

Final | Confidential

London's VRU

MyEnds evaluation.
Thematic report 2:
Strengthening community
networks

July 2024

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1 Executive summary

1.1 What is meant by 'strengthening community networks'?

MyEnds is an ambitious programme funded by London's Violence Reduction Unit (VRU). It promotes highly-local, place-based and co-designed approaches to reducing violence in eight London neighbourhoods which have experienced high and sustained levels of violence (sometimes referred to in this report as 'sites'). Consortiums of voluntary and community sector (VCS) organisations were awarded funding to develop and deliver the local programme in each site.

Research indicates that community trust and cohesion is likely to be an important protective factor in preventing violence in neighbourhoods in London¹. MyEnds has sought to do this by making activities to strengthen community networks a key element of the programme. This includes efforts to: (1) increase equity in decision making across community members, the voluntary and community sector (VCS) and statutory organisations, including seeking to capture and act on the views of young people; (2) perceive partners from different sectors as equal; (3) improve inter-agency information sharing and multi-agency responses; and (4) improve the speed and quality of mobilisation in response to critical incidents.

1.2 What have strengthening community networks activities achieved, and how?

Collaborative partnerships between local organisations, particularly in relation to critical incident response, have increased as a result of strengthening community networks activity. The status of MyEnds consortiums amongst wider system partners has also increased, and community trust in delivery partners and involvement in shaping plans has improved. All of these impacts have contributed to improved foundations for community based violence reduction.

The case studies included in this report showcase some of the ways in which MyEnds sites have developed their local networks. The approaches taken by sites have differed according to local priorities and locally held knowledge and expertise. There are also commonalities in the principles underpinning different sites' approaches, with a number of effective engagement approaches proving successful across multiple sites.

1.3 How does 'strengthening community networks' fit within the MyEnds model?

Within the MyEnds model there are four key activity strands. Together they aim to strengthen community networks in order provide stronger foundations for violence reduction and to enable the delivery of interventions which engage young people and community members in the local areas. They also contribute, in different ways, to promoting the sustainability of work implemented under

¹ Behavioural Insights Team (2019). [Violence in London: What we Know and How to Respond](#). Last accessed: 30 April 2024.

MyEnds. For instance, strengthening a collaborative network approach has the potential to support sustained action in the longer-term, which is independent of the MyEnds programme. The strands are:

1. **Community and youth-led co-design and engagement.**
2. Supporting and building capacity in the grassroots sector.
3. Targeted hyper-local interventions.
4. **Strengthening collaborative network approach.**

Strengthening community networks encompasses strands 1 and 4, and also relates closely to strand 2. Interaction between the different activity strands is an important part of the MyEnds model. Therefore, some activities cut across – and have potential to deliver outcomes in – more than one strand. Equally, all activity strands are supported and informed by the set-up, key components and ethos, and system-level mechanisms of change which are reflected in the model.

The MyEnds model is explored in more detail in thematic report 1. This report, thematic report 2, examines key 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. Lessons and implications for MyEnds are brought together in thematic report 5.

1.4 About this report

This report summarises key findings from the MyEnds evaluation 2021-24 in relation to activities undertaken to strengthen community networks. It:

- Outlines approaches taken to strengthening community networks, including showcasing five specific examples from local areas involved in MyEnds.
- Explores the impact of these approaches on the make-up, strength and dynamics within local networks involved in violence prevention and reduction.
- Considers emerging impact on local responses to violence, and on other outcomes for communities and young people.

The findings in this report are based on extensive qualitative consultation with a range of stakeholders throughout the three years of MyEnds programme delivery in 2021-24 and review of the final monitoring data submissions covering the period April 2023 to March 2024 inclusive². Please see annex 1 for more information on the evaluation methodology and research questions.

² This report contains monitoring data which was captured during the extension year and not from previous years of the programme. Changes in the way monitoring data was reported across the years meant it was not always possible to combine quantitative data from submissions in different years. However, data from this period provides a useful snapshot of the activity and learning in sites once the programme was well established.

Thank you to everyone who has taken part in consultation activity or shared information with us to support the evaluation. Without your input, we could not have gained the insights and learning included in our reports.

2 Overview of key findings



What has the impact of network strengthening activities been?

- 1 **Collaborative partnerships** between local organisations have increased. This may support local networks as they transition towards operating in a collective way in the longer term.
- 2 Consortiums have attained **higher status amongst wider system partners**. In some areas, the local voluntary and community sector is becoming **more highly valued by statutory partners**.
- 3 **Communities** have become **more involved in shaping plans and activities** when they have **greater trust** in the organisations delivering them
- 4 **Building partnerships** between organisations and **trust with the community** has enabled promising examples of **improved collaboration following critical incidents** and has **expanded the range of activities** available in the preventative space.
- 5 Network strengthening activity has contributed to **stronger foundations for collaborative, community based violence reduction**. The extent to which this has reduced violence in local areas is hard to determine at this stage.



How have network strengthening activities been implemented and delivered?

- 6 Each consortium has emphasised **different types** of network strengthening activity within a **hyper-localised and innovative** approach.
- 7 Consortiums have sought to build more **collaborative** local networks through broadening and strengthening **inter-agency partnerships**.
- 8 Local MyEnds programmes have **honed** their approaches to **engaging communities and young people** based on **learning through implementation**. They have sought ways to build more **extensive engagement in delivery and decision making**.
- 9 **Effective engagement approaches** have reflected **important components of the MyEnds model** and have demonstrated techniques which could be **replicated in the future**.



Future focus

Increase the involvement of communities and young people in setting strategy for MyEnds and violence reduction.

Enhance VRU support available to consortiums to increase their status with statutory partners.

Support consortiums to (1) factor the time taken to build trust into programme planning, and (2) explore activities which have a dual function.

Embed programme sustainability within consortiums' planning from the outset.



Case studies

In Tower Hamlets, **THICN** has used a Board structure to build closer partnerships between organisations.

In Lambeth, **Ecosystem Coldharbour** has used community engagement to build trust and collaboration.

In Hackney, **Rise Up East** has engaged young people informally through outreach in the community.

In Brent, **One Flow One Brent** has used a Youth Board to increase young people's role in decision-making.

In Croydon, **MyEnds West Croydon** has involved young people in police cultural competency training.

3 What has the impact of network strengthening activities been?

3.1 **Key finding 1: Collaborative partnerships between local organisations have increased. This may support local networks as they transition towards operating in a collective way in the longer term**

Building stronger partnerships between stakeholders within and outside of consortiums has been a key success of the programme. Consortiums have fostered greater interconnectedness across their local networks, especially at an operational level. Relationships between the VCS, including smaller grassroots organisations, and statutory organisations have been strengthened. The degree to which networks have developed in their structure and maturity varies across the consortiums.

Within consortiums, organisations are supporting and learning from each other and promoting an ethos of collaboration over competition. There is evidence that the level of shared understanding of local needs, hotspots, assets and referral routes has improved because stronger partnerships have been established. Looking to the future, continued partnership working will facilitate the alignment of local organisations' resources and agendas.

Stakeholders expressed optimism that the local VCS associated with the consortiums will continue to work towards operating with a more collective voice. This voice may be used to influence local decision making, identify and respond to system challenges, and contribute to responses to local issues.

3.2 **Key finding 2: Consortiums have attained higher status amongst wider system partners. In some areas, the local voluntary and community sector is becoming more highly valued by statutory partners**

The status of consortiums within the local system has increased over the past three years, and local MyEnds programmes have contributed to this. Where networks have matured, there are reports that wider system organisations are seeing these networks as a 'go-to' for cross-sectoral local connections. For example, THICN's Board, which is made up of key stakeholders from consortium partners organisations, the local authority and the police, has increased local awareness of who is responsible for the local MyEnds programme. Consortium partners have subsequently gained more awareness, and the Board has become a 'go-to' for local groups to direct queries and information towards.

There is also some evidence that statutory partners are increasingly recognising the value of the voluntary and community sector in enabling community-informed responses to violence and its reduction. For example, in some sites like THICN and Ecosystem Coldharbour, consortium partners have built closer relationships with key local authority teams and with the police over the course of MyEnds. Combined with their ability to engage communities directly and quickly, this has

meant that they are able to support statutory partners to gather information and connect with communities.

Equally, consortium partners and the wider VCS – including grassroots organisations – have demonstrated their ability to engage communities in their own activities and interventions (see thematic reports 3 and 4). Statutory partners are increasingly recognising that the VCS is well placed to do this and that they therefore have a key role in community-based responses to violence. For example, in the qualitative commentary in their monitoring data returns several sites refer to detached and outreach teams as being important for increasing the level of recognition of local programmes, especially by statutory partners.



Future focus: Enhance VRU support available to consortiums to increase their status with statutory partners

Whilst consortium partners' status with statutory partners has developed as they have demonstrated their value through delivery, this has necessarily taken time to unfold.

As consortium partners' strengths have typically lain in community engagement, they have naturally focused on this element of strengthening community networks, particularly in the early stages of MyEnds. They have generally required more support to develop relationships with statutory partners, in which they often have less experience. The VRU supported current MyEnds consortiums to gain buy-in from statutory partners – especially local authorities – at an early stage of the programme, by requiring them to endorse consortiums' bids for MyEnds funding. The VRU have also liaised with statutory partners throughout the delivery of MyEnds. In the next iteration of MyEnds, it may be useful for the VRU to explore additional ways to promote early buy-in from statutory partners. These could include:

- **Supporting sites to understand governance structures, key departments and roles within local authorities, police, schools, and other statutory partners with responsibility or interest in violence reduction**, and how MyEnds can support their work and bolster local capacity to respond to violence. There will be some local nuances to these relationships that may be informed by community needs assessments, but some information is likely to apply across local areas. The VRU may consider developing a checklist for building relationships with statutory partners that is applicable across sites.
- **Harnessing the VRU's existing relationships with relevant local authorities, and using the VRU's status to develop new relationships** with relevant departments and staff, and broker relationships between these partners and consortium partners. This could include advocating for a role within each MyEnds local authority that is responsible for their partnership with MyEnds. This could help increase local authority collaboration on MyEnds, and avoid overdependence on relationships developed with individual staff, which risk disruption as staff move roles.

- **Highlighting and facilitating opportunities for sites to engage in forums involving statutory partners**, where they can show that their skillsets are complementary to statutory partners' areas of work (such as reach into the community and experience working with those involved in violence). The VRU could also support sites to use these forums to generate further opportunities for partnership working.

3.3 **Key finding 3: Communities have become more involved in shaping plans and activities when they have greater trust in the organisations delivering them**

Many sites have found that involving the community in shaping plans and activities was not possible until they had built a greater level of trust between organisations and the local community. Community members needed to feel confident that consortiums' commitment was genuine before they could share their views or participate in decision making. Consortiums have responded to this by addressing the community's immediate concerns and priorities.

For example, the parents group set up by Gamechangers found that parents from the local community themselves would benefit from support before they felt comfortable to contribute to the shaping of the consortium's plans. Please see thematic report 3 for further detail on community's engagement in decision making as part of grassroots grant rounds.

There is, however, a risk that some communities and young people most in need of support have not been reached, which highlights the continued need for establishing trusting relationships with communities and young people who are most in need of support. It is difficult to ascertain how far MyEnds has succeeded in engaging those most at risk of involvement in violence or most in need of support in consultation or decision making about violence reduction activities. For instance, the experience of developing One Flow One Brent's Youth Board suggests that participation in activities of this nature attract those young people who are already self-motivated to participate. While young people on the Board tap into their existing networks of young people, the types of networks available may consequently be restricted and therefore limit the Youth Board's ability to represent a range of young people from the local area.



Future focus: Support consortiums to (1) factor the time taken to build trust into programme planning, and (2) explore activities which have a dual function

Findings from the first iteration of MyEnds demonstrate that building trust with communities that have been affected by violence takes time. They also indicate that some activities can simultaneously build trust with communities and work towards a second outcome, such as offering a fun, diversionary activity or upskilling community members. Encouraging future MyEnds consortiums to think strategically about how to build trust quickly and

authentically with those affected by violence may support local programmes to mobilise more effectively. This may include:

- **In early stages of programme development, supporting sites to develop relationships with partners already engaging with community members and young people affected by violence.** This may include children's services, community safety teams, YOTs and PRUs. Developing these relationships will support sites to facilitate consultation with those engaged with these services, and use this to inform programme strategy. Simultaneously, sites can build intervention referral pathways with these partners, to support them to reach those affected by violence. Community members and young people may be encouraged to engage in consultation regarding a programme they may later access.
- **Ensuring there is sufficient support to encourage meaningful engagement from those are new to consultation activity.** This may include personal and professional development opportunities such as mentoring and training, for example in public speaking and to support their understanding of the systems and sectors they are seeking to influence. It may also include emotional and mental health support; remuneration; and access to technology and suitable work space. Offering this kind of support may increase people's capacity and confidence to engage, enabling them to do so in a meaningful way that supports them personally and professionally, alongside the development of the programme.

3.4 **Key finding 4: Building partnerships between organisations and trust with the community has enabled promising examples of improved collaboration following critical incidents and has expanded the range of activities available in the preventative space**

The impact of strengthened community networks on violence reduction efforts is particularly visible in the way that networks respond to violence having happened in the community. The partnerships which have developed between organisations, such as through THICN's Board, are facilitating a collaborative and adaptive approach to responding to violent incidents. The increased level of trust between community members and local organisations, such as in Ecosystem Coldharbour, has meant that consortium partners can provide support for communities following critical incidents. Examples of this support include structured community meetings and food trucks to encourage young people to avoid isolating themselves and to engage with other sources of support.

Consortiums are also using insights generated through engagement with the community to prioritise and deliver activities which aim to prevent young people from becoming involved in violence or exploitation and which are embedded in local communities. This is visible in the grassroots organisations being supported to deliver interventions locally (please see thematic report 3), and in the overall profile of interventions which are being delivered (please see thematic report 4).

3.5 **Key finding 5: Network strengthening activity has contributed to stronger foundations for collaborative, community-based violence reduction. The extent to which this has reduced violence in local areas is hard to determine at this stage**

Across MyEnds sites, there is a shared understanding that strengthened partnerships between local organisations, communities and young people make for more effective collective work towards violence reduction. Stronger partnerships exist as the MyEnds programme draws to a close, and the programme has played a part in developing these. This provides a better foundation for developing and delivering collaborative and community-based responses to violence.

There are some challenges in determining whether this is yet resulting in a reduced incidence of violence in MyEnds areas. For instance, linking some of the more preventative and diversionary interventions to likely violence reduction would require providers to articulate a clear theory of violence reduction, grounded in the evidence of what works, and then to determine the impact of the interventions through robust outcomes measurement. It is arguably not reasonable to expect small scale interventions and providers to have the resources and skills to develop these theoretical models and corresponding outcomes measurement approaches. Equally, it might take time for the cumulative impact of these interventions to translate into an overall reduction in incidence of violence at a local level.

Future MyEnds consortiums will undoubtedly benefit from community needs assessments, which will help further articulate local need and strategy. That said, through encouraging approaches and strategies which are driven by local knowledge, the first iteration of MyEnds has supported community networks to develop by promoting activities which are feasible and relevant at a local level.

Sustaining and extending strong community networks will always be a work in progress. Qualitative commentary in sites' monitoring data returns reveals that for some sites, staffing has posed challenges. For instance staff sickness and capacity challenges can limit sites' abilities to maintain strong community networks. Communities' and young people's priorities and experiences will evolve, as will the context for and nature of violence, and the landscape of local organisations who can contribute to addressing violence and its causes. If local organisations and communities can maintain momentum following MyEnds, they will likely remain in a stronger position to work together to understand, address and prevent violence in their local areas.



Future focus: Embed programme sustainability within consortiums' planning from the outset

Strengthening community networks is crucial for ensuring that the achievements of the MyEnds programme are sustained. This means that the key findings detailed in this report likely contribute to the sustainability of the

programme, because promoting collaborations between VCS and statutory organisations will support longer-term sustainable action.

In particular, where there are activities which do not rely on specific resources to maintain them, it is likely that some of the progress made during MyEnds in building stronger community networks will be maintained following the programme. For example, improved relationships and connections between partner organisations will likely persist as long as the staff members involved remain in local roles. However, some activities like ongoing engagement of communities and young people need continued resourcing.




Planning for sustainability as early as possible can support consortiums and other local partners to maintain and build on their progress once the programme ends. A growing emphasis on monitoring and evaluation will support teams in both the VRU and local consortiums to demonstrate the longer-term impact of the programme.

In the first iteration of MyEnds, London's VRU and MyEnds sites have focused on sustainability, especially in the final year of delivery. The second round of MyEnds represents an opportunity to explore ways to build in sustainability planning even earlier in the programme period, drawing on successful examples from the first iteration of the programme. (See thematic report 3 for examples of sustainability within onwards grants and capacity building support to grassroots organisations).

4 How have network strengthening activities been delivered?

4.1 **Key finding 6: Each consortium has emphasised different types of network strengthening activity within a hyper-localised and innovative approach**

The MyEnds model deliberately builds in flexibility for consortiums and their wider partners to deliver activities to strengthen community networks while taking a hyper-localised approach. As a result, consortiums have prioritised different types of activity in order to best suit the varied communities, assets, needs and networks within the different MyEnds areas and consortiums. Examples of activity types alongside their purpose and respective case studies are:

 Activity type	 Purpose	 Case studies
Strengthening networks within and between VCS and statutory partners who might play a role in violence prevention and reduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make partnership working between local partners more effective. • Increase the recognition and involvement of the VCS by statutory services as a key agent in engaging communities and generating locally-relevant approaches to violence prevention and reduction. 	Chapter 6. Using a Board structure to build closer partnerships between organisations: THICN
Engaging communities in dialogue, planning, decision-making and action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve professionals' understanding of communities. • Improve relationships and collaboration between organisations and the communities they serve. 	Chapter 7. Community engagement to build trust and collaboration: Ecosystem Coldharbour
Engaging young people informally within the community or via interventions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raise young people's awareness of support available to them. • Take the temperature on current risks and factors contributing to violence. • Hear from young people on the support they would like. 	Chapter 8. Engaging young people informally through outreach in the community: Rise Up East
Engaging young people in structured activities to support MyEnds design and delivery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase young people's involvement in co-design, decision-making and delivery on approaches to violence prevention and reduction. 	Chapter 9. Youth Board to increase young people's role in decision-making: One Flow One Brent Chapter 10. Involving young people in police cultural competency training: MyEnds West Croydon

Consortiums have displayed a high degree of innovation as they have sought to find new and effective ways of engaging communities and young people and promoting improved partnership working. This is reflected by the range of activities showcased in case studies. Qualitative commentary in sites' monitoring data returns further emphasises the importance of innovative approaches, especially to engaging young people via structured activities. Examples include creative opportunities such as launching podcast sessions and comics.

4.2 **Key finding 7: Consortiums have sought to build more collaborative local networks through broadening and strengthening inter-agency partnerships**

The MyEnds model specifies that local programmes should be led by a consortium of local voluntary and community sector (VCS) organisations. This builds in a structure and expectation of collaboration and partnership working between these partners from the outset. Consortium partners have dedicated time and attention to further cultivating partnerships within their consortiums.

Consortium partners have also sought to develop relationships and communication with wider local VCS organisations and statutory partners, such as the police and local authority – especially community safety, children's services, youth justice services and gangs units. To do this, they have sometimes established new forums such as THICN's Board to oversee the delivery of MyEnds or ACT-AS-1's monthly Roundtable meetings for partners working with young people impacted by violence and exploitation. More often, they have joined existing local multi-agency forums.

Qualitative commentary in sites' monitoring data returns suggests that organising structured meetings or events has proven a valuable means of bringing together a range of community members, grassroots organisations and statutory partners. Examples include West Croydon's Friday meetings, One Flow One Brent's She Is Summit and Ecosystem Coldharbour's Safeguarding Schools Transitional Event. According to monitoring data, a total of 603 community events were held in the extension year.

The most promising relationships with statutory partners have been developed where sites have built this into their strategies from an early stage. For example, working closely with the local authority was a core aim for Gamechangers. They therefore took time at the start of the programme to understand local authority governance, and the key roles and departments with responsibility for or interest in violence reduction. They then targeted their partnership working efforts accordingly, promoting their programme and building relationships with those with influence in the violence reduction space and who were likely to support Gamechangers' contribution to violence reduction in Southwark. This helped them to optimise the time they dedicated to the strengthening collaborative network strand of MyEnds. In year three, they also started to take a similar approach to education, understanding its governance and building relationships with relevant partners in the local authority, schools and academies.

'We made it a duty to put MyEnds in the mouths of the councillors, to understand how the local authority and its departments work, and who we needed to speak to.'

Local Programme Manager in a MyEnds area

4.3 **Key finding 8: Local MyEnds programmes have honed their approaches to engaging communities and young people based on learning through implementation. They have sought ways to build more extensive engagement in delivery and decision making**

The MyEnds model promotes a culture of ongoing reflection and learning. Consortiums and their wider partners have applied this in their activities to strengthen community networks. They have adapted and expanded on their approaches to engaging communities and young people in conversations about violence and violence reduction, based on learning about what works best locally.

Consortiums and partners have also sought opportunities to move from engagement focused mostly on consultation towards greater community and young people involvement in delivery and/or decision making about activities to reduce violence. This marks a significant shift in culture towards embedding co-development with young people wherever possible. Some consortiums like Rise Up East have involved young people in delivery by promoting peer-to-peer approaches, particularly in the delivery of detached and outreach work. Elsewhere, as in One Flow One Brent, young people have had opportunities to participate in decision-making forums such as youth boards or to interact with VCS and statutory stakeholders.

In qualitative commentary within their monitoring data returns, consortiums demonstrate their commitment to continuing to promote young people's active engagement and participation in local networks. Consortiums identify some strategies which seem to have bolstered engagement with young people: showing active responsiveness to feedback, upskilling young people and empowering them to feel their voices are not only heard but valued. Monitoring data also indicates that for some consortiums, by involving young people in decision-making panels whose remit is to award onward grants, MyEnds has offered a new space in which providers can demonstrate that young people's voices are being listened to.



Future focus: Increase the involvement of communities and young people in setting strategy for MyEnds and violence reduction

Most of the promising examples of involving communities and young people in decision making about local MyEnds programmes are at a more operational level, e.g. involving community members in making their area safer, or in decisions about small grants allocation (see thematic report 3). In the second round of MyEnds, the VRU team and local areas could explore opportunities and techniques to involve communities and young people to a greater degree in setting the strategy for violence reduction in their local area.

4.4 **Key finding 9: Effective engagement approaches have reflected important components of the MyEnds model and have demonstrated techniques which could be replicated in the future**

In engaging communities and young people, consortiums have drawn on several key components of the MyEnds model: outreach and detached youth work, peer to peer approaches, trauma-aware approaches and culturally competent approaches. Many of these approaches and principles are also important within the development and delivery interventions (see thematic report 4).

In addition, consortiums' approaches have demonstrated a number of techniques which have proved successful in encouraging people to engage with consortium and wider partners. Some techniques have also helped to promote engagement which moves beyond one-off consultation towards more ongoing involvement in developing or delivering violence reduction activity. The main categories of engagement approaches are summarised below, along with illustrative examples from MyEnds sites.

- **Addressing the community's immediate concerns and priorities, as a means of engaging people and building trust.** In Ecosystem Coldharbour, consortium partners have built trust by demonstrating a response to community feedback around concerns about violence gathered during "community truths" events. In Gamechangers, a parents group was formed as a 'hook' to address a gap which was identified in support available for parents, and offered parents an opportunity to engage with consortium partners.
- **Ensuring that the people involved in engaging communities and young people are credible to them.** In Rise Up East, detached outreach workers have extensive local knowledge and networks, and are skilled in engaging young people. One Flow One Brent has run football events between teams on three local estates (and sometimes a police team). The organiser of the events is a skilled youth worker who is well respected locally.
- **Upskilling community members and young people to enable them to be confident and skilled to participate and to engage others.** One Flow One Brent has provided training opportunities in specific areas such as emergency first aid and mental health first aid to members of its youth board. Ecosystem Coldharbour has funded compassionate listening training for resident volunteers and trauma informed training for a group of mothers who have lost children to gun and knife crime, who are now able to offer support to others in their community.
- **Tapping into existing community groups and forums to engage people on their own terms or build on previous successful engagement.** West Croydon has tapped into Friday meetings which are a regular and well-attended community engagement forum attended by cross-sectoral organisations and community members. Home Cooked has produced a film on mental health and adverse childhood experiences and taken it into schools and colleges in order to reach parents and students there.

- **Providing or using the right physical spaces in the local areas, to take engagement activities to people in the places where they are already.** Detached outreach work in Rise Up East offers a recognisable and consistent presence in open areas in the community, and focuses on areas perceived to be at high risk of critical incidents. ACT-AS-1's onward grants programme has used coffee morning events in the local community to connect with potential grantees and host community panels to decide on grant awards.
- **Demonstrating to people that their views and experiences are translating into action for change.** In multiple sites, additional measures (e.g., bleed kits in THICN) or information sharing following critical incidents has demonstrated consortiums' commitment to the community. In West Croydon, the consortium has facilitated young people participating in police training, demonstrating a commitment to taking discussion beyond the Friday meeting space.



Case studies

The rest of this report consists of five case studies which showcase some of the ways in which MyEnds sites have developed their local networks. The case studies focus on:

1. An example of a governance mechanism for strengthening partnerships in Tower Hamlets.
2. Mechanisms for developing community engagement by building trust and collaboration in Lambeth.
3. An example of community outreach work being used to further a consortium's community engagement work in Hackney.
4. An example of a youth board as a co-production mechanism in Brent.
5. How a police training session is being targeted as a means of improving relationships between the police, the community and young people in Croydon.

5 Using a Board to strengthen partnerships between organisations: Tower Hamlets

5.1 Overview of activity



Key findings

- In Tower Hamlets, the THICN Board was set up as a mechanism for a small group of local stakeholders to monitor and track progress of the local MyEnds programme.
- The Board provides a forum in which stakeholders can take collective accountability for the delivery of the local MyEnds programme and problem-solve collaboratively.
- A key success of the Board has been the strengthening of relationships between local stakeholders. It has promoted direct communication channels between VCS and statutory representatives, both during and outside of Board meetings themselves.
- If the Board were to continue, it could look to develop channels to incorporate more direct input from young people and community members into the Board's decisions and discussions.



Overview and purpose

- The THICN Board is made up of a group of key stakeholders from consortium partner organisations, the local authority and police. It includes stakeholders in both operational and strategic roles.
- The Board aims to monitor the progress of the THICN programme and to ensure the consortium is meeting its aims in the local community.



Rationale

Stakeholders involved in developing the THICN MyEnds programme recognised that a 'broad community coalition' of different organisations and sectors was important in working towards violence reduction on the Isle of Dogs. The Board is a structure through which this coalition can be brought together.

The Board has two overarching objectives:

1. To keep stakeholders up to date with THICN's activity.
2. To promote and facilitate the sharing of information and feedback among stakeholders.



Development

The concept of a Board was initially discussed when the local MyEnds bid was being drawn up. Once the THICN consortium had been formed and the MyEnds programme had begun with a programme manager in place, the Board was established. The Board involves consortium partners and stakeholders who aren't consortium members such as council directors, councillors, police representatives and operational delivery partners.



Delivery

The Board meets on a quarterly basis. Outside of the meeting space, stakeholders continue to communicate through less formal channels.

The Board builds on existing partnerships between consortium partner organisations. It also develops new relationships and strengthens existing relationships between consortium partners and statutory partners, like the local authority and police. These partners are able to share information and feedback within and between Board meetings, both to monitor the progress of the THICN programme and to make decisions about approaches and resources to promote violence reduction or the conditions for it.

The Board also employs data analysts who feed insights into meeting.



Outcomes and mechanisms of systems change

- Strengthened relationships between Board members and between their respective organisations.
- Increased accountability for delivery of the THICN programme.
- Higher profile of the Isle of Dogs among local stakeholders in Tower Hamlets.

5.2 Relationship to the MyEnds model

5.2.1 Joined-up working

The Board builds on strong existing relationships between VCS organisations in Tower Hamlets and brings in decision makers from the council. Building this network promotes a collaborative focus on violence reduction on the Isle of Dogs.

5.2.2 Incident response

The Board has played a role in promoting a coordinated initial response to recent critical incidents, in order to reduce the risk of further conflicts. For example, THICN Board members who have strong relationships in the local community were involved in police communications following a recent critical incident. As a result, the police were able to reassure the community in a way which they may not have been able to do otherwise.

5.2.3 Sharing access to the resources, knowledge and skills required to make change at multiple levels across the system

The Board supports local networks to better monitor and adapt to emerging needs. It facilitates a direct connection between those most informed of local need (members representing on-the-ground local organisations) and those with greater decision-making power (council directors such as the Head of Community Safety). The Board also employs data analysts, enabling collective monitoring of the programme through discussion of data-based insights at Board meetings.

5.3 Contribution to community networks and partnership working

5.3.1 Strengthened relationships between Board members and their respective organisations

The Board has given its members a reason to come together on a quarterly basis with a common goal: to monitor the progress of the THICN programme and to share insights into how the programme's activities are running and being received. In turn, this has prompted more regular, consistent and direct lines of communication between consortium partners, operational staff and decision-makers from the local authority. Strengthened relationships are evidenced by local stakeholders who said they are able to 'pick up the phone' to each other in a more informal way than previously.

"The Board makes connections informal – takes [them] outside of formal channels, we are like a team together – we work for different people but have the same goals."

THICN Board stakeholder

5.3.2 Increased accountability for delivery of the THICN programme

The Board has brought accountability to the local MyEnds programme in two ways. First, by bringing together consortium partners and statutory representatives, the Board has increased awareness of who is leading the different components of the THICN programme and therefore to whom they should direct queries or information. There is some evidence that this awareness is extending to local residents.

“People may ask ‘who’s leading this project?’, ‘who’s responsible for it?’ and the Board can provide that accountability to stakeholders and local people.”

THICN Board stakeholder

Second, the constructive atmosphere at Board meetings means that stakeholders delivering MyEnds feel comfortable to discuss things which haven’t gone as planned. The Board members collaborate to troubleshoot and explore solutions.

5.3.3 Higher profile of the Isle of Dogs among local stakeholders in Tower Hamlets

Stakeholders conveyed that historically, fewer resources have been allocated to supporting young people on the Isle of Dogs. The Board has played a role in raising awareness of violence taking place in the local area and understanding of some of the factors which might be contributing to violence. For instance, the Board consults a publicly available interactive map on which local residents anonymously flag their concerns about local safety. Sharing this information with stakeholders who can make decisions about funding and resource allocation has resulted in more attention and resources being focused on the Isle of Dogs.

5.4 Key learning



Positive practice: Involving people in local roles with a high level of authority and decision-making power. The Board is relatively small in the size of its membership, but the attendees that it does have are well-networked and have local decision-making power. This is key to the Board’s success, because it allows for questions and ideas raised in meetings to be investigated or actioned immediately, which in turn motivates other Board members to maintain momentum.



Challenge: Formally incorporating local young people’s voices into Board meetings and activity. The Board relies on operational staff working closely with local young people to gather and feed in young people’s views. There are no formal channels through which young people can share their views with the Board. The Board’s ability to monitor progress and impact of the THICN programme, as well as understand and respond to emerging local needs or community preferences, could be strengthened by incorporating young people’s views more formally into discussions.



Positive practice: A culture of openness and accountability. Board meetings are an open forum in which stakeholders are encouraged to share things that have ‘gone wrong’ within the local MyEnds project. The Board works as a group to solve immediate issues and look reflectively at past

incidents that could have been handled differently. Showcasing vulnerabilities and mistakes has contributed to both relationship building and the Board's ability to effectively track the progress of the project.



Future opportunity: Using the interactive map to capture data in more different ways. The interactive map tool has the potential to be used in more diverse ways. For example, operational staff could use the map as a visual tool when talking to young people and encourage them to contribute their views within the map. This would provide a direct channel of information from young people to the Board.

6 Community engagement to build trust and collaboration: Lambeth

6.1 Overview of activity



Key findings

- In Lambeth, Ecosystem Coldharbour uses a range of activities to engage with local resident groups in the main areas covered by their MyEnds programme, both on an ongoing basis and in response to critical incidents.
- These activities have built relationships and greater community trust of consortium partners and other organisations working locally. This has strengthened the foundations for organisations to work with the community to prevent and reduce violence.
- The community engagement work and related activities have also contributed to improved relationships between the police and community members, and to improved information sharing and availability of support following critical incidents.
- In the future, finding ways to ensure that ongoing community engagement outside of critical incident responses retains a demonstrable link to understanding violence and violence reduction might help to ensure that it contributes as much as possible to the ultimate aim of MyEnds.



Overview and purpose

- Ecosystem Coldharbour uses a range of different activities to engage with local resident groups in the main areas covered by their MyEnds programme, both on an ongoing basis and in response to critical incidents.
- The primary aim of the work is to build community trust in the consortium partners and other organisations working locally, in order to work towards better responses to violence.



Rationale

Community engagement was a high priority from the outset for Ecosystem Coldharbour consortium partners. They wanted to build effective, regular and sustained community engagement into the local MyEnds programme because historically organisations working in the area had not successfully engaged local people in ways that built trust and provided the foundations for working together to reduce violence. The engagement approaches build in community-led activities and promote involvement and action from a wide range of organisations working locally.



Development

Community members were consulted from the beginning of the Ecosystem Coldharbour MyEnds programme. Events called "community truths" explored community members' views on solutions to violence in the area, in order to use this information to guide the work of the Ecosystem Coldharbour consortium. After this, a programme of regular community engagement activities was established, alongside increased community engagement and support in the period following any critical incident.



Delivery

Consortium partner organisations engage community members directly. They also facilitate engagement between community members affected by violence, and between community members and other local grassroots and statutory organisations. Some activities promote ongoing dialogue to share views and information, or to spark new ideas and relationships. Examples include monthly coffee mornings at different sites across the three main estates, and public meetings following critical incidents. Other activities respond to the needs and priorities of community members following a critical incident. Ecosystem Coldharbour coordinates increased presence from police and support services, uses food trucks and meals to encourage young people to engage, and facilitates supportive contact between families who have been affected by violence.



Outcomes and mechanisms of systems change

- Increased trust of consortium partner organisations by community members.
- Improved relationships between police and community members.
- Improved information sharing and availability of support following critical incidents.

6.2 Relationship to the MyEnds model

6.2.1 Developing routes for community engagement

Ecosystem Coldharbour has conducted regular community engagement on the three estates in the area from the beginning of the MyEnds programme. This began with “community truths” events to elicit residents’ suggestions on how to address violence locally. It extended to regular community coffee mornings to inform community members about services and activities available locally (both as part of MyEnds and outside of it), and to hear their opinions and concerns.

This generated new routes for community engagement, which have been sustained throughout the programme. An important feature of the engagement approach is that it involves a wide range of partner organisations and is not restricted to discussions between consortium partners and community members:

“The emphasis on truly engaging and involving residents and everyone else has created a true and proper ecosystem – we don’t do everything, but we have lots of people in different places who are able to play their own roles.”

Ecosystem Coldharbour stakeholder

6.2.2 Adapting to emerging need and critical incidents

As a result of the more regular community engagement, the consortium is now better placed to understand community needs and also to convey to the community that it is building responses to these needs. Demonstrating action in response to community feedback is key part of the community engagement strategy in Ecosystem Coldharbour:

“They can see that someone is taking action. For them, they are no longer saying ‘we talked about this four years ago and we are still talking about it’, they are saying ‘we have X, Y and Z.’”

Ecosystem Coldharbour stakeholder

The strongest example of this strategy in action is the community engagement and follow up activity immediately after a critical incident in the area. Ecosystem Coldharbour leads a series of community meetings following an incident, which facilitate engagement, discussion, planning and action between the community, consortium and statutory partners. This is outlined in further detail in section 6.4.

6.2.3 Incident response

The community meetings described above form part of the incident response to which Ecosystem Coldharbour contributes. Outreach workers and police also increase their presence in the area during these times. Alongside this, the programme has introduced or bolstered a number of other resources and activities to support communities immediately after a critical incident. These promote safety and feelings of safety, increase the availability of services and support, and provide opportunities to engage young people and those affected by

violence in support. They also foster the involvement of community members themselves – including those with lived experience – in responding to incidents.

Elements of incident response enabled by Ecosystem Coldharbour

Ecosystem Coldharbour has funded training for community members, to provide them with additional skills when supporting their communities following an incident. For example, it funded trauma awareness training for Circle of Life Ignite, a group of mothers who have lost children to gun and knife crime and who now provide emotional and practical support to families who have recently lost children in the same circumstances. It also funded compassionate listening training for resident volunteers, who are available to support others in their community and can refer them to support services.

Ecosystem Coldharbour provides food trucks on each estate for a few weeks after critical incidents. For the most at risk young people, it also offers small group cooking sessions. Consortium partners recognise that young people tend to hide and isolate themselves following incidents when tensions are high. The food trucks bring food to young people when they do not feel able to safely leave their estate. They also present an opportunity to engage them in support and other services, such as trauma and violence wellbeing support offered through Marcus Lipton and CHIPS.

6.3 Contribution to community networks and critical incident response

6.3.1 Increased trust of consortium partner organisations by community members

The increased and regular engagement between consortium partner organisations and community members has reinforced opportunities for ongoing dialogue. Suggestions from community members have been incorporated into aspects of Ecosystem Coldharbour's MyEnds programme or into actions for wider system partners, enabling community members to see that their opinions are translating into action. Consortium partners' active presence following critical incidents has further established them as invested in supporting local communities when they need it. Stakeholders reported that this has increased community members' trust in consortium partners' commitment to the community:

"[There is] a difference in terms of people thinking there is an opportunity for change."

Ecosystem Coldharbour stakeholder

6.3.2 Improved relationships between police and community members

As well as this increased trust of consortium partners, there is some evidence that community engagement facilitated by Ecosystem Coldharbour is also helping to improve relationships between the police and community members. In particular, the community meetings following critical incidents have contributed to better relationships by promoting an open and direct line of communication between communities and the police at a time of high tension.

“Residents now have specified names of the police who they will relate to and trust. When we have an incident, they will ask for specific local officers to be on the estate – those are the ones that everyone trusts and works with, including young people.”

Ecosystem Coldharbour stakeholder

It is important to note that there are other factors outside of the work of Ecosystem Coldharbour that might also be contributing to better community-police relations. For instance, outside of MyEnds, police are focusing more resources on engagement work with the local community and there is an increasing emphasis on providing police officers with an understanding of culturally competent approaches to working with communities.

6.3.3 Improved information sharing and availability of support following critical incidents

Ecosystem's Coldharbour's role in establishing and facilitating the series of community meetings, and coordinating or resourcing activities and support following a critical incident, has contributed to an improved incident response locally. It has led to more opportunities for the community and service providers to collaborate to share information and take action following an incident, and for people to be offered and engage with support that they might need.

6.4 Key learning



Positive practice: structured community meetings following critical incidents. Ecosystem Coldharbour has developed and facilitates a series of community meetings following an incident of serious violence. This structured approach can be replicated and promotes dialogue, action planning and action immediately following an incident.

Community meeting structure following a critical incident

Meeting 1: residents lead this meeting, a safe and structured space to share their concerns and knowledge following an incident. Ecosystem Coldharbour partners join the meeting, noting concerns and feedback.

Meeting 2: statutory partners (including police and relevant housing associations) meet with consortium partners to prepare for further engagement with residents.

Meeting 3: residents, statutory partners and consortium partners meet to develop an action plan collaboratively. Residents provide guidance on how organisations can best to support them during these times and how to reduce the risk of future similar incidents.

Meeting 4 and further meetings: residents, statutory partners and consortium partners meet to monitor progress on agreed actions. Residents may then continue to meet without involvement of any organisations.



Positive practice: Demonstrating responsiveness to community feedback and priorities as a way of building community engagement and trust.

This was an important aspect of Ecosystem Coldharbour's community engagement strategy from the outset, and it appears to have yielded fruit in enabling partners to build greater trust with local communities. It may therefore be a useful starting point for future similar programmes involving community engagement.



Future opportunity: Ensuring ongoing community engagement is more closely focused on reducing or preventing violence.

The community engagement following critical incidents and the initial "community truth" events have been closely focused on both supporting the community following a violent incident and preventing future violence. The ongoing engagement through events like coffee mornings arguably has less of a clear focus on solutions to violence because it involves facilitating informal networking and dialogue within and between consortium partners, wider voluntary and community sector organisations and the community at events like coffee mornings. Finding ways to ensure that this engagement maintains a demonstrable link to understanding violence and violence reduction might help to ensure that it contributes as much as possible to the ultimate aim of MyEnds.

7 Engaging young people informally through community outreach: Hackney

7.1 Overview of activity



Key findings

- In Hackney, Change in Youth, a youth-centred organisation, offers a detached outreach function on behalf of Rise Up East. It aims to raise young people's awareness of – and engagement with – local services, including those delivered by the consortium. It also helps to take the temperature from young people in the local area, to build a better understanding of local risk of violence and of young people's views on service provision.
- The work of Change in Youth has resulted in increased referrals of young people into local services, greater awareness among of the local community of Rise Up East consortium partner organisations, and the development of supportive relationships between local young people and the Change in Youth team.
- Consistency and visibility in the community play a central role in Change in Youth's approach. The team walk around the Hackney Wick and Homerton area at the same time every day, wearing a distinctive and recognisable uniform, with the aim to start conversations with local young people and signpost them to local opportunities.
- In future, Change in Youth could be more strategic and targeted in their recruitment of young people into their outreach team, specifically targeting the recruitment of young people aged 21 and under.



Overview and purpose

- Change in Youth is an independent youth-focused organisation providing a detached outreach service on Rise Up East's behalf.
- It aims to reach young people in the community, increase their engagement with local opportunities and services, and gain their insights to inform service provision and responses to risk of violence.



Rationale

Change in Youth aims to increase the presence and visibility of outreach workers in the local community, particularly among young people. Outreach workers are relatively young (aged 21-28) and are generally from the local areas which are the focus of the outreach. These are deliberate choices, to increase the likelihood of workers being credible and approachable to the young people they are aiming to reach, and to capitalise on their local knowledge and understanding. As well as its aim to reach and engage young people, it also seeks to provide youth leadership opportunities for those involved in the outreach team.



Development

Change in Youth began working with Rise Up East in the summer of 2022 to offer a detached outreach function as part of the MyEnds programme. The methods and aims of the outreach team have stayed consistent since the beginning. The introduction of a uniform (a blue tracksuit with Change in Youth logo) has significantly boosted the visibility and recognisability of the team and its work.



Delivery

The outreach team consists of 12-15 outreach workers. They walk around the Hackney Wick and Homerton area in pairs every day between 3pm and 6pm and approach community members (mostly young people but occasionally adults). They shift the focus of their activities as needed, to respond to changing information about areas where the risk of violence might be highest.

The team has built positive relationships with young people, some of whom they encounter on a regular basis. On every approach, the team collects a few basic details from the person, and offers information and referrals to local services based on the young person's needs and interests. Services are usually within the 16+ network of community organisations for Hackney youth.



Outcomes and mechanisms of systems change

- Raised awareness of local services, including those offered by Rise Up East consortium partners.
- Increased referrals of young people into organisations in the 16+ network.
- Improved skills and confidence for individual outreach workers.

7.2 Relationship to the MyEnds model

7.2.1 Locally informed practice

Change in Youth works collaboratively with other local organisations to identify areas that may be at high risk of a critical incident. Change in Youth outreach workers then focus more of their work on the area of concern.

“We are part of an intel group. I got an email [...] about a particular area of concern and asking for the detached outreach team to go out there.”

Rise up East Change in Youth stakeholder

Some Change in Youth outreach workers are active local community members themselves. They use their extensive local knowledge during their work, such as:

- Knowledge about where young people in the area congregate (e.g., near a particular community centre) and at what times (e.g., after school).
- Experience of having been approached by youth workers in the past, which supports their understanding of how to make an approach that will be received positively. This includes being friendly, informal and relationship focused.

7.2.2 Raising awareness and community outreach.

A key part of Change in Youth's work is signposting and making referrals into the Hackney 16+ network. An offer of information and referral is made to every person that is approached.

The Hackney 16+ network includes more than 80 local organisations offering services and opportunities for young people. The organisations offer services relating to employment and job clubs, youth clubs, sports, courses on finance and creative skills, as well as safeguarding and mental health support.

Change in Youth also gathers information from young people about their views on services and the types of activities they would like to see in their local community. This is a source of information to feed into future programme and service design.

7.3 Contribution to increased youth engagement in local services

7.3.1 Increased awareness of local services, including those offered by Rise Up East

Young people are not always aware of the opportunities or services available in their local area due to this information not reaching them where they are. Change in Youth addresses this by using outreach as a platform for sharing information about what's available. The Change in Youth team hands out business cards with a QR code on. When young people scan this with their phone, it shows information about local organisations and services.

7.3.2 Increased referrals of young people into the Hackney 16+ network

Change in Youth outreach workers reported that they have referred lots of the young people they have met during outreach into the 16+ network and other local services. Local services are aware of how effective the Change in Youth outreach team are at generating referrals, and often reach out to them directly to ask them to signpost young people to their services. Part of the reason for the Change in Youth team's success in generating referrals is their proactive approach. The team does not wait to be asked to make referrals, and it does not wait until the second or third time they meet a young person – it offers service referral and information on every single interaction.

7.3.3 Strong relationships between outreach workers and local young people

The stakeholders we spoke to reported that the outreach team creates positive relationships with local young people. This contributes to building a stronger local support network for young people, which may have the potential to act as a preventative mechanism against violence in the future.

“[The purpose is] to show them that people are there for them – to make sure they feel they are being heard.”

Rise Up East Change in Youth stakeholder

Several aspects of the team's work contribute to these positive relationships:

- Consistency of the outreach approach. The outreach workers walk around the same areas of Hackney Wick and Homerton at the same time every day. This means they regularly see the same young people and have built positive relationships with them over time.
- Visibility due to recognisable uniforms. Stakeholders stressed the value of the blue Change in Youth tracksuits that all outreach workers wear. They are now well known by local young people who live in the area.

“I delivered a workshop in a school. The school said they see people in blue tracksuits, they see them daily and they get stopped by them. They are visible and know them. That has been powerful.”

Rise Up East Change in Youth stakeholder

- Outgoing and engaging outreach workers with extensive local knowledge. Stakeholders said it is important for the outreach workers to be outgoing and have positive attitudes in order to successfully engage young people. The outreach workers also use their own personal experiences and local knowledge, e.g. by visiting areas they know young people will be and approaching them in a friendly and natural way.

7.3.4 Improved local network response to areas of concern

Change in Youth are well known by local services and have a reputation as an effective outreach team. Organisations with local intelligence on areas at risk of violence request that Change in Youth concentrate their work in these areas. This demonstrates a responsive and targeted approach to changing locations and levels of risk. More information is required to determine whether this has contributed to reduced violence or helped avoid critical incidents in these areas.

7.4 Key learning



Positive practice: supporting engagement with wider local services through consistent presence and signposting young people to services they may not otherwise know about.

The outreach team offers information and referrals to local services on every single approach and interaction. Change in Youth uses uniforms and regular outreach hours to build their local profile and develop local support networks for young people. Change in Youth is well placed to share information and signpost community members to services. This in turn has led to an increased awareness of local services, including those offered by Rise Up East.



Challenge: evidencing impact using data. The Change in Youth team collects data from the young people they meet. This covers demographic characteristics, employment/education status, assessed needs and interests, services the young person has been signposted to, and whether this is a first or subsequent contact with the outreach team. This provides a useful overview of the young people reached, but it is difficult to use it to gauge impact. It may be useful for the team to explore ways of gathering data about whether young people go on to access services they are signposted or referred to. This would provide data on the outreach team's impact on young people's engagement with other services. Possible approaches include collecting this information directly from young people during subsequent contacts with the outreach team or following up directly with services (with consent).



Positive practice: responsive and targeted outreach in areas perceived to be at high risk of critical incidents.

Change in Youth uses local networks and information sharing to identify areas which might be at higher risk of critical incidents. It then focuses its outreach efforts on those areas in order to help to reduce the chance of these incidents occurring.



Future opportunity: recruitment of younger people into the outreach worker role.

The current age range of the outreach team is 21 to 28 years old. Although the outreach team are experienced and effective in their roles, they are at the older end of 'young people'. The outreach team should explore the recruitment of people aged 21 and under into the role. This would help to further Change in Youth's aim to be youth-led, enabling them to tap into the experience of younger people from the local community when delivering the outreach (who might be closer in age to the young people generally targeted by the team). It would also provide paid work opportunities and a pathway into a youth work career for young people in a slightly younger age bracket.

8 Youth Board to increase young people's role in decision-making: Brent

8.1 Overview of activity



Key findings

- In Brent, the Youth Board was set up following reflection on One Flow One Brent's Youth Steering Group. It aims to support inclusive decision making within the consortium and to offer positive opportunities to a small, targeted group of young people.
- The Youth Board has a positive impact on the young people involved, through providing resources and opportunities that young people choose to take up.
- It has also increased the level of say young people have in certain decisions, such as the allocation of small grant funding.
- If the Youth Board were to continue, it could explore ways of increasing the level of representation of young people more widely, and consider how to broaden the demographic profile of its members.



Overview and purpose

- One Flow One Brent's Youth Board involves eight young people who live in the consortium's target areas and who participate in meetings, training and other activities.
- The Board aims to facilitate the representation of young people's views within MyEnds decision-making and as part of other local projects, as well as to provide a group of young people with development opportunities.



Rationale

Stakeholders involved in One Flow One Brent identified that bringing young people together as a group was an important mechanism for hearing their views and channelling them into decision-making forums for MyEnds and other local work. The Board has several objectives, including:

1. Representing the opinions of young people within One Flow One Brent and acting as a monitoring mechanism for the consortium from the perspective of young people.
2. Involvement in small grant distribution and the design of local events.
3. Development opportunities for Youth Board members including training and work experience.



Development

At the beginning of the MyEnds programme, One Flow One Brent formed a Youth Steering Group. This group was large in size and it proved difficult to ensure that all members were able to contribute. One Flow One Brent reformed the group with fewer young people and named it the Youth Board. The Youth Board is run collaboratively by its members and three of the delivery team staff from the Young Brent Foundation.



Delivery

The Youth Board's main activities can be broken down into three categories:

1. Fortnightly catch-up meetings.
2. Training, workshops and extra-curricular activities.
3. External responsibilities to One Flow One Brent and the wider Brent community, such as attending consortium meetings.

The Youth Board has regular access to One Flow One Brent delivery staff through whom they can request specific opportunities such as help setting up work experience with local organisations.



Outcomes and mechanisms of systems change

- Improved professional skills for young people who are members of the Youth Board.
- Increased personal development opportunities for young people who are members of the Youth Board.
- Increased involvement of young people in discussions and initiatives which are happening locally to support violence reduction.

8.2 Relationship to the MyEnds model

8.2.1 Involving young people in design, planning and delivery

The Youth Board contributes to the planning and delivery of the One Flow One Brent programme. For instance, representatives from the Youth Board attend regular meetings between One Flow One Brent partners, where they are encouraged to share insights and reflections generated from their own experiences and from those of other young people living in the target areas.

Youth Board members gather the views of other young people through informal means. This is generally through discussions with friends and fellow school pupils based on young people's existing networks. Recently the Youth Board conducted a specific piece of research into why they struggled with recruiting boys and young men onto the Board. As part of this, Youth Board members approached male peers on their estates and at school to start conversations with them about why they were reluctant to engage.

"We all have our own different groups and personalities. There is another member who is really sporty, and she is able to bond more with that side of the community. We link with different groups."

One Flow One Brent Youth Board stakeholder

8.2.2 Developing routes for young people's engagement

Members of the Youth Board have benefitted from having been involved in an array of activities which extend beyond attending fortnightly meetings. For example, they have completed first aid training, been on residential trips, sat on grant giving panels and gained access to work experience placements at local organisations including One Flow One Brent consortium partner organisations. Some of these opportunities extend to other young people, and Board members encourage their peers to attend and engage in events and training sessions.

8.3 Contribution to increased youth participation in decision making

8.3.1 Increased representation of young people's views and opinions within the One Flow One Brent consortium and in wider local decision making

The Youth Board contributes to the One Flow One Brent consortium's understanding of what priorities are for young people. The Youth Board regularly attends consortium partner meetings and is encouraged to share views and opinions. Increasingly, major decisions made by One Flow One Brent are made with some level of consultation with the Youth Board.

"Our input and decisions help Young Brent Foundation make decisions on how they can make things youth friendly."

One Flow One Brent Youth Board stakeholder

In this way, the Youth Board provides a direct line into the experiences and views of young people growing up and living in the local area:

“We need to have a more direct ear into what’s going on in the community – what matters to young people, what is worrying them.”

One Flow One Brent Youth Board stakeholder

8.3.2 Increased involvement of young people in conversations and initiatives happening locally to support violence reduction

The Youth Board has brought together a group of young people who can be called upon to feed into conversations, some of which ultimately aim towards violence reduction. For example, members of the Youth Board have been involved in a network meeting which involved planning for a funding application to the VRU. At this meeting, young people posed questions and provided suggestions for the council and the police. The Youth Board has also worked on broader topics, such as contributing to a local panel working on housing.

8.3.3 Improved professional skills for young people who are Youth Board members

The different activities that Youth Board members are involved in have provided opportunities for them to develop professional skills. Taking part in large meetings has supported them to improve their public speaking skills. They have also gained exposure to professional environments such as grant-making panels, consortium partner meetings and work experience opportunities.

“Whenever I attend [consortium partner] meetings [...] I try to make positive impressions as they are potential employers.”

One Flow One Brent Youth Board stakeholder

As well as professional skills and experience, the young people have also been given training in specific areas such as emergency first aid and mental health first aid. Several stakeholders referenced these training opportunities as valuable for the young people’s future applications for university and jobs, as well as for their own self-confidence.

“The Youth Board gives us monthly trainings such as first aid. It helped my UCAS application, and I have been able to use it as well.”

One Flow One Brent Youth Board stakeholder

8.4 Key learning



Positive practice: treating Youth Board members as equal partners to One Flow One Brent delivery staff is a key feature of the Board activity, which promotes youth participation. Young people are given ownership and responsibility for the direction of the Board and its activities. For instance, they suggest topics or activities in which they feel would benefit from training or experience, and then delivery staff help to make the activities happen. They are also invited to attend high profile meetings with consortium partners and

given decision making power in the small grants applications process. Finally, young people are paid for the time they spend working on the Youth Board.

“Often people forget that young people want to be paid too, not just have experience for their CV”.

One Flow One Brent Youth Board stakeholder



Challenge: involving young people with diverse characteristics and experiences on the Board, including young men and those who are not already engaged in activities. The activities associated with the Youth Board require resources to be allocated to a small group of young people in a concentrated way. Those on the Board mainly heard about the opportunity by word of mouth and were motivated to put themselves forward. This presents a challenge, as stakeholders believe members of the Youth Board are likely already involved in local projects and opportunities, and already have a certain level of skill and experience.

“Sometimes the people who see these opportunities and take them up are people who are already ambitious, already have opportunities”.

One Flow One Brent Youth Board stakeholder

This means that young people who might most benefit from the individual level outcomes associated with the Youth Board are likely to miss out. It also makes it challenging to ensure a mix of different characteristics and experiences on the Board. For example, there are currently no young men represented. More targeted and intentional recruitment could help to encourage greater diversity of characteristics and experiences on the Board and increase representation of those who are currently less well-engaged by decision-makers.



Positive practice: culture of learning and development. One Flow One Brent is focused on learning and development as a consortium. This is demonstrated by its approach to developing the Youth Board over time. The young people and delivery staff recognised issues with the original Steering Group; there was too much online interaction and not enough in-person, and there were too many young people involved for individuals to make meaningful contributions. The new Youth Board seems to have addressed both these issues, with regular in-person contact and a much smaller group size.



Future opportunity: develop a clearer strategy to ensure that the Youth Board can represent and share the views of young people in a more targeted way. While the Youth Board does attend consortium meetings and local panels, it could be developed as a more effective tool for feeding the views of young people into the local system by: a) developing more formal channels through which Youth Board members can consult with other young people in their local area in order to generate greater understanding of the needs and views of the local community; and b) supporting Youth Board members to communicate this information to the One Flow One Brent consortium, through consortium meetings or through other channels, such as one-to-one meetings with delivery staff who can convey information to others.

9 Involving young people in police cultural competency training: Croydon

9.1 Overview of activity



Key findings

- In West Croydon, young people are involved alongside a local, Black-owned VCS organisation in delivering cultural competency training to new Metropolitan Police recruits in Croydon. The training aims to equip the new recruits with awareness, skills and confidence to police in culturally sensitive ways within the local community.
- The training has a positive impact new recruits' awareness, skills and confidence to police in culturally sensitive ways within the local community.
- It has also contributed to improved relationships between the police and the local community, to greater community involvement in responses to critical incidents, and to the personal development of the young people who are involved.
- If the training continues, the provider organisation and police could explore ways to deliver it to a larger proportion of local police officers and staff, and to involve young people more closely in the training design.



Overview and purpose

- Young people are involved alongside a local, Black-owned VCS organisation in delivering cultural competency training to new recruits to the Metropolitan Police in Croydon.
- The training aims to equip the new recruits with awareness, skills and confidence to police in culturally sensitive ways within the local community.



Rationale

Training by a local, Black-owned VCS organisation and involvement of young people in delivery is important for three main reasons:

1. It ensures that the views and voices of local people are informing the police's understanding of how best to work with local communities and to police in ways which take account of community members' prior experiences, strengths, needs and preferences.
2. It demonstrates to local community members that the police are open to learning from them and improving their practice.
3. It provides an opportunity to forge initial relationships between individual police recruits, the lead trainer and young people in the community.



Development

A Friday meeting between the Met Police in Croydon and local Black community members was set up just prior to MyEnds and the programme has built on this meeting as a mechanism for community engagement and dialogue between the police and community. The training was born out of these meetings, in order to establish a structured way for the learning from discussions with the community to feed into policing attitudes and practice.



Delivery

The training is run for every cohort of new police recruits. It is co-facilitated by a staff member from PJs community services, a local Black-owned voluntary and community sector organisation, and a police inspector. 3-4 young people from the local Black community attend to support each training day, drawn from a pool of around 35 young people. They are paid for their time.

The training covers a core set of skills and information, such as humility and active listening, contextual information about generational trauma and the history of policing in the Black community, and practical information such as always ensuring the officers' body worn video cameras are on. Beyond this, the training is responsive to what new recruits want to cover and are concerned about, as well as what the young people feel is relevant and important.



Outcomes and mechanisms of systems change

- Improved understanding of the local Black community by new police recruits
- Improved relationships between community members and local police.
- Greater community involvement following critical incidents.
- Personal development and increased confidence among young people involved.

9.2 Relationship to the My Ends model

9.2.1 Involving young people in design, planning and delivery

Young people are involved in the delivery of the cultural competency training. During the sessions, they play a role in determining the topics and experiences that are discussed, because they draw in their own views and experiences rather than delivering only pre-agreed content. They are also encouraged to contribute to the ongoing evolution of the training's structure and design, though stakeholders explained that their confidence to do this varies.

"This is about giving [the young people] a position of power. When they talk to us about what they get out of it, they feel empowered by it – this is stuff that kids never normally get to do."

MyEnds West Croydon police training stakeholder

9.2.2 Developing routes for community engagement and building on existing assets

The training has extended community engagement activity which was already taking place via Friday meetings. These are meetings between the Met Police in Croydon and local Black community members, which were established just prior to MyEnds and have been a key ongoing community engagement forum. This was an important signal by the police to local community members because it demonstrated the police's commitment to ensuring that learning from community feedback informs police attitudes and practice:

"One of the things we got challenged on is that it's all very well us sitting in the meeting and talking, but how can we show the community that that information and ethos is actually being trickled down into how we train our staff."

MyEnds West Croydon police training stakeholder

The training also builds on existing assets. For example, the relationship between the lead training facilitator and a senior police officer has enabled implementation. Similarly, the status of the facilitator as a recognised and respected local community member means he both understands and can credibly convey the views and experiences of the local community.

9.2.3 Locally informed practice

The training is locally informed. It draws on community views and experiences of interactions with the police (e.g. during Stop and Search). This includes up-to-date material, such as discussion of recent incidents and social media content. In addition, it provides information about common experiences within the local community, such as generational trauma and the history of police-community relations. It also includes relevant topics to inform the policing of racially minoritised people more broadly, such as the history of human rights and immigration, and the adultification of Black children. However, stakeholders suggested that the locally specific content is particularly valuable.

9.3 Contribution to more culturally competent policing and better police-community relations

9.3.1 Improved understanding of the local Black community by new police recruits

As a result of the training, the new recruits have a greater understanding of the experiences and views of the local Black community. This is particularly valuable because the vast majority of the recruits are not from the local area and are from areas with less cultural diversity. This means that they are better equipped with awareness, confidence and skills to police in culturally sensitive ways. This contributes to enabling them to deliver safer and more locally informed policing.

9.3.2 Improved relationships between community members and local police

The training has contributed to improved relationships between community members and the police. For example, stakeholders reported that they now receive substantially fewer community complaints about policing.

There are three main reasons for this. First, the act of implementing the training has conveyed to community members that local police are invested in building better police-community relations. Second, the increased awareness, confidence and skills of the new recruits who receive the training enables them to interact more positively with community members whilst they are policing. Third, during the training itself the recruits meet and forge initial positive and open relationships with the young people who are supporting delivery and with the lead facilitator. They carry these relationships into their policing in the community, making them more confident in their ability to engage with community members. The young people also positively endorse the recruits to other young people and community members, improving the way the community receive them.

“Because of the work [that has] been done, young people are willing to sit down with the police and have conversations. This level of relationship keeps young people invested in the future of building this.”

MyEnds West Croydon police training stakeholder

It is important to note that the training is one of a number of activities which the local police have implemented to try to build better relationships with their communities. As a result, improvements in relations are not attributable to the training alone. For instance, the Friday meetings discussed above precede MyEnds and the training. Equally, the police are also implementing a restorative justice project for older police officers and games events involving plain clothes police officers and young people involved with the youth justice service.

9.3.3 Greater community involvement following critical incidents

The improvements in police-community relations, to which the training has contributed, have facilitated greater community involvement in the immediate response to critical incidents. Community members now attend investigation

update meetings, and young people have recently worked with the police to share information from social media channels following a critical incident.

9.3.4 Personal development and increased confidence among young people involved

Young people involved in the training have had the opportunity to practice skills in a professional environment, such as communication and public speaking, time management and organisation. For some, this has improved their confidence and skills in these areas:

"[There has been] an unbelievable change in the young people now when doing public facing speaking or events."

MyEnds West Croydon police training stakeholder

The training has also impacted on young people's confidence in interactions with the police, because it has provided them with a positive encounter on which to draw in the future. For some, this is their first encounter with the police. Others have had negative past experiences with the police. Stakeholders reported that it is valuable for the young people involved to meet and talk with police in a positive, relaxed environment.

9.4 Key learning



Positive practice: Promoting a safe, non-judgemental space. The training provides a safe space for both new police recruits and the young people to be honest about their concerns and fears. The lead facilitator creates an environment where new recruits and young people are encouraged to share their beliefs, experiences and concerns openly without fear of judgement. The senior police officer involved in the training also promotes this environment by openly sharing his own experiences of witnessing less positive policing.



Challenge: Increasing the role of young people in training design. At present young people are encouraged to contribute their ideas on training content but few of them take up this offer. This could be because it relies on them having the confidence to make suggestions proactively. Creating more structured opportunities for them to contribute to the ongoing development of the training (e.g. six-monthly review meetings with young people) might increase their role in training design.



Future opportunity: Reaching more police officers. The training delivers positive benefits for police officers who participate, with knock-on positive impacts on their policing approaches and community-police relations. It is currently only delivered to new recruits. If resource is available and if time-release for training can be organised, there may be an opportunity to extend the training to a larger number of police officers and staff in Croydon. This might amplify its positive impact.



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