VRU | MAYOR OF LONDON
VIOLENCE REDUCTION UNIT

London Violence Reduction Unit Outcomes Framework

Guidance for Delivery Partners & Commissioners

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Introduction

The VRU Outcomes Framework sets out the shorter-term change (outcomes) we need to achieve in order to progress our longer-term goals. This Framework sets out lists of key VRU outcomes which delivery partners & commissioners should draw from when bidding for funding or proposing new programmes.

Background on the London Violence Reduction Unit

London's Violence Reduction Unit believes that violence is preventable, not inevitable. We were set up by the Mayor of London to deliver a partnership approach to tackling violence that is rooted in prevention and early intervention.

To reduce violence affecting young people, we must intervene at key points in their lives – that includes roles for parents, schools, communities, and peers. Our investment is focused and targeted, ensuring our interventions are joined up and follow the journey of a child and the key relationships they hold.

We take an evidence-based approach to tackling violence and we champion young people and communities to help bring about change and support access to positive opportunities where they live.

This document introduces our **Outcomes Framework**, setting out a clear and consistent logic for embedding and measuring outcomes across VRU programmes to drive performance monitoring and to demonstrate progress towards our overall goals.

What is an Outcomes Framework?
By using a data-driven, evidence-based approach supported by robust measures, the Outcomes Framework reflects our strategy and helps to ensure we are maximising our impact. Through accessible language, it articulates a shared direction across our programmes and delivery partners, enabling local authorities, agencies, and London communities to work together towards reducing violence and delivering positive opportunities for young people.

Why is an Outcomes Framework important?
Demonstrating impact is critical to develop our understanding of what works and supports us in advocating for policy change.
This Framework is also important for enabling public scrutiny. We are responsible to Londoners and by having clearly defined, measurable outcomes we ensure transparency and value for money.

How should I use the Outcomes Framework?
The Outcomes Framework is a key tool to be used when commissioning a new programme or proposing a new project. It provides a list of key short and medium-term outcomes which can be chosen for each programme, ensuring alignment to our priority areas.

Methodology & Consultation
The Framework embodies the VRU's public health approach and commitment to community-led responses to violence. Designed to enhance collaboration and synergy, it is informed by consultation from across key stakeholders in violence reduction, including the NHS, education sector, local authorities, the Home Office, the Youth Endowment Fund, academic experts, other VRUs, the Mayor's Office for Policing And Crime (MOPAC) and the Greater London Authority (GLA). In line with our community co-production values, we consulted grassroots VCS delivery partners, as well as our Young People's Action Group and Youth Practitioners' Advisory Board to understand the user-perspective. To capture our existing work and learn from our local delivery partners, we undertook a detailed review of all outcomes being delivered across all our interventions.

No Framework can be comprehensive. A key part of our work is to support innovative, experimental approaches as well as established programmes. The Outcomes Framework should be viewed as a living document that will evolve in response to new approaches. We will continue to collaborate with communities and partners to identify new ideas and support exciting new initiatives to tackle violence.

The Outcomes Framework

VRU Long-Term Impact

Three over-arching impact goals articulate the overall impact we aspire to have as a VRU:

1. **Violence is stabilised and reduced**

2. **Children and young people feel (and are) safer**

3. **Community-led & partnership approach to long-term & sustainable violence reduction solutions**

The Outcomes Framework further defines these impact goals and captures tangible progress on the short and medium-term steps to sustainable long-term reductions in violence

Priority Areas

Our work is organised into priority areas. The first five areas reflect the contexts within which violence occurs and the interactions between risk and protective factors for violence in each of these contexts.[1] Our sixth priority area, 'Systems and Sector', captures our research, data insights and policy advocacy work and illustrates the VRU's ambition to advance innovative approaches to violence reduction and systems-level change.

The Priority Areas form the foundation of the Outcomes Focused Performance Framework; each has a strategic objective statement (outlined below) and accompanying high-level and programme-level outcomes.

[1] https://www.who.int/groups/violence-prevention-alliance/approach

Priority Areas	
	Children & Young People: Reducing Harm Improving identification of and support to prevent violence against children and young people at greatest risk of harm and exploitation
	Children & Young People: Positive Opportunities Expanding access to positive opportunities and providing development and support through training, apprenticeships, and employment & enrichment
	Families Developing stronger and more resilient families
	Educational settings Promoting engagement in education, healthy relationships and system wide inclusive practice
	Communities & Place Providing communities with the support and resources to deliver sustainable reductions in violence
	Systems & Sector Collaborating and working in partnership to deliver better services and improved outcomes for those affected by violence

Priority Groups

Our key focus is on improving the lives of young people in London. Our ambition is to invest in prevention and early intervention to ensure that all young people have access to the opportunities they deserve. The Framework acknowledges that certain groups are disproportionately at risk of violence and recognises that violence reduction strategies must be place-based and culturally appropriate.

- Our programmes therefore take a targeted, data-driven approach to ensure that we successfully engage with those most at risk, decrease the disproportionate impact on certain demographics and minimise disparities in outcomes across groups. For example, we commission programmes to focus on engaging young women and girls, marginalised or minoritized groups and individuals with special educational needs.

- In many programmes, it will be necessary to adjust outcomes, to incorporate equity, diversity and inclusion concerns and to ensure our programmes are specific to the needs of the priority groups we serve.

1. Children & Young People – Reducing Harm & Exploitation

This priority area covers our key programmes working with children and young people (CYP) who are at a greater risk of harm or exploitation. Our aim is to identify vulnerable young people at critical 'reachable' moments and make sure they are supported to access the help they need. We also aim to support organisations working with these young people to improve their practices, enabling professionals to better identify risks, provide tailored support and encourage adoption of trauma-informed approaches.

High Level Outcome	Definitions	Programme-Level Outcomes *Individual Level*
Reduction in violence effecting CYP	*CYP at high risk of harm and exploitation are diverted from violence. Areas with high rates of violence are safer.*	Reduced frequency and/or severity of (re) offending
		Reduced risk of harm to self and others
		Reduced weapon carrying
Reduction in victimisation	*CYP Victims are identified and supported.*	Reduced victimisation
		Reduction in hospital/A&E admissions/attendances for assault with a bladed article/weapon
		Reduced child sexual exploitation
		Reduced frequency and severity of child criminal exploitation
Improved knowledge & understanding of risks/ issues relating to violence & exploitation	*CYP at risk of harm have improved understanding and ability to identify risks and access preventative support.*	CYP have improved understanding of issues related to harm & exploitation
		CYP have increased feelings of safety
		CYP have improved understanding of safety - online
Reduced vulnerability to harm & exploitation	*CYP at risk of harm are supported to engage in healthy behaviours that will reduce their*	Improved self-control
		Improved decision making
		Increase in positive peer relationships

	vulnerability to harm & exploitation.	Improved healthy relationship attitudes and behaviours
		Increased feeling of having a trusted adult in young person's life
Reduction in harmful behaviour	*CYP are supported to avoid harmful/ risky activities, behaviours or situations that may increase the risk of violence.*	Reduced behavioural & emotional difficulties
		Reduced aggression
		Reduced harmful sexualised behaviour
		Reduced involvement with criminal peers/ gangs
		Reduced problematic substance misuse
		Reduction in Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) incidents
		Reduction in episodes of missing children
High Level Outcome	**Definitions**	**Programme-Level Outcomes** *Organisational Level*
Improved practice to prevent harm	*Organisations working with CYP at risk of harm/ engaging in harmful behaviour have improved knowledge and practice to identify risk factors and support CYP.*	Improved information sharing between agencies on CYP at risk
		Victims are better supported
		Increased ability for professionals to identify and support children and young people who have witnessed or experienced domestic abuse
		Increased GP/Clinical awareness of Domestic Abuse referral pathways
		Practitioners have increased understanding of online harm
		Improved practitioners' response to safeguarding risks

2. Children & Young People – Positive Opportunities

This priority area focuses on expanding access to positive opportunities by giving children and young people the support they need to thrive. Our aim is to improve the lives of vulnerable young people through early intervention, improving their wellbeing and access to whatever support they need. We also aim to ensure young people develop essential skills that increase their access to sustainable and satisfactory income.

Our approach involves empowering and engaging young people to put them at the heart of decision-making, as well as working with organisations to increase accessibility to their services and improve their offer to young people.

High Level Outcomes	Definitions	Programme-Level Outcomes *Individual Level*
Improved wellbeing	*Young people are supported improve all aspects of their mental wellbeing and factors that might negatively impact this.*	Improved mental wellbeing
		Improved self-esteem/self-confidence
		Improved ability to respond to stress or trauma
		Improved life skills
		Improved motivation
		Improved aspiration/ personal ambition
		Increased overall life satisfaction
Improved socio-emotional learning	*Young people are supported to develop their understanding of who they are and how to interact with others.*	Improved socio-emotional learning skills
		Increased resilience
		Improved relationships with trusted adults
		Improved emotional capabilities
Improved engagement	*Young people are better able and willing to take an*	Increased engagement in decision making

	active role in engagement with services.	Increased engagement within employment and training settings
		Increased engagement with activities and support services
		Increased engagement in project/service design and delivery
		Improved appropriate relationships with practitioners (e.g., dependency and engagement)
		Increased engagement within wider community
		Improve knowledge of available support services
Improved employment opportunities	*Young people have increased opportunity to generate sustainable and satisfactory income, through business or employment.*	Increased number of young people entering sustained employment
		Improved employability skills and training (including improved attitude to work / career management skills and increased qualifications)
		Improved digital skills
		Increased business/entrepreneurial skills
		Increase in young person's satisfaction with employment
High Level Outcomes	**Definitions**	**Programme-Level Outcomes** *Organisational Level*
Improved practice to support vulnerable young people	*Organisations working with vulnerable young people have improved engagement, reach and quality of service.*	Improved accessibility and reach of services (particularly for minoritised or often marginalised groups)
		Improved trauma informed practice
		Improved ability to successfully maintain engagement with young people
		Improved knowledge and understanding of the needs of vulnerable young people

3. Families

Our 'Families' work focuses on developing stronger and more resourceful families (to better support young people). We take a 'whole family approach' to reducing violence. Programmes in this space focus on building strong family relationships and supporting organisations and agencies to work together to engage families and support their needs.

High-Level Outcomes	Definitions	Programme-Level Outcomes *Individual Level*
Improved family relationships	*Family members are supported to improve their wellbeing and foster supportive, healthy family relationships.*	Improved relationships with family
		Improved nurturing and responsive parental relationships (e.g., consistent parenting; good parental supervision)
		Improved mental health and wellbeing of parent/carers
		Better life stability/quality of life
		Fathers are better connected to family
		Improved family functioning
		Increased feelings of safety for sibling(s)
		Increased confidence in parenting
Decreased family harm	*Family members are supported to feel safer and overall family conflict, stress and harm is reduced.*	Reduced parental conflict
		Reduced family stress
		Increased feelings of safety for the child or young person within the family home/ context of family
		Increased feelings of safety for the parent/carer
		Increased support for children and young people that have been impacted by domestic abuse/ violence
		Reduction in family breakdowns resulting in children being accommodated and becoming Looked After
		Improved parental ability to identify concerning behaviours
High-Level Outcomes	**Definitions**	**Programme-Level Outcomes** *Organisational Level*

Increased Awareness	*Services have increased awareness of family harm.*	Awareness of abusive/ neglectful parenting
		Increased understanding of violence within the family (e.g., Child & Adolescent to Parent Violence)
Improved practice to support families	*Services have improved pathways for families to access support and improved quality of support being delivered.*	Improved pathways to support (especially reaching marginalised groups)
		Improved awareness of available support
		Improved identification of victim/survivors and their families in need of support
		Improved confidence in family support
		Improved capability for parents to talk/access to peer support
		Improved partnership/multi-agency working to support families
		Improved understanding of quality, support design and delivery of family support

4. Educational Settings

This priority area focuses on improving young people experience and engagement within educational settings. Educational settings can include primary or secondary schools, Pupil Referral Units (PRUs) / Alternative Provision (AP), or all types of colleges. By ensuring that schools and educational settings are inclusive and adaptive to the needs of children and young people we believe we can prevent harm and create environments where all students can thrive.

High-Level Outcomes	Definition	Programme-Level Outcomes *Individual Level*
Improved engagement with education	*Young people are supported to actively engage and thrive at school.*	Improved educational attendance
		Increased educational engagement
		Improved attitudes to education/learning (specifically in school/PRU settings)
		Improved attainment
		Improved rates of successful reintegration into mainstream education
		Reduction in NEET rates (Not in Education, Employment or Training)
Improved wellbeing at school	*Young people are supported improve all aspects of their mental wellbeing and factors that might negatively impact this at school.*	Reduction in number of complaints re Sexual Harassment
		Reduction in number of racist/hate incidents in school
		Improved feelings of safety in school
		Improved feelings of safety in school
		Improved transitions support
		Improved student - teacher relationships in school
		Improved peer relationships in school
Improved understanding of different needs	Schools have improved knowledge and understanding of the experiences and intersecting needs of children	Improved knowledge and understanding of pupils' needs
		Improved knowledge and understanding of harmful sexual behaviour and its impact
		Improved knowledge and understanding of online abuse and its impact
		Improved knowledge and understanding of domestic abuse and its impact

	and young people.	Increased knowledge and understanding of structural racism and its impact
		Improved knowledge and understanding of gender informed approaches
High Level Outcomes	**Definition**	**Programme-Level Outcomes** *Organisational Level*
Improved inclusive practice	Schools have improved capability and practice to respond to the needs of young people to create an inclusive environment	Increased staff confidence in responding to pupils with SEMH (Social, Emotional & Mental Health) needs and behaviour incidents in school
		Improved identification of pupils with SEND (Special Educational Needs & Disabilities)
		Improved response and support for the social and emotional needs of all children, particularly those with SEND/SEMH needs
		Increased transparency and more appropriate action on incidents
		Improved early identification of risk of exclusion
		Reduction in number of permanent exclusions, temporary exclusions (suspensions) and incidents of pupil isolation
		Reduction in disruptive behaviour
Improved practice to prevent and reduce harm in school	Schools and colleges have an improved response to risk and harm.	Improved teacher attitudes towards, and consistency in applying, nurturing and trauma-informed practice
		Improved whole school approach to sexual abuse and healthy relationships
		Improved understanding, confidence, and transparency in school about harmful sexual behaviour and appropriate action taken on incidents
		Increase confidence to identify and deal with the early signs of vulnerability and risk

5. Communities & Place

Violence often has complex place-based drivers and can require a hyper-local response.[2] Much of our work is therefore focused on intensive support to specific areas affected by high and sustained levels of violence. The 'Communities & Place' priority area takes a place-based approach and focuses on ***empowering & embedding capacity for communities to drive localised, sustainable responses to violence reduction***. We put communities at the forefront of tackling violence through providing the support needed to deliver interventions designed locally by local people. Though place-based interventions may focus on outcomes across priority areas, we aim to ensure that collectively our approach builds community capacity and resilience.

High Level Outcomes	Definitions	Programme-Level Outcomes *Community Level*
More connected communities	*Residents feel connected to their neighbours and a sense of belonging to their area. Partnerships between local organisations are well-developed and residents participate in local activities.*	Improved access and use of community resources and support
		Increased community awareness of local initiatives
		Increased collaborations/partnerships between community groups/organisations
		Increased engagement within the wider community
		Increased community connectedness
Increased inclusive decision making	*Violence reduction strategies are locally led and informed by those impacted by violence. Decision making forums are inclusive, accessible and result in the adoption of community-led approaches.*	Increase community empowerment
		Improved community engagement
		Increased engagement in decision-making
		Increased young person participation
		Improved equity in decision making
		Increase in adoption of community-led approaches
Improved perceptions of community safety	*Local residents feel safe in their area and are aware/*	Improved community buy-in for local approaches to violence reduction
		Reduction in worry/fear about violence

[2] As outlined in our Strategic Needs Assessment: Violence in London: What We Know and How to Respond (Behavioural Insights Team 2019)

	approve of local approaches to reduce violence.	Increased feelings of safety in neighbourhood
High-Level Outcomes	**Definitions**	**Programme-Level Outcomes** *Organisational level*
Improved capacity in community networks	*Community groups have the skills, tools and resource to engage in violence reduction strategies locally. Agencies and grassroots organisations have the resources and capacity to respond to local need and take an evidence-based approach to tackling violence.*	Increased analytical capacity and use of evidence in Violence Reduction planning within community-led networks and/or local authorities
		Improved cultural competency / understanding of different cultures
		Increase in number of individuals/organisations engaged in local responses to violence
		Improved capacity within community-led networks

6. Systems & Sector

Outcomes across the previous five Priority Areas are designed for inclusion in our commissioned programmes. However, our approach seeks to collectively improve outcomes across entire systems. There are four key systems-level outcomes we wish to see collectively across all our projects. These high-level outcomes are:

- **Improved systems-level thinking:** The VRU acts as a best-practice hub to bring together multiple stakeholders across London to improve multi-agency working and improve how organisations can work together to support service users.

- **Empowering communities and marginalised groups:** Community engagement and lived experience is central to programme design. The VRU seeks to empower communities, particularly marginalised and minoritized groups, to participate in decision making. We engage those that are at the highest risk of violence to build programmes and services that work for all. We strive to support accessibility for all groups and remove barriers to participation.

- **Innovative approaches to violence reduction:** The VRU seeks to identify and amplify innovative violence reduction approaches which can be used in multiple contexts and programmes. For example, our Trauma Informed champion network seeks to embed trauma informed approaches across multiple statutory agencies in London.

- **Evidence-based commissioning:** We commission both innovative and established interventions, taking an evidence-informed approach to understand what works, targeting people and places most in need of support.

7. Measuring Outcomes

In the VRU, outcomes are measured through both monitoring and evaluation. Programme specific monitoring frameworks will provide quarterly updates on outcomes. You can see the published VRU performance monitoring on our website here.

Evaluation provides a robust impact assessment of our programmes. VRU evaluations are published on our 'Evidence Hub' here which groups research by priority area, timing of intervention and target group.

To monitor and evaluate outcomes, we seek to ensure that appropriate measures are used to assess progress, encouraging standardisation wherever possible but recognising the value of context-specific and culturally competent tools. The VRU is currently piloting an Outcomes Toolkit which will set out recommended measures for priority outcomes.

Appendix 1: Definitions & Examples

Priority Areas

All programmes and outcomes are allocated to a Priority Area that best reflects their overarching aims. It is important to note that a programme/ project may drive outcomes across multiple Priority Areas.

In Practice: **Selecting outcomes from across multiple priority areas**

A school-based programme supporting at-risk young people may focus on 'improved engagement with education' and will therefore sit within the 'Educational Settings' priority area. This programme may nonetheless identify outcomes from other priority areas such as 'reduced vulnerability to harm & exploitation' (CYP- Reducing Harm) and 'improved socio-emotional learning' (CYP-Positive Opportunities).

Outcomes

Outcomes are factors that a programme is expected to change and, crucially, are observable in the shorter-term. In the 'Outcomes Table' for each Priority Area you will see two-levels of outcomes:

- **High-Level Outcomes** (in the left-most column) are high-level statements which articulate what success would look like and reflect necessary steps towards our long-term overall impact.
- **Programme Outcomes** (in the right-most column) are the outcomes that should be selected for specific programmes.

Programme-Level Outcomes are broken down depending on *who* will be experiencing the change:

- ***Individual outcomes*** look at progress from the perspective of an individual user. For example, a young person who has received a mentoring intervention may show progress on outcomes relating to their behaviour or well-being.
- ***Organisational outcomes*** focus on improving collaboration across organisations to deliver better services. Many of these outcomes may be difficult to measure. Progress may be indicated by outputs in the shorter term, for example, the number of Professionals engaging in a training.

In Practice: **Using the Outcomes Tables**

The below is an excerpt from the Outcomes Table for the Priority Area 'CYP – Reducing Harm'. The high-level outcome (further described in the definition column) is logically connected to the Priority Area and highlights an aspirational statement of change. The Programme Outcome column

provides more granular detail. When commissioning/ proposing a new project you should select outcomes from the 'Programme Outcomes' column.

High Level Outcome	Definitions	Programme Outcomes *Individual Level*
Reduction in violence by CYP	*CYP at high risk of harm and exploitation are diverted from violence. Areas with high rates of violence are safer.*	Reduced frequency and/or severity of (re) offending
		Reduced risk of harm to self and others
		Reduced weapon carrying

Outcome Measurement

Outcome Measures / Tools

By measures, we mean the ways or tools used to assess the outcome of interest. Examples of measures can include administrative data, outcomes stars or survey feedback. Some programmes might use a '*validated tool*', a specific measure that has been demonstrated to be an effective method of measurement such as the 'Warwick-Edinburgh mental wellbeing scale'. A first iteration of the VRU **Outcomes Toolkit** (currently in development) will provide recommended data sources and validated tools for key outcomes in the framework.

- ***In Practice:*** **Identifying Indicators and measures**

The programme outcome '*reduced frequency and/or severity of (re) offending'* might be measured by the number of *incidents of grievous bodily harm* using *police recorded data*.

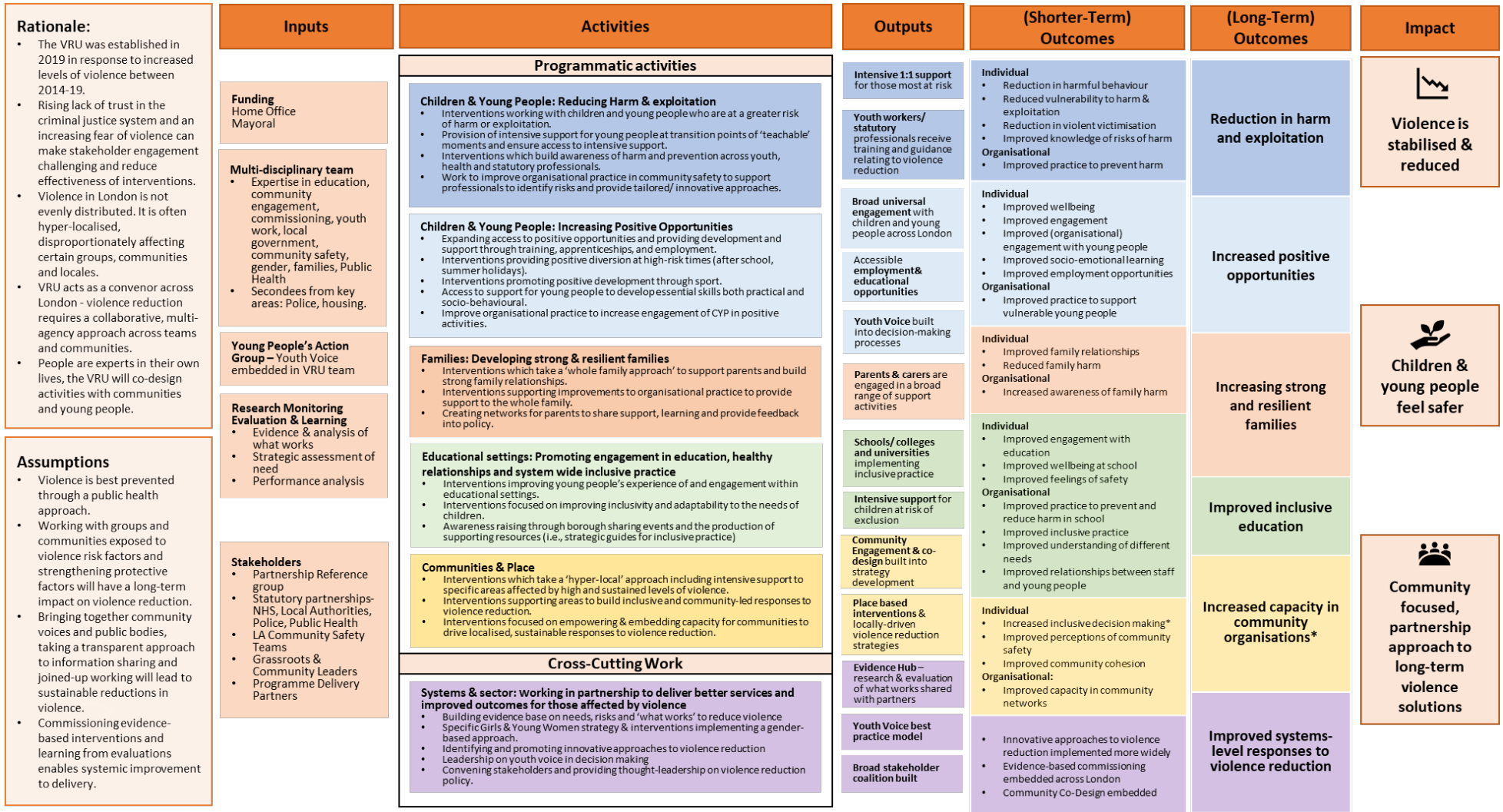
The programme outcome '*improved mental health & wellbeing'* may be measured using the *Warwick Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale* (a validated tool).

The programme outcome 'Improved feelings of safety in school' may measure the *perceptions of school children* before and after the intervention by means of a *survey.*

Outputs

Outputs are the tangible products of intervention activities. They can be counted (for example, the number of trainings, the number of people reached by the programme.) This Framework does not address output selection. Each programme should have defined expected outputs to be reported to the VRU on a quarterly basis. Output reporting should generally be agreed before the programme begins, but may be adjusted as the programme develops.

Appendix 2: Outcomes Framework & Logic Model



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