Key reviews of effectiveness for interventions to prevent violence

Purpose of this document

This paper forms one of the outputs of a scoping exercise to set out potential next steps in developing a public health approach to violence prevention and reduction in London. This paper is not a critical literature review and has not been collated in a scientific manner, it is a collection of evidence reviews that have informed the scoping exercise. It describes a range of key reviews of the evidence and resources that are considered relevant to reducing violence in London using a public health approach.

The purpose of summarising the evidence is to guide selection of interventions and programmes which could form part of a system level response to reducing violence in London.

Published reviews

1. World Health Organisation

![Table of effectiveness of youth violence prevention strategies, by context](chart.png)

**The WHO report on violence and health has been followed by a number of publications including a 2011 review of the evidence base¹ and a series of briefings. WHO use an ecological approach with 4 levels, individual, relationship community and society. At each level risk and protective factors exist, these factors add up and interplay making violence more or less likely. Violence is seen as an outbreak of infection spreading between individuals and between generations. The aim is to break the cycle of violence. Some factors**

¹ [http://www.who.int/violence_injury_prevention/violence/youth/youth_violence/en/]
are specific to a type of violence, such as domestic abuse, but others are shared.

**What this resource adds:** The WHO collection of resources have been influential in shaping thinking about the application of a public health approach to tackling violence. They provide the rationale for a system wide prevention focused approach.

### 2. Police College Crime Reduction Toolkit

The Crime Reduction Toolkit is a live online repository for systematic reviews focused on crime reduction. The aim is for the toolkit to be the 'go to' place for decision-makers and funders when they want to see 'what works' to reduce crime. Filters can be set to select interventions to reduce violent crime.

The relative quality and strength of the evidence is presented using the EMMIE framework developed by UCL. The framework looks at the impact on crime, how it works, where it works, considerations for implementing it locally and the direct and indirect costs.

This June 2018 screenshot indicates the interventions considered effective in reducing violent crime.

**What this resource adds:** A one stop searchable site with a collection of studies reviewed systematically. The evidence is viewed through a policing lens in that the outcome is reducing crime but covers a broad range of prevention options.


This document, produced by the team at Liverpool John Moores University, was published in 2012 just as public health was moving into Local Authorities. It describes the opportunities seen at the time for health and wellbeing boards and public health work in local government. The context has shifted since then but the

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2 [http://whatworks.college.police.uk/toolkit/Pages/Toolkit.aspx](http://whatworks.college.police.uk/toolkit/Pages/Toolkit.aspx)

premise that violence is a public health issue which can be prevented, on which the recommendations were made stands.

The document examines the extent and nature of violence including; Violence in the general population; Child maltreatment; Youth violence; Intimate partner violence; Sexual violence; Elder abuse; Violence against health service staff.

The document also describes the immediate and longer term impacts of violence on individuals and the cost of violence. The evidence around known risk factors for violence is presented.

Evidence for interventions to prevent violence include: Supporting parents and families; Developing life skills in CYP; Working with high risk youth and gangs; Reducing the availability of alcohol; Community interventions; Changing social norms that support violence and identification, care and support of those affected by violence.

**What this resource adds:** This document was designed to inform a public health approach so focusses on causes and prevention as well as mitigating the effects of violence. It draws on the international evidence base and provides a perspective on the evidence as it applies to England. It has been written by recognised experts in the field.


This 2015 publication synthesises the evidence by looking at published reviews then drilling down into programmes that have been included in ‘what works’ clearing house publications, to find common principles and themes. A sister resource lists details of the programmes backed by evidence of effectiveness in an early intervention guidebook described below. Interventions are grouped into universal and those that target at risk and high risk children and young people. The results are coherent and summarised in an accessible manner using infographics. An example is included overleaf.

**What this adds:** This document is more recent than others, is focussed on prevention and the context in England whilst drawing on international literature. It is not only concerned with on criminal violence. The authors note that they were unable to source robust evidence around the effectiveness of gang work

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programmes so the principles are drawn from violence and crime prevention and work to tackle risk factors for these and gang involvement.

5. Early Intervention Programme: The Guidebook

The EIF Guidebook is a searchable web based resource that provides information about early intervention programmes which have been evaluated and shown to improve outcomes for children and young people. Results can be filtered for interventions that reduce crime violence and antisocial behaviour and the strength of evidence. Information on cost is also included.

The Guidebook also provides information about the specific outcomes a programme has been shown to improve, how the programme works, how it is delivered, and the conditions or resources that can make a programme more likely to be effective.

What this resource adds: The EIF guidebook will be of particular use to commissioners, it contains detailed information that is hard to find elsewhere.
6. **UK Drug Situation 2017**

This annual report produced by the UK Focal Point is based at PHE and is part of the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction. It examines a range of drugs issues including patterns of use and drugs markets.

**What this resource adds:** A comprehensive overall picture of drugs use, useful when looking at prevention work with prison leavers or around restricting supply, of relevance in gang driven violence.

7. **Lambeth Needs Assessment 2015**

London Borough of Lambeth produced a needs assessment in 2015 to inform their use of a public health approach to tackle serious violence. The needs assessment is an illustration of data sources available and application of the evidence base to form recommendations on tackling issues around; early childhood and families, the influence of delinquent peer groups and social and cultural norms on the socialisation of boys and young men; ‘socio-health’ factors including the prevalence of poverty, deprivation, learning and other disabilities and poor mental health; the sale and consumption of alcohol (and to a lesser extent, drugs) and a lack of ‘resilience’ in public places such as night time economies and transport hubs.

**What this resource adds:** An illustration of need in one borough with a long history of high levels of violence, based on data analysis and review of the evidence base.

8. **ScotPHN Violence Prevention: A Public Health Priority 2014**

**What this adds:** This document was aimed at Scottish Directors of Public Health and presents the issues of violence prevention in a way that will be familiar to public health professionals. It spells out the public health approach using the WHO Violence Reduction Unit framework and provides an overview of the evidence base. The authors note that gaps exist in the literature but that there is work to shape our understanding of the scale and impact of violence, the causes and what works to prevent it and to extend better support and care to affected populations. They also review mechanisms that could be strengthened to prevent violence.

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This document covers: Youth violence, Intimate partner violence, child abuse, suicide, elder abuse, sexual violence, violence against disabled people, substance misuse and violence, other forms of violence.

**What this adds:** A public health view and public health rationale. A view across tackling common risks for different types of violence and inclusion of inequalities as a consideration. A description of a range of promising interventions in place in Scotland.

9. **PHE: Rebalancing Act** A resource for DPHs PCCs, the police service & other health and justice commissioners, service providers and users. Home Office & PHE 2017

This resource concerns services and support for people in contact with the criminal justice system, many of whom have complex physical and mental health needs which cut across agencies and may be linked to reoffending behaviours. The document presents the case for investment and a call for action to improve the efficiency of service provision by investing upstream in prevention and to improve access to services for this group of people who experience disadvantage and health inequality.

The resource document covers policy; prevalence; partnership & governance identifying opportunities to join up work across the system and describes need.

**What this resource adds:** This paper focuses on people in contact with the criminal justice system, a key risk population for involvement in violence. It considers more specific health and care needs for this population than other publications such as the inclusion consideration of people with learning disability, communicable disease issues, mental ill health and substance misuse.

10. **Children and Young people in London with Offending Behaviour – A scoping review** – PHE H&J Team

This slide deck describes work which pieces together publicly available information on the health profile of young offenders nationally and in London. It describes characteristics of children and young people who offend, the youth justice and pathway. It also describes the characteristics of children and young people in custody, risk factors for offending and factors that reduce reoffending.

**What this resource adds:** Offending has a cause and effect with violence. Many of the risk factors are modifiable, such as homelessness or exclusion from school. The nature of the risks means that many of the children are likely to have been in

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contact with public services before their offending behaviour commenced, providing opportunities for prevention. The coherence of the risks identified in this work with risks for ACES/vulnerabilities; offending and involvement in violence. Also it describes the relationship between reoffending and the quality and continuity of case management; and the value of positive personal relationships in reducing reoffending.

11. Creating Safe Places to Live through Design

This 2014 publication by the Design Council presents case studies of housing estate designs where safety has or has not been an issue. It suggests design features to improve safety.

Reviews in progress

12. PHE: Improving Outcomes in Vulnerable Children

This review of the literature focuses on areas of vulnerability in children, including adverse childhood experiences, which negatively affect life chances. The work, due for publication in Autumn 2018 will examine the evidence for tackling the root causes of vulnerability, opportunities for early intervention and for mitigating the impact of adverse experiences in childhood. The plan is to present routine data sources, risk and protective factors for vulnerability.

Early results indicate that risk factors include:
- Violence abuse or neglect:
- Lack of access to housing
- Lower educational attainment
- Lack of life opportunities
- Lack of social support or isolation
- Parents who abuse substances
- Parents in contact with the criminal justice system
- Family disharmony or breakup
- Harsh or inconsistent parenting
- Carer with mental illness or substance misuse
- Low self esteem
- Impaired cognitive development
- Poor physical health
- Poor language skills

Protective factors include:
- Strong community cohesion and social networks of support
- Good social and emotional skills
- Well-developed cognitive skills

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9 https://www.designcouncil.org.uk/resources/report/creating-safe-places-live-through-design
- Stable home environment
- Supportive relationships
- School support
- Good peer relationships
- Networks
- Supportive parenting
- Secure attachments with a significant carer
- Good health
- Opportunities to improve self esteem eg through sport or hobbies

**What this resource adds:** An evidence based description of ACE’s and prevention opportunities in England.

### 13. PHE: Preventing Reoffending in Children

PHE’s Health and Justice team in partnership with key stakeholder are carrying out a rapid evidence review to improve understanding of and action towards developing *Collaborative Approaches to Preventing Reoffending In Children- Overview & Recommendations for New ways of working (CAPRICORN).* This will include models of care and exemplars of good practice and due to be published at the end of the financial year 2018/19.

**What this resource will add:** A robust analysis of the evidence base for effective interventions to prevent reoffending in young people to guide service development.

### 14. The Youth Violence Commission

The Youth Violence Commission is a group of MPs working for cross party consensus on solutions to address youth violence. They have commissioned two reports from Warwick University, due imminently which includes a detailed review of the literature. They have gathered a useful range of reports on their website covering different aspects of violence, including gang violence, violence against children, the impact of social media.

**What this resource adds:** A full robust review of action and interventions to reduce violence led by a cross party group

### Summary/Conclusion

There appears to be a consensus among reviews of evidence on what is likely to work or not to tackle violence. This is perhaps unsurprising as the reviews will be drawing in the main on a core set of research results, but the coherence is evident even when varying definitions and subsets of violence are examined.

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10 [http://yvcommission.com/literature-reports/](http://yvcommission.com/literature-reports/)
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