisation with the skills and resources to deliver effective leadership and change.

Cultural competence: MyEnds sites are expected to (1) take steps to understand their personal and organisational power and privilege, and the blind spots this may have created regarding the experience of these diverse communities, and (2) ensure that their behaviours, attitudes, and policies work effectively in cross-cultural situations and serve the differences and similarities across protected characteristics. [10]

Trauma-informed: Within MyEnds, taking a trauma-informed approach is grounded in a commitment to developing and embedding an intersectional understanding of the impact of trauma and its effect on communities that have experienced violence.[11]

Whole-family: Within MyEnds, whole-family approaches are those that aim to develop resilience in families and their access to information, advice, and guidance, grounded in the view that '*there is considerable evidence that supporting the whole family should be part of a holistic approach to reducing violence.*'[12]

Peer-to-peer: Peer-to-peer approaches focus on enhancing individuals' capabilities to provide advice, information, and support, and to organise activities around health and wellbeing, in their own or other communities. Programme documentation notes that peer-to-peer support can take many forms, for example emotional support, practical support, information support, or reflective support such as offering feedback.

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[6] Conaglen and Gallimore, 2014, and Dahlberg et al., 2002.

[7] Youth Endowment Fund, 2023.

[8] London's VRU, 2021.

[9] London's VRU, 2020.

[10] London's VRU, 2020b.

[11] London's VRU, 2020b.

[12] London's VRU, 2020b.

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6 Further information

To find out more or carry on the conversation about our research, please email Cordis Bright at info@cordisbright.co.uk.