

# **VRU Core Funded Programmes Impact Evaluation**

## **West Yorkshire Violence Reduction Unit**

**Report from RedQuadrant**

**March 2022**

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## 1 Summary

- 1.1 RedQuadrant was commissioned by the West Yorkshire Violence Reduction Unit to carry out an impact evaluation of five of their Core Programmes.
- 1.2 We carried out desk-based research initially into the background of each project and looked at data on performance and outputs where available. We interviewed key stakeholders for all the projects and drew our findings from these interviews into common themes. For each of the projects, we looked at cost-effectiveness based on the unit costs, changes in outcomes where known and social costs.
- 1.3 Our findings on each programme are summarised below:

### **‘Tackle It’ programme with Leeds Rhinos Foundation, based at HMP Wealstun**

- 1.4 ‘Tackle It’ is a course run in HMP Wealstun, a Category C prison, by Leeds Rhinos Foundation aimed at changing the behaviour of offenders who have committed domestic violence-related offences. The six-week course comprises classroom-based activity followed by a sports session. The aim is to increase self-reflection and self-improvement so that individuals are less likely to commit further domestic abuse when they leave prison. The intervention includes support for the victim-survivors of those offenders. The Victim Support Worker liaises with Probation Officers, police, and other agencies to ensure that the victim-survivor(s) of each participating offender are kept informed and any concerns they may have addressed.
- 1.5 There were delays in setting up the course partly due to the pandemic and the first of the two courses delivered started in November 2021. Two courses have been run for a total of 16 offenders. There is clearly a demand for the course given that around 160 out of the 850 prisoners in the prison have committed DV-related offences and there is a waiting-list as it has not been possible to meet demand.
- 1.6 Although there is some data on the participants and on their recidivism, it is difficult to conclude whether the programme meets all its objectives of effecting long term changes in behaviour and of keeping victim-survivors and their families safer than they would otherwise be following release. This is partly because there is no basis for comparison with a similar cohort who have not participated in the programme.
- 1.7 Although the programme is not an accredited programme (e.g.: by Respect who accredit some Domestic Violence Perpetrator Programmes), it nevertheless shares

some features of accredited Domestic Violence Perpetrator Programmes and is strongly supported by the prison. The cost-effectiveness of the intervention is seen as very positive with a unit cost of £855 per course participant and the overall benefits to society of around £7800 per case. It should be noted that the cost-benefit ratio is far more favourable if even one homicide or serious assault is prevented because of the programme. The course is relatively easy to run and could be scaled up within the prison given the significant demand which has not been met.

## **Gangs and Violence Reduction programme at HMP Leeds with Catch 22**

- 1.8 The programme at HMP Leeds includes five distinct elements, each of which are considered by Catch22 to be vitally important when maintaining safety within the prison and supporting people to change their behaviour.
- 1.9 The key element of the programme is R.O.A.D (Rehabilitation Offering Another Direction), which uses a restorative approach to provide space for individuals to reflect on their experiences and to set prosocial goals for their lives. It seeks to encourage participants to consider alternative pro-social life options and opportunities moving forward. Exercises are designed to challenge pro-criminal attitudes, allowing other prisoners to challenge their peers' behaviour towards victims, staff, and each other.
- 1.10 The aim of the programme is to reduce the risk posed by gang-affiliated individuals. Of the 56 people that participated in the programme, 59% (33 out of 56) self-reported that their offending behaviour had been addressed. This is a very positive outcome.
- 1.11 Equally positive is that several protective factors (i.e., those that reduce the likelihood of violence and offending), including community, improved values and beliefs, and a sense of self, were also addressed.
- 1.12 The approach taken by Catch22 meant that there were regular reporting and communication channels open to those working at HMP Leeds, and so valuable information on prisoners' attitudes and behaviours could be easily shared and acted upon. It also allowed Catch22 to make referrals to other agencies where appropriate, further ensuring that vulnerable prisoners received the help and support they needed.
- 1.13 These findings are particularly positive, given the challenges faced throughout the funding period – notably the restrictions due to Covid in HMP Leeds, the fact that only one person was doing most of the work for much of the time, and the high numbers of prisoners to be screened before those suitable for the programme could receive support.

- 1.14 However, given these challenges, we are unable to evidence that the programme was successful at reducing offending behaviour following release from HMP Leeds. It is possible that, with more time available, the programme would show similar positive outcomes for those released from custody.
- 1.15 For this evaluation, we must conclude that there is good evidence HMP Leeds has benefited from this programme, but that the extent of its' impact on the wider community is unclear.

### **Custody Diversion programme with St Giles Trust**

- 1.16 The custody diversion programme run by the St Giles Trust seeks to engage with young people at a 'teachable moment' when they have been arrested, and so may be more open to accepting support that will move them away from criminality and towards a more positive lifestyle.
- 1.17 All of those we spoke with about the Custody Diversion programme were very positive, and there was a real feeling that the programme was making a positive difference.
- 1.18 The data gathered by St Giles over the first nine months showed that there was a positive improvement in several protective factors, including: the well-being, confidence, and self-esteem of those young people on the programme; improved relationships with their family; and going on to further education and training, or improved their employment status. There was also some positive impact in terms of young people's relationships with their families.
- 1.19 These are all positive changes that could lead to a reduction in violence, and so should not be lightly discounted.
- 1.20 However, when we looked at those factors that may be more closely linked with crime and gang activity, or vulnerability of being exploited by criminals, the findings suggested that the programme had only made a small positive impact.
- 1.21 There may be good reasons for this – the programme could be less effective than hoped for, or it may be that behaviour change away from criminality simply takes a longer period to occur. For this evaluation, we cannot say which of these possibilities reflects the situation in West Yorkshire.
- 1.22 If the programme were to be commissioned again, we believe that there is room to tighten some of the administrative elements, to better demonstrate how the programme is achieving value for money.

## Police control room IDVA with Leeds Domestic Violence Service

- 1.23 Independent Domestic Violence Advisers (IDVAs) are based in Elland Road Police Station in Leeds to provide earlier intervention and support for victim-survivors in standard and medium risk Domestic Violence and Abuse (DVA) cases following police call-outs for domestic violence. This is intended to reduce any delay in contact with the victim, increase engagement in services, support victim-survivors around prosecutions and reduce the risk of ongoing abuse. The IDVAs are co-located with police officers and the mental health workers and triage cases as domestic violence incidents come in and within the following 24 hours with a view to providing support to the victim-survivor by telephone and making ongoing referrals to the Leeds Domestic Violence Service (LDVS) and other agencies including early help.
- 1.24 The project went live in February 2021; it had taken some time to set up and for it to operate at full capacity, partly because of the need for the IDVAs to undergo thorough vetting procedures and partly due to the Covid-19 pandemic social distancing requirements which prevented staff from sharing office space. Ongoing staffing issues have also made it difficult to maintain full capacity. The staffing model changed from the original concept which relied on a single IDVA working overtime to cover the hours required to a team of IDVAs being contracted to work the hours required.
- 1.25 The main benefit of the scheme is that the IDVAs provide rapid support to victim-survivors who have been the subject of recent call outs to the police about DVA. Their input helps to elicit additional information which may not have been picked up by the police officer responding to the call and to feed this information into the risk assessment processes which are an essential element in keeping victim-survivors and their families safe. The provision of information and support at this stage is welcomed by victim-survivors as it can help them to make often difficult decisions as to how they wish to proceed and clarify the options that are open to them. Referral to other agencies by the IDVAs, including LDVS, ensures that there is continuity for victim-survivors who need it and their families. Co-location of the IDVAs with the police and sharing of their information systems is crucial to the success of the intervention and the multi-agency working that underpins it. There are opportunities for awareness about DVA to be raised because of the close working between the police and the IDVAs and scope for increasing the impact through disseminating information about the purpose and role of the IDVAs.
- 1.26 It has been difficult to ascertain the precise unit costs of the intervention and to measure its precise impact in the absence of any basis for comparison (i.e.: an

equivalent cohort who have not received the intervention or more detailed measures of victim satisfaction and reductions in the rate of attrition of prosecution rates). However, our estimates of the value-for-money are positive if imprecise. We estimate that, in return for expenditure of £270 per case, there is a reduction in social costs of some £5,830, of which £625 relates to public services. It is recognised that any reduction in re-victimisation can be extremely cost-effective and a reduction in attrition rates welcome.

### **HMYOI Wetherby Violence Reduction programme.**

- 1.27 The Violence Reduction programme run by the St Giles Trust at HMYOI Wetherby was established to contribute to a reduction in knife-related violence and reoffending after leaving custody.
- 1.28 The programme has three discrete elements and includes: four 15-week programmes delivered to small groups of up to eight participants; mentoring sessions for 10-15 individuals; and a training and guidance session for prison staff.
- 1.29 The programme had been significantly affected by the pandemic, with work only starting on the group work sessions.
- 1.30 There was some evidence that the programme may be having some positive effect through the mentoring sessions, but we cannot show that the programme has led to any reduction in violence or aggression within HMYOI Wetherby, or that it has contributed to a reduction in knife-related violence and reoffending after leaving custody.
- 1.31 If the programme had been able to have been delivered as originally intended, it is of course possible that we might have seen reductions in violence and aggression, but Covid-19 and the restrictions placed on the YOI have significantly disrupted the delivery of this work.

## 2 List of recommendations

### 'Tackle It' programme with Leeds Rhinos Foundation, based at HMP Wealstun

- 2.1 **Recommendation 1:** If the WYVRU continue funding Tackle-It, they should include in the conditions for the grant the need for a more robust form of evaluation to measure reoffending by course participants. Ideally, this should include collecting longitudinal data to measure recidivism and comparison with a cohort of prisoners not receiving the intervention. It should also include a systematic view of victim-survivors' wellbeing and satisfaction with the service.
- 2.2 **Recommendation 2:** If the intervention is continued, it should be ensured that it is accessible for a diverse population so that the needs of prisoners who might find it more difficult to participate fully are met (e.g.: in terms of language or learning difficulties).
- 2.3 **Recommendation 3:** If the funding does not proceed beyond June 2022, on the grounds that the project is intended to become 'business as usual', can no longer be funded by the WYVRU or the VRU no longer wish to fund it, the LRF should be encouraged to:
- seek alternative sources of funding to allow the course to continue given the high level of demand at HMP Wealstun. This would help to ensure that all those who may benefit from the course are able to do so;
  - look at the possibility of rolling out the intervention to other prisons elsewhere with similar cohorts of prisoners;
  - look at how the intervention could be evaluated more robustly (see Recommendation 1);
  - review the course materials to ensure that they are of the highest standard and up to date. In particular, the course booklet should be professionally designed and updated, perhaps in discussion with course participants, so that it is more relevant to the Tackle-It course, and the questions asked are clearer;
  - consider the possibility of accreditation and discuss with Respect whether this is likely to be feasible and what it would involve.
- 2.4 **Recommendation 4:** The WYVRU may wish to look at Tackle-It as one of a whole range of interventions for perpetrators of domestic abuse, including those in the community and those in prison, to ensure that there are opportunities for offenders at every stage of their rehabilitation journey.

## Gangs and Violence Reduction programme at HMP Leeds with Catch 22

- 2.5 **Recommendation 1:** If the WYVRU were to fund this programme again in future, and wished to focus on achieving the same outcomes (i.e. to reduce violence within HMP Leeds and on release), we would advise that: (i) the screening and referral process capture details of those likely to be released during the funding period; and (ii) the programme set out how it will assess behaviour change for those released.
- 2.6 **Recommendation 2:** Discussions between Catch22, staff at HMP Leeds and the WYVRU should be clear on which prisoners were being selected for the programme and why. This should include whether those prisoners were subject to short sentences. This would help support Recommendation 1.
- 2.7 **Recommendation 3:** As HMP Leeds is a clear beneficiary of the programme, greater partnership working between Catch22 and prison staff should be encouraged. For example, joint screening and identification of those suitable for the programme may reduce the burden on the Catch22 coordinator, freeing her up to support more prisoners.
- 2.8 **Recommendation 4:** The data collected by Catch22 is valuable but is not easily capable of comparison with the standard data returns that go to the WYVRU. Consideration should be given to providing data in the format currently collected to the WYVRU, to help them better understand the impact the programme is having.

## Custody Diversion programme with St Giles Trust

- 2.9 **Recommendation 1:** if the programme were commissioned for another year by the WYVRU t, we recommend that any future Grant Agreement be clearer on the outcomes to be achieved. The current agreement only requires that St Giles engage with up to 200 young people but says nothing about the outcomes it expects that engagement to achieve.
- 2.10 **Recommendation 2:** We recommend clearer metrics and reporting mechanisms be put in place to better understand the impact that the programme is having on reducing crime and vulnerability of being exploited by criminals. This is because we are unable to say why there has only been a small positive impact on young people exiting gangs or from going missing.
- 2.11 **Recommendation 3:** We recommend that consideration be given to locating the case workers in those areas of greatest demand. It was not always clear whether

the case workers were based in the areas where gang-related referrals were made.

- 2.12 **Recommendation 4:** We recommend that consideration be given to back-office and support costs being shared between St Giles and the Liaison and Diversion Service. Given that they already work very closely together, closer sharing of functions should provide benefits to both organisations.
- 2.13 **Recommendation 5:** We recommend that St Giles and the WYVRU consider the pay scale for the caseworkers and team leaders against local equivalents, to determine if the funding available could be used to recruit additional caseworkers. If so, this would increase the capacity of the programme.

### **Police control room IDVA with Leeds Domestic Violence Service**

- 2.14 **Recommendation 1:** We recommend that if this project proceeds, the partners work together to achieve more systematic integration between the police and the IDVAs in the PCR with a view to transferring skills, information, and expertise. The IDVAs need to work as members of an integrated multi-agency frontline team within the PCR. This would enable them to contribute to cases in real time rather than having to wait for referrals or for an examination of the calls logged on WebSTORM.
- 2.15 **Recommendation 2:** Whilst the need for data collected specifically for monitoring is recognised, we recommend that thought should be given from the start of every project as to whether the returns required are proportionate and streamlined so that project workers do not spend too long in completing data returns. We recommend that the data burden for this project should be reduced if possible and the data recorded just once (i.e.: extracted from the LDVS system and used to inform WYVRU).
- 2.16 **Recommendation 3:** We recommend that wherever possible, additional resources are made available by the VRU to enable project management support to be provided for new projects and projects that are being extended to avoid placing an excessive burden on frontline staff.
- 2.17 **Recommendation 4:** We recommend that feedback is given to police and to providers by the VRU to ensure that they know what is being achieved by the project and whether outcomes are being met. Effective feedback on the outcomes

of individual projects such as this one is an essential element of strategies for tackling violence<sup>1</sup>.

- 2.18 **Recommendation 5:** People who do not have English as a first language and those who find using the telephone difficult including those with neurodiversity issues or hearing impairment may find it more difficult to receive support by telephone. We recommend that LDVS looks at the way in which victim-survivors are contacted to ensure that it is as accessible as it can be for people who may find communication by telephone challenging.

### **HMYOI Wetherby Violence Reduction programme.**

- 2.19 **Recommendation 1:** if the WYVRU chooses to fund this work in future, we recommend that a clearer link be made between the objectives and ambitions of the programme, and the West Yorkshire Strategic Needs Assessment and Strategy documents. This should include, whether the programme is aimed at reducing violence within HMYOI Wetherby or reducing violence after release.
- 2.20 **Recommendation 2:** We recommend that sufficient time be given to ensure that the 15-week programme can be delivered, and that outcomes data can be collected.
- 2.21 **Recommendation 3:** We recommend that discussions take place as early as possible between the prison staff and psychologist team at HMYOI Wetherby to explain the rationale for using workers with lived experience.
- 2.22 **Recommendation 4:** t We recommend that consideration be given to ensuring that a greater proportion of the allocated funding be spent on the intervention staff and frontline delivery.
- 2.23 **Recommendation 5:** We recommend that if the WYVRU chooses to fund one external organisation to provide two or more programmes, that the back-office or administrative costs be considered in their totality and not on a project-by-project basis (unless there is a compelling reason). Doing so would remove any questions about the duplication of funding or using funding from one programme to offset costs in another.

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<sup>1</sup> A whole-system multi-agency approach to serious violence prevention, A resource for local system leaders in England. HM Government (October 2019).

### 3 Introduction

3.1 RedQuadrant was commissioned in November 2021 by the West Yorkshire Violence Reduction Unit (WYVRU) to conduct an impact evaluation of its Core Programmes. These are:

- ‘Tackle It’ programme with Leeds Rhinos Foundation, based at HMP Wealstun
- Gangs and Violence Reduction programme at HMP Leeds with Catch 22
- Custody Diversion programme with St Giles Trust
- Police control room IDVA with Leeds Domestic Violence Service
- HMYOI Wetherby Violence Reduction programme.

3.2 The Core Programmes are key initiatives of VRU programme delivery, addressing factors that contribute to violence in West Yorkshire. The evaluation is intended to help the VRU understand the impact of these core programmes, with a view to improving future implementation and delivery, through identifying what works in West Yorkshire and establishing what would be needed to scale up or replicate these interventions in other areas of West Yorkshire and beyond.

3.3 The impact evaluation is intended to:

- Determine causal attribution of the VRU Core Programmes through establishing the impacts they are having in West Yorkshire;
- Identify whether programme impacts are positive or negative, whether the programmes are having the intended impacts or whether there are also unintended impacts arising from their implementation, as well as casting light on direct or indirect impacts;
- Establish the value for money of the VRU Core Programmes.

3.4 The VRU has four main priorities:

- Empowering Communities and Building Resilience
- Infrastructure & Partnership Development
- Identify and Support those at risk
- Links with Enforcement<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>2</sup> See <https://www.westyorks-ca.gov.uk/policing-and-crime/west-yorkshire-violence-reduction-unit/>

3.5 There are three Home Office mandated key success measures for VRUs which are:

- A reduction in hospital admissions for assaults with a knife or sharp object and especially among those victims aged under 25;
- A reduction in knife-enabled serious violence and especially among those victims aged under 25;
- A reduction in all non-domestic homicide and especially among those victims aged under 25 involving knives.

3.6 The VRU adopts a public health approach<sup>3</sup> to reducing violence in the region and has been working to identify the key drivers of serious violence locally with the aim of developing a co-ordinated response to tackling them. Each of the five areas<sup>4</sup> has produced an individual needs assessment and the VRU has produced an overall West Yorkshire Serious Violence Needs Assessment<sup>5</sup> which incorporates the findings from each of these, and a Serious Violence Response Strategy<sup>6</sup>. Both documents were updated during the lifetime of this project.

3.7 This evaluation is intended to help the VRU to understand how it is tracking against these three measures.

3.8 The needs assessment sets out a detailed picture of the impact of serious violence in West Yorkshire. Between October 2020 and September 2021, 24 people lost their lives to violence and 2325 people were seriously harmed costing West Yorkshire nearly £1billion in 2021<sup>7</sup>. It sets out the priority areas focusing on cross-cutting issues of disadvantage and inequality, vulnerability and exploitation, trauma, and adverse childhood experiences.

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<sup>3</sup> The public health approach to violence sees violence as a public health issue and as preventable; the WHO have developed a process for implementing public health approaches to violence and sought to identify the common risk factors driving violence and the protective factors preventing violence. See A whole-system multi-agency approach to serious violence prevention, a resource for local systems leaders in England. HM Government, October 2019, section 4.

<sup>4</sup> The county of West Yorkshire covers five metropolitan boroughs: Calderdale, Kirklees and the Cities of Bradford, Leeds, and Wakefield.

<sup>5</sup> Serious Violence in West Yorkshire, Strategic Needs Assessment, West Yorkshire Violence Reduction Unit, January 2022, see [www.westyorks-ca.gov.uk/media/7997/final-wy-serious-violence-needs-assessment-2022.pdf](http://www.westyorks-ca.gov.uk/media/7997/final-wy-serious-violence-needs-assessment-2022.pdf)

<sup>6</sup> West Yorkshire Response Strategy Refresh 2022, Serious Violence: West Yorkshire Strategy for Change (January 2022), see [www.westyorks-ca.gov.uk/media/7963/wy-serious-violence-response-strategy-2022-final.pdf](http://www.westyorks-ca.gov.uk/media/7963/wy-serious-violence-response-strategy-2022-final.pdf)

<sup>7</sup> Strategic Needs Assessment, op cit, page 8.

## Methodology

- 3.9 Desk-based research was conducted following the award of contract, and a range of documents was analysed and reviewed. This included a range of documents related to each of the five projects to be evaluated, key documents produced by the WYVRU and published evidence related to each of the interventions.
- 3.10 Stakeholders were identified in discussion with the WYVRU for each of the five projects and approached with a request for an interview. Interviews were then conducted by telephone or videoconference, using a semi-structured interview approach, tailored to the specific project and to the stakeholder's role. The questions were agreed with the WYVRU. Most interviews were digitally recorded, and some were transcribed. Some interviewees chose to submit additional written information to supplement the interviews. Once noted or transcribed, the interviews were analysed to identify themes and queries raised with interviewees or with the WYVRU who had commissioned all five projects. The themes identified have been incorporated into this report using quotations from participants where these helped to illustrate emerging key issues. The quotations have been used with permission of the individual interviewee. The team's economist analysed the costs and data provided and carried out investigations into other relevant published data.
- 3.11 We produced an interim report in January summarising our preliminary findings and recommendations which were used as the basis for a discussion at a meeting with the WYVRU, two months after the project started. Feedback was received and considered during the remainder of the evaluation period. The final report has been shared with the WYVRU and (with their permission) with the individual project leads on a confidential basis and their comments considered.
- 3.12 In terms of assessing value for money, our general approach has been to:
- calculate unit costs, defined as expenditure per year divided by the number of clients per year, considering disruptions to the number of clients supported if appropriate
  - assess the percentage improvement in key outcomes (such as client wellbeing), either based on evaluation findings or from similar projects – unfortunately the evidence base for assessments has not been robust, however, so these assessments must be seen as indicative;
  - assess the social costs imposed by the incidents that the schemes aim to address. We have calculated social costs in relation to (1) domestic violence; (2) gang membership; and (3) an 'average' cost of crime

- calculate the change in social costs by multiplying those social costs against proportional improvement in outcomes; and
- compare unit costs against the reduction in social costs achieved per case.

3.13 A list of those interviewed for this report is set out in the Appendices of each chapter.

### **Acknowledgements**

3.14 We would like to thank all those who took part in the interviews we carried out for this project and to those who provided the information needed to complete this report.

## 4 'Tackle-It' programme with Leeds Rhinos Foundation, based at HMP Wealstun

### Domestic abuse in West Yorkshire

- 4.1 There is a high level of Domestic Abuse offences in West Yorkshire. There were 54,446 recorded domestic abuse offences between October 2020 and September 2021<sup>8</sup>. According to ONS data, West Yorkshire has the highest number of domestic abuse-related crimes recorded by the police in any police force in England and Wales (23 crimes for every 1,000 people in the population). The ONS data also show that there were 77,867 domestic abuse-related incidents and crimes recorded in the year ending March 2021, equivalent to 33 incidents and crimes for every 1,000 people in the population, the fourth highest for any police force area in England and Wales.<sup>9</sup> The number of cases discussed at MARACs in West Yorkshire (73 cases per 10,000 females) is the fifth highest in England and Wales. The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on domestic abuse may also have affected the reporting given the additional difficulties for victims of seeking help during lockdowns.
- 4.2 Although the three main national aims for VRUs are not centred on domestic abuse, flexibility has been allowed to enable VRUs to set local priorities based on their own assessment of needs. The Strategic Needs Assessment (SNA) published in January 2022 provides more detail on the nature of the offences, the hotspot locations and the offenders' place of residents as well as the demographics of offenders.
- 4.3 The response to the SNA published in January 2022<sup>10</sup> shows the ambitions for the VRU which include supporting families affected by domestic and sexual violence and abuse, and Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG). A gender-based approach focusing on women and girls has been taken and is reflected in this document. The response sets out the actions to be taken to ensure that domestic and sexual abuse are targeted in the coming year. Tackle-It has been commissioned as one of several local violence reduction interventions – see Appendix A to this report.

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<sup>8</sup> Serious Violence in West Yorkshire, Strategic Needs Assessment, January 2022, see <https://staging.westyorks-ca.gov.uk/media/7962/wy-serious-violence-needs-assessment-2022-final.pdf>

<sup>9</sup> ONS, Domestic abuse in England and Wales Data Tool, see [www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/datasets/domesticabuseinenglandandwales/datatool](http://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/datasets/domesticabuseinenglandandwales/datatool)

<sup>10</sup> West Yorkshire Response Strategy Refresh 2022: Serious Violence. West Yorkshire Strategy for Change.

## Domestic abuse perpetrators – an overview

- 4.4 This section sets out the background and evidence for interventions such as Tackle-It aimed at addressing the behaviour of domestic abuse perpetrators and reducing the risk of reoffending. Domestic Violence Perpetrator Programmes (DVPPs) are aimed at reducing the incidence of domestic violence by changing the attitudes, behaviours, and beliefs of perpetrators<sup>11</sup>. Such programmes were introduced into the UK relatively recently to reduce the harm caused by domestic violence and abuse and to stop high-risk perpetrators from further abuse or becoming serial perpetrators. However, there has until recently been a lack of consistent evidence on the effectiveness of these programmes for people who perpetrate domestic violence and abuse<sup>12</sup>. There has been increasing evidence of the effectiveness of interventions in recent years<sup>13</sup>.
- 4.5 The traditional approach to domestic abuse focused on interventions aimed at safeguarding the victim-survivor and (generally) her family, including refuges and support as well as criminal justice interventions, with offenders receiving some rehabilitation services. Initially, the latter offered behaviour-change interventions in a groupwork setting to male perpetrators of violence – more recent developments included practitioners developing interventions for delivery in a one-to-one setting<sup>14</sup>.
- 4.6 The effectiveness of DVPPs has been questioned. The outcomes of individual programmes aimed at rehabilitating or providing self-help groups for violence in men<sup>15</sup> have had mixed results, with little impact on reducing recidivism (treatment programmes are thought to account for around 10% reduction in the recurrence of violence).<sup>16</sup> As a consequence, there is an understandable determination to ensure that only programmes that give good value for money are commissioned<sup>17</sup>. The most common way of deciding whether DVPPs are successful is to look at the changes in perpetrators' behaviour, i.e., are they less likely to use physical and sexual violence after completing the programme? There

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<sup>11</sup> What works for Children's Social Care, Domestic Violence Perpetrator Programmes, see <https://whatworks-csc.org.uk/evidence/evidence-store/intervention/domestic-violence-perpetrator-programmes/>

<sup>12</sup> NICE guideline, Domestic abuse and violence: multi-agency working (published 2014); page 33, paragraph 4.19, <https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ph50>

<sup>13</sup> For example, Hester M, Eisenstadt E. et al, University of Bristol, Evaluation of the Drive Project – a Three Year Pilot to address high-risk, high-harm perpetrators of domestic abuse (December 2019), See <http://driveproject.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/Drive-Evaluation-Report-Final.pdf>

<sup>14</sup> See Respect website <https://respectphoneline.org.uk/resources/frontline-workers/factsheets/domestic-abuse-perpetrator-programmes-do-they-work-factsheet-for-frontline-workers/>

<sup>15</sup> Antunes-Alves, S and De Stefano J, Intimate Partner Violence: Making the Case for Joint Couple Treatment. *The Family Journal: Counselling and Therapy for Couples and Families*, 2014. Vol 22(1) 62-68, page 63.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid page 63.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid

have been many evaluations of DVPPs in the UK and overseas in recent years, with one notable study concluding that:

*‘DVPPs extend men’s understandings of violence and abuse, with clear shifts from talking about stand-alone incidents of physical violence to beginning to recognise ongoing coercive control’<sup>18</sup>.*

- 4.7 Where such interventions are delivered professionally and competently, they are recognised as proving effective in creating change and reducing harm though ‘poorly run services can raise the risk and add to survivor vulnerability.’<sup>19</sup> The development of an accreditation standard by Respect<sup>20</sup>, the main organisation in the UK who develop safe and effective work with perpetrators, has helped to raise standards. Many organisations have sought accreditation for perpetrator programmes to show that they comply with the working principles outlined and to assure commissioners that the programmes offered meet these high standards. A recent study of the benefits of the Respect standard found that:

*‘The desire to demonstrate the quality of their service was the top reason why survey respondents said their organisation had applied for accreditation – with 100% saying that accreditation was important to demonstrate quality. Some organisations felt that the accreditation process had actually improved their practice.’<sup>21</sup>*

- 4.8 There has been considerable interest in recent years in investing in perpetrator programmes and a move away from the controversy surrounding them which previously saw investment in this area as diverting scarce resources from services for victim-survivors. Some victim-focused organisations were directly opposed to investing in DVPPs.<sup>22</sup> This has changed significantly in recent years with increasing recognition that there is scope for both investment in high level perpetrator programmes as well as support for victims. Some programmes, such as Drive (and, to some extent, Tackle-It, see below), combine the two, with an IDVA or Victim

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<sup>18</sup> Kelly and Westmarland, 2015:45 cited on Respect website, op cit.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> See Respect Standards, third edition 2017, see [https://hubble-live-assets.s3.amazonaws.com/respect/redactor2\\_assets/files/105/Respect\\_Standard\\_FINAL.pdf](https://hubble-live-assets.s3.amazonaws.com/respect/redactor2_assets/files/105/Respect_Standard_FINAL.pdf).

<sup>21</sup> Westmarland, N. and Kilkova Z, Mapping the Benefits of the Respect Standard, University of Durham Centre for Research into Violence and Abuse and Respect, January 2022, see [http://hubble-live-assets.s3.amazonaws.com/respect/file\\_asset/file/589/DU - Respect Standard Report - Mapping the benefits of the Respect Standard 1 .pdf](http://hubble-live-assets.s3.amazonaws.com/respect/file_asset/file/589/DU - Respect Standard Report - Mapping the benefits of the Respect Standard 1 .pdf)

<sup>22</sup> Refuge responds to Drive perpetrator programme. See <https://theconversation.com/will-changing-the-focus-from-victim-to-perpetrator-end-domestic-violence-55206> and <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2016/feb/17/pilot-scheme-to-target-domestic-abusers-rather-than-victims>

Support Worker (VSW) supporting the victims and families of the perpetrators receiving the intervention. The Drive evaluation recognised that:

*'IDVA work is absolutely critical to the reduction in risk. They also indicate that Drive plus IDVA intervention reduces that risk even further.'*<sup>23</sup>

- 4.9 The government has made funding available to develop and evaluate perpetrator programmes as part of the overall strategy on Violence Against Women and Girls<sup>24</sup>, with the Home Office allocating an £11.1 million fund for programmes for domestic abuse and stalking perpetrators for Police and Crime Commissioners to run programmes for domestic abuse perpetrators and perpetrators of stalking<sup>25</sup>. The Strategy states:

*'There is some evidence that intervening early can prevent violence from escalating and further offending occurring, and there is some promising evidence from domestic violence perpetrator programmes. For example, an evaluation of an early behaviour change programme for perpetrators of domestic abuse offences who did not have any previous convictions, 'Cautioning and Relationship Abuse', found that those who attended the course were significantly less likely to re-offend than those who did not.'*<sup>26</sup>

- 4.10 A national Call to Action on domestic abuse perpetrators<sup>27</sup> was published in January 2020 calling for a national domestic abuse perpetrator strategy for England and Wales. This includes a call for additional investment in quality assured perpetrator interventions that address the whole range of perpetrators as well as a national approach to quality assurance.
- 4.11 It is recognised that perpetrator intervention work is on a steep upward trajectory in the UK<sup>28</sup> and that relying solely on interventions which meet the Respect standard has both advantages and disadvantages. Only commissioning interventions that are accredited in this way may provide reassurance for commissioners but may equally stifle innovation and new approaches and exclude

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<sup>23</sup> Hester M, Eisenstadt N. et al, University of Bristol, Evaluation of the Drive project, a three-year pilot to address high-risk, high-harm perpetrators of domestic abuse, executive summary, page 3 (January 2020).

<sup>24</sup> Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls, July 2021, see <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/tackling-violence-against-women-and-girls-strategy/tackling-violence-against-women-and-girls-strategy#executive-summary-and-ambition>

<sup>25</sup> VAWG Strategy, op cit, page 17.

<sup>26</sup> Cited in VAWG strategy page 63: Strang, H., Sherman, L., Ariel, B. et al. Reducing the Harm of Intimate Partner Violence: Randomized Controlled Trial of the Hampshire Constabulary CARA Experiment. *Camb J Evid Based Policing* 1, 160–173 (2017). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s41887-017-0007-x>

<sup>27</sup> A Domestic Abuse Perpetrator Strategy for England and Wales, Call to Action, <http://driveproject.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/Call-to-Action-Final.pdf>

<sup>28</sup> Westmarland and Zilkova, op cit, page 6.

small providers, for whom the length of time it takes, and the difficulties associated with meeting the Respect standard are prohibitive<sup>29</sup>.

## **Tackle-It – an intervention for domestic abuse prisoners**

4.12 In this section, we look at the aims of Tackle-It, how this is delivered at HMP Wealstun, the course content, referrals, and the way in which it fits with WYVRU's strategic objectives. We then assess the benefits and the challenges of delivery and comment on its effectiveness and cost-effectiveness. A list of the stakeholders interviewed is set out at Appendix 1 to this chapter.

### **Aims of Tackle-It**

4.13 Tackle-It aims to address the behaviour of prisoners who have committed domestic abuse offences. It challenges behaviours, thinking and attitudes through classroom and sport participation and evolved from an earlier intervention, Onside, which was developed by the Leeds Rhinos Foundation (LRF) for use in prison, aimed at improving employment opportunities for offenders in HMP Leeds and HMP Wealstun on release. This combined classroom-based work and physical activity sessions to help offenders find work upon their release.

4.14 There are over 160 sentenced domestic abuse offenders in HMP Wealstun where Tackle-It is delivered. The programme is delivered twice a week (in two and a half hour sessions) over six weeks comprising classroom and physical activity (the classroom session being around an hour and a half followed by an hour's sporting activity); the sessions aim to demonstrate how individual qualities and life skills can transfer into different situations through a programme of challenging activities and value-based lessons for offenders, enabling them to make positive changes in their lives<sup>30</sup>.

4.15 Sport is used to engage the offenders with the classroom-based activity covering a broad range of issues including abuse, reoffending, crime, drugs and alcohol misuse, unemployment, and health. The targeted areas covered include raising awareness of abusive behaviours, healthy and unhealthy relationships, what being a man means (including the idealised or stereotypical pictures of men and women that prisoners may hold and the influence of role models), identifying behaviours and feelings and understanding how these may affect others, and triggers and feelings that may lead to abusive behaviours. Essential values underpinning the approach include motivation, teamwork, respect, and discipline.

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<sup>29</sup> Westmarland and Zilkova, op cit, page 6.

<sup>30</sup> Rhinos Foundation, delivery proposal for Tackle-It.

- 4.16 The aim of Tackle-It is therefore to help assess options of support and plan for life on leaving prison, to increase self-reflection and self-improvement so that individuals can be motivated, rehabilitated and resettled into society with any changes needed for a safer environment for their partner, ex-partner, or children.
- 4.17 To complement the intervention for perpetrators, a Victim Support Worker (VSW) who is part of the project team works with the victim-survivors and families of the perpetrator participating in the programme to offer support. The VSW has strong links with HMP Wealstun and liaises with prison and probation staff in the prison to ensure that victim-survivors and their families remain safe and to address any issues of safety that arise during the delivery of the intervention (for example, unwanted telephone calls).

### **Tackle-It at HMP Wealstun**

- 4.18 HMP Wealstun is a Category C prison near Wetherby with around 850 prisoners, catering mainly for violent offenders, although not those who have committed sexual offences. We were advised that around one third of the prisoners have a domestic violence flag [prison representative interview] even if this is not their index offence. Some education programmes are available at the prison as one of the nine pathways they have for reducing reoffending. These include Resolve (a cognitive-behavioural therapy-informed offending behaviour programmes aimed at improving outcomes related to violence in adult males other than domestic violence who are at medium risk of offending) and the Thinking Skills Programme (TSP) (a cognitive skills programme which addresses the way offenders think and the behaviour associated with their offending). Resolve will be phased out leaving only TSP. However, because of the way in which prisoners are selected for these programmes, based on a scoring system, those with domestic abuse as their index offence may not meet the criteria for these types of interventions.
- 4.19 Tackle-It was first piloted as part of a broader 'reducing reoffending' scheme which started in 2016 in HMP Leeds, delivered by the LRF with the first course being run in 2018. This included the Onside project (see paragraph 4.13). It was developed by the LRF through their partnership with West Yorkshire Police Integrated Offender Management (IOM) 6<sup>th</sup> Prison hub, originally commissioned by the West Yorkshire Police and Crime Commissioner. WYVRU later commissioned this project as part of its portfolio of projects to tackle violence across West Yorkshire to begin on 1 April 2021 for a year at a cost of £25,650. Due to the onset of the pandemic, the project ran two weeks late, partly because of the complications imposed by social distancing requirements which required the separation of prisoners from different wings. All the education provision delivered

by outside agencies was stopped during the lockdowns. The first course commissioned by WYVRU (which is the fourth time the course has been run) did not therefore start until 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2021 and the second course started in January 2022.

- 4.20 The VSW works closely with the prison staff and the LRF staff who are delivering the course in the prison. There is an information sharing agreement in place with West Yorkshire Police, enabling the police to give the VSW intelligence packages about each of the perpetrators attending the course. This includes their domestic abuse history and underlying issues such as drugs and alcohol problems, the nature of his offences and his release date. The VSW contacts the victim-survivor(s) and lets her/them know that the offender will be participating on the course, checks how they are and offers support<sup>31</sup>.
- 4.21 Many of the victim-survivors are already receiving support from other agencies, but this has been less common during the pandemic. As a result, the victim-survivors have been more likely to engage with the VSW and to welcome the support offered. This can include referrals, providing information about what will happen when the offender leaves prison (e.g.: the terms of any Restraining Order), or looking at the implications for any children who the offender might wish to have contact with on leaving prison. The VSW may check that the services that will be needed when the offender leaves prison are in place (for example, that Children's Social Care and other agencies who may be involved know that he will be back in the community). She can also make referrals for the offenders if needed (for example, ensuring that they are receiving support from prison mental health teams if required or that they can be referred to Drugs and Alcohol Services on their release).
- 4.22 After the course, the VSW provides an overview of each participant on the course which is included on the prisoner's OASys<sup>32</sup> record in prison and shared with his Offender Manager; this will also be sent to the probation officer in the community on release.

## Referrals

- 4.23 Referrals are all made by the Prison Offender Managers who hold the cases. The aim is to identify those for whom domestic abuse is their index offence; the intention was to focus on younger men, but this has proved challenging (see paragraph 4.29 below). In addition, the intervention was initially aimed specifically

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<sup>31</sup> For the November 2021 course, there were 12 victims for the eight perpetrators attending.

<sup>32</sup> Offender Assessment System used in prison to measure the risks and needs of criminal offenders under their supervision.

at the large numbers of offenders in whom domestic abuse behaviours are not yet entrenched (low to medium risk) who are generally missed by DVPPs. However, since only a few prisoners can be accepted and the numbers eligible are so great, in practice, those selected all have domestic abuse as an index offence and some serious offenders have been included (including one convicted of domestic homicide). The perpetrators attending the first course will all have been referred to the MARAC<sup>33</sup> at some stage. They also aim to recruit prisoners who have at least six months left on their sentence. It is hoped that the course provides an opportunity for perpetrators to reflect on the impact of their behaviour and make changes before their release to prevent them from further abusive behaviour.

4.24 For those who have committed very serious domestic abuse -related offences and in whom such behaviour is already deeply entrenched, HMP Wealstun are planning to introduce a separate programme.

4.25 Tackle-It is not seen as an intense programme like Resolve but is felt by the prison to meet an important need and as a way of preventing behaviour escalating in perpetrators who are unlikely to receive any other intervention, certainly whilst in prison:

*'So what we're trying to do is target those individuals early on, so that they don't reach that level where they become entrenched...But what Tackle-It does is to meet the needs of a huge part of our population, where those individuals that may not necessarily have a significant history of domestic violence, but they don't have any sort of level of intervention around what they've done..... We've got a large portion of our population don't do any offending behaviour work because they don't fit the criteria for certain types of programmes.'* [Member of prison staff.]

4.26 LRF and the prison discuss all the referrals and the recommendations made to decide which offenders are going to be most likely to benefit, drawing on advice from the Prison Offender Managers who know the individual prisoners. It is recognised as important that perpetrators of domestic abuse are referred to the correct programme and that it could be harmful for them to attend a very high intensity programme if this does not meet their needs:

*'You can't have every individual doing a high intensity domestic violence piece of work because...putting them into a high-intensive programme doesn't work, and it...could have a really negative impact on those individuals.'* [Member of prison staff.]

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<sup>33</sup> Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference

- 4.27 This decision as to who attends the course is therefore not completely objective: some who may benefit may be unable to access the course. This is partly due to the lack of capacity (see paragraph 4.28 below) and the fact that there is a waiting list for the course; it could be addressed if the number of places on the course were expanded to ensure that all those who may benefit are able to do so which would remove the subjectivity of those deciding who is most likely to benefit.
- 4.28 The number of prisoners taking part in the first and the second courses (which started in November 2021 and February 2022) was eight. Numbers were limited because of the social distancing requirements in place due to Covid-19 – it would otherwise have been possible to accommodate a maximum of twelve participants. However, thirty to forty referrals were made and there is consequently a waiting list. Increased capacity on the course would be welcomed by the prison given the large number of prisoners who have committed domestic abuse -related offences and the lack of alternative provision.
- 4.29 Detailed information is recorded on each of the course participants including demographic information. For example, of the 9 prisoners initially referred to the first course held during 2021/22, 8 were white and 1 was Asian (in the event, only 8 people participated). With one exception, all the prisoners were over 25. The data collected is summarised and included in the monthly return. For all of them, their index offence included domestic abuse. LRF have tried to identify younger prisoners as they feel this is more closely aligned to the objectives of the WYVRU but have struggled to find many prisoners under the age of 25 years as there are few in prison for domestic abuse offences:

*'We've tried to get the younger end this time just to try and get around that 23-year-old mark; at the moment, it's probably in the early 30s. This is a very, very young course compared to the others because the funders want the younger end targeting.'* [LRF representative.]

## **Course content**

- 4.30 The course is intended to provide an opportunity for self-reflection. For example,

*'...probably the biggest one is about a topic called being a man. So, what they perceive a perfect man to be like, or what a man should be. And that gets them to kind of look inside themselves and address some of the issues that they've got.... That's the one that gets them the most.... So, we break it down to do certain role plays about certain things...how they've dealt with it. Put into play stuff that they could do to help them not act in the same way. We address their anger triggers...and then we look over...problem-solving and relationship choices and then the*

*consequences that come from their choices in everyday life.’ [LRF course leader]*

- 4.31 The curriculum for the classroom-based activities covers a wide range of subjects with sessions including communication, blame denial, being a man, feelings and behaviours, and accountability and beliefs. The course includes some theoretically based tools such as the Power and Control wheel and the Equality wheel (derived from the Duluth model)<sup>34</sup>.
- 4.32 Participants are asked to think about and discuss their own experiences. Course materials include films and prompt cards which are used to inform and stimulate the discussion. Each participant receives a workbook which asks them about their expectations and contains an assessment form for each session. Although it has not been possible for us to observe the course being delivered, the curriculum seems logical, the films are of high quality and engaging and provide the basis for a stimulating and participative discussion according to the Course Leader. The content of the booklet, which was developed at the course’s inception, could be improved to improve its relevance to the course content and to provide some information about the topics covered by the course.
- 4.33 The physical exercise takes place after the classroom session and provides some release and reward for the more intensive classroom-based activities:

*‘They do the classroom lessons which can get quite heavy, and men will cry in there once they realise.... There’s a lot of barriers to break down initially and then once they get into the proper working in the classroom, and these men start realising that yeah, I am the perpetrator for that type of behaviour, it can lead to very low mood and some very dark places in there. So, the support aspect is to let them go to the gym afterwards, to do some teamwork, to sort of get it out of the system about what they’ve just experienced in the classroom’. [LRF representative.]*

### **Strategic fit with WYVRU’s objectives**

- 4.34 The aims of Tackle-It do not appear at first glance to fit well with the overall aims of the VRU as mandated by the Home Office – see paragraph 3.5. However, given the scale of the problem in West Yorkshire as set out in paragraph 4.1, domestic

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<sup>34</sup> The Power and Control Wheel and the Equality Wheel are derived from the Duluth model, which was developed in a small town in Minnesota, Duluth, as innovative way of tackling domestic abuse within a community including taking the blame off the victim and placing accountability on the offender. See [www.theduluthmodel.org/what-is-the-duluth-model/](http://www.theduluthmodel.org/what-is-the-duluth-model/). The wheels are widely used during training about domestic abuse and can be found at: [www.theduluthmodel.org/wheels/fags-about-the-wheels/](http://www.theduluthmodel.org/wheels/fags-about-the-wheels/). The Power and Control Wheel is a tool that helps explain the different ways an abusive partner can use partner and control to manipulate a relationships. The Equality Wheel was developed not to describe equality per se, but to describe the changes needed for men who abuse their partners to move from being abusive to non-violent partnership.

abuse (including the impact on children and young people) is seen as a priority for the VRU.

- 4.35 A workshop was held on 9<sup>th</sup> February 2022 to develop a Theory of Change for Tackle-It to help to understand and articulate the way in which the changes brought about by Tackle-It are meant to happen and to define the activities, outputs, outcomes, and impact. This was attended by representatives of LRF and the prison and facilitated by RedQuadrant. The outcome of this is set out in the Theory of Change diagram presented at Appendix 2.

## Benefits

- 4.36 The following benefits identified from the interviews with stakeholders included (see also section on Effectiveness):
- 4.37 **Filling a gap:** There is a clear need for a programme for those perpetrating domestic abuse given the high numbers in prison for domestic abuse -related offences. Providing Tackle-It in prison means that perpetrators are accessing it earlier than an equivalent intervention after release which we were told they may not get on to for several months. Tackle-It is therefore seen by the prison staff to fill a gap:

*'Tackle-It is a godsend for us because it fits the criteria for those low-level domestic violence perpetrators at low and medium risk.'* [Member of prison staff]

- 4.38 In the view of the prison staff, the offenders who participate in Tackle-It would otherwise be unlikely to receive any intervention, even (in some cases) when they leave prison given the level of their offending behaviour (particularly those who are in prison for non- domestic abuse offences). Their concern was that these individuals were then more likely to become high risk domestic abuse offenders if the behaviour was not addressed and that they could commit more and more domestic abuse offences. In addition, attendance is likely to be better than equivalent community-based programmes and therefore has more chance of having an impact on perpetrators of domestic abuse domestic abuse. We were also advised that there was currently no equivalent intervention to Tackle-It in the community and that Tackle-It presented the prison with an opportunity to help to promote public protection:

*'And that's where I think we have a responsibility within a closed environment to support these guys and to get them support and get them to reduce the risk. We've got responsibility to help protect the public. And I think we've got an opportunity here with Tackle-It to utilise a*

*programme which is really hugely beneficial and will have an impact on those individuals in a really positive way.’ [Member of prison staff.]*

- 4.39 **Key component of overall rehabilitation strategy:** Tackle-It fits within an overall approach to rehabilitating prisoners within HMP Wealstun – it is the only intervention specifically aimed at low to medium risk domestic abuse offenders, though the intention is to develop a course for more serious domestic abuse offenders who are in prison [see paragraph 4.24 above]. It is considered suitable for prisoners in whom domestic abuse behaviours are not yet deeply entrenched and is strongly supported and considered effective by the prison staff:

*‘It’s a piece of work that I think will massively benefit the prisoners.’ [Member of prison staff]*

- 4.40 **Acceptability to offenders:** Offenders were said to be more receptive to the intervention as it was delivered by an external organisation rather than by prison staff. In addition, for some, because this was the only offending behaviour work that they had received, they were appreciative of the programme:

*‘A few of them said, this is the first time it’s opened my eyes about what I’m actually doing. And I found that resonated with me because I felt that those are the individuals that get missed...and what tends to happen is they escalate...and then they become the high-risk individuals.’ [Member of prison staff.]*

- 4.41 It was also popular with prisoners because of the sporting activities which are built into the sessions, allowing them to ‘let off steam’ after the classroom work as well as to enable the group to work as a team. We were told that for some prisoners, the course brings home to them that their behaviour constitutes domestic abuse even if they did not previously realise that:

*‘If you could see in that classroom, a lot of them do not realise what domestic abuse involves, so it doesn’t have to be physical, it can be mental, it’s coercive behaviour. They don’t get that until it’s pointed out to them. In the classroom situation, once it’s explained to them, and it’s broken down into scenarios and examples ...you should see the look on their faces as they think yeah, that’s me.’ [LRF representative]*

- 4.42 Although we were unable to interview any of the course participants directly, we were told that two representatives had attended a meeting with the VRU at which they gave positive feedback:

*‘They didn’t feel like they were in a teaching, a teacher to pupil situation. It was very much discussion-focused and, even though they were clear that [the staff] themselves have rules and standards to stick to, I think*

*they felt very comfortable in the style that things were delivered and, with the sporting element, there's other discussions and other ways of handling the conversation, so it wasn't just dictating things to them'. [LRF representative]*

- 4.43 **Support for victim survivors:** High quality and effective support and advocacy are provided alongside the course for the victim-survivors – the experienced VSW can identify the needs of victim-survivors and families, answer any questions they may have and provide reassurance as well as any additional support or referrals needed. As the VSW pointed out, many of the victim-survivors have lost self-esteem because of the domestic abuse – for some of them, helping them *'back into society, back into some sort of communication with other people whereby they're not controlled and can do what they want' is a huge step on the road to recovery'* which she can help them with [LRF representative]. It was clear from interviews that having a VSW who has been working with offenders for some time, including in HMP Wealstun in a different capacity, and therefore knows this area of work and the people involved well, has greatly advantaged the project.
- 4.44 **Effective information sharing:** Information is shared effectively between the LRF and the prison; there is a clear feedback mechanism in place allowing any problem behaviour both from the classroom environment of picked up from the victim-survivor to be identified early on and fed back to the prison staff. This is submitted on an intelligence report via the prison recording system which is sent directly to the Security department or to the police team at HMP Wealstun and disseminated to the appropriate department within the prison. It is also brought to the attention of the prisoner's Offender Manager. We were advised that any information picked up in this way is acted on efficiently.

*'It's been really easy sharing information with the prison.'* [LRF representative]

- 4.45 There is some contact between the prison-based Probation Officer and those in the community. The VSW liaises with Probation Officers prior to release, and this may impact on the licence conditions.

## Challenges

- 4.46 The following challenges were identified from the interviews:
- 4.47 **Delays due to Covid 19 pandemic:** There was a delay in setting-up the courses because of the Covid-19 pandemic and a two-year period when it was not possible to run any courses. The restrictions in place meant that it was not practicable to run the course due to the social distancing requirements imposed which

precluded prisoners from different wings mixing with one another. In addition, a health and wellbeing day where the prisoners were allowed to mix led to an outbreak of Covid-19 and a further delay in starting the course. The restrictions also meant the number of places was reduced from 10-12 to 8-10 making it difficult to accept all referrals. The option of running the course for prisoners in one wing at a time was considered but this would have made it difficult if there was an outbreak of Covid-19 in that wing. Mixing prisoners from different wings was also seen as having some advantages.

- 4.48 **Lack of capacity:** The course could be filled many times over if demand were to be satisfied given the high proportion of the 850 prisoners who have committed domestic abuse -related offences. A waiting list has been drawn up, but it seems unlikely that all those who wish to participate and all those who stand to benefit will be able to do so before their release. As one member of prison staff told us:

*'There's so many referrals, we could put on three or four programmes at once.'*

- 4.49 **Age range:** It was not possible to find many prisoners within the preferred age range; the vast majority of those accepted were over the age of 25. This is likely to be an ongoing issue given that many prisoners in the prison for domestic abuse offences are over 25.
- 4.50 **Impact of staff changes:** From our interviews, it seemed likely that staff changes in LRF had caused a lack of continuity. However, LRF were able to appoint a course leader who was new to this area of work to replace the previous course leader who had led the programme since its inception (and the previous Onside programme).
- 4.51 **Communication between the prison and LRF:** Some issues in communication arose with the prison staff because of the numbers of different prison staff involved in providing the necessary approvals, but these were resolved early on.
- 4.52 **Lack of ongoing support after release:** Although outside the scope of Tackle-It and of this study, there is a gap in providing ongoing support for offenders after their release which means that there is little continuity for the men on their rehabilitation journey. However effective Tackle-It is, a short-term educational intervention of this kind is unlikely to completely stop domestic abuse in an individual offender. Ideally, referrals should be made to other complementary programmes but there is no guarantee that this happens – it was suggested that even if support is available on release, the men do not know how they can access it and are unlikely to do so [interview with LRF representative]. This is something

that LRF are aware of and are in discussion with another organisation to see whether a community-based intervention could be established to align with Tackle-It and to provide continuity for the offenders who have participated in Tackle-IT.

- 4.53 **Diversity and accessibility:** It is not clear how well the intervention delivers in terms of diversity – for example, in meeting the needs of course participants who may have communication, language or literacy difficulties. This may need to be considered if the programme is to be extended to ensure that Tackle-It meets the needs of a diverse range of offenders including those with learning disabilities or who are neurodiverse, those with literacy problems and prisoners with language difficulties. This is particularly important given that the selection of who is chosen to do the course is undertaken by the Offender Managers in discussion with the LRF.
- 4.54 As far as victim-survivors are concerned, the VSW has access to interpreter services if needed. She can use a telephone-based translation service for a ‘live’ conversation; there is also an online booking portal if she needs to speak to a victim-survivor at a specific time and date, run by CAPITA. In the event of having a victim-survivor with a learning disability, an appropriate adult would be found (the need for this would be flagged on the intelligence package provided by the police for both language and learning difficulties)<sup>35</sup>.
- 4.55 **Sustainability:** Funding uncertainty means that there has been no guarantee for staff or the prison that the course will continue as a permanent part of the rehabilitation programme within HMP Wealstun. Sustainability is therefore an issue for Tackle-It, and it is uncertain whether funding will be found once the WYVRU funding ceases in July 2022 through other means. It was always hoped, however, that the prison would be able to carry on the funding themselves once the VRU funding came to an end.
- 4.56 **Accreditation:** The lack of accreditation of the intervention means that it is more difficult to provide reassurance for commissioners of the effectiveness of the intervention. This is dealt with in more detail below, see paragraph 6.45.

## Effectiveness of Tackle-It

### Measuring long-term impact – offenders

- 4.57 The long-term impact of Tackle-It is dependent on whether it meets the identified aim of resettling prisoners into society without perpetrating any further domestic

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<sup>35</sup> Information provided by email by VSW on 14<sup>th</sup> March 2022.

abuse against their former partner(s) or a new partner. Measuring the long-term impact of the intervention is challenging; it is difficult to assess whether these outcomes have been achieved in the absence of longer-term data and with little basis for comparison. The VSW asks the police teams based in the prison periodically whether any of the offenders who have previously attended the course have reoffended and come back to prison for domestic abuse offences. Although data is available on the numbers attending the course, the precise impact on recidivism is difficult to measure. LRF have reviewed the available data and looked at the number who have returned to prison in West Yorkshire in a 12-month period after their release for a further domestic abuse offence:

- From four courses (October 2018 until March 2020), 4 out of 31 sentenced domestic abuse prisoners have returned: 2 for violent offences and 2 for breaching restraining orders. This gives a recidivism rate of 13% in one year.
- The LRF website claims that ‘out of the 31 sentenced offenders to have successfully completed the Tackle It course since it began, only one has later been recalled to prison - proving its success so far.’

4.58 However, this data is not robust. It is possible, for example, that the perpetrators may have committed offences or been convicted elsewhere and not been identified. They may also go on to offend in the future. They may attend a DVPP on release at some stage and it would be difficult to disentangle the impact of this from the impact of Tackle-It. It is also, of course, difficult to prove cause and effect since there is no counterfactual which would enable comparison to be made with a similar group who had not received the intervention. If the data in paragraph 4.57 above were borne out by a longer-term study, and if causation could be established, such a reduction in recidivism would appear to be very positive - we consider this issue later in this section. Evidence of such an effect would provide some rationale for further investment.

### Measuring short term impact – offenders

4.59 Short term measures should also be considered when assessing impact. These could include whether the offenders are motivated by the course to change their behaviour and how engaged they are in the course. The course leader spoke of his aim to ensure that the prisoners participate and engage fully in the sessions and to address their behaviour rather than just participate because they think that it will look good on their record, i.e.:

*‘How well did they communicate, how well are they putting across their thoughts, feelings and behaviours.’ [Tackle-It course leader]*

- 4.60 It has not been possible during our study to establish how well the classroom sessions are being delivered, which would appear to be another determinant of its effectiveness -the quality of the course materials, the classroom teaching and the linked participation in sport can be assumed to be key determinants of the programme's success. We have looked at the course materials which seem to be fit for purpose though the course booklet could be redesigned, and its content improved, perhaps considering the views of offenders who must complete it. Some of the material appears to be more relevant to the previous programme, 'Onside', than to Tackle-It; some of the questions may be difficult for prisoners to answer (for example, asking them to rate their knowledge of an area as broad as communication before and after the course) and could perhaps be simplified. We therefore recommend that the programme booklet is reviewed and updated if the course is continued or marketed elsewhere.
- 4.61 The participants are given the opportunity to feed back in their personal development booklets. They complete this during the course and can show this to their Prisoner Offender Managers to show them what they have been doing. There are also short-term outcomes which should be considered. Each course participant completes a pre-assessment and a post-assessment form which includes details of their views on each session. They are also required to identify their own goals for the programme (two short term and one long term).
- 4.62 The VRU Project Performance Monitoring form for Tackle-It submitted in January 2022 outlines that:
- 'Throughout the course, both formative and summative assessment was used to continually assess the participants and make sure we were always pushing them to achieve their overall goal, this was done by group discussions, 1:1 target-setting, group target-setting, tutor observations, learning observations, worksheet activities and group feedback'<sup>36</sup>.*
- 4.63 The impact of engaging in sport alongside the classroom-based work (which is key to this programme) and what impact this has on outcomes is also not known although there are studies in related areas<sup>37</sup>. Further work in this area would be useful.

### Measuring impact – victim-survivors

- 4.64 As far as victim-survivors are concerned, Tackle-It will have succeeded if they and their families are, and feel, safer than they would otherwise have been, or felt,

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<sup>36</sup> VRU Project Performance Monitoring form

<sup>37</sup> For example, see Meek R, Lewis G, The impact of a sports initiative on young men in prison: staff and participant perspective <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/0193723512472896>

had the perpetrator not participated. LRF have had discussions with Upshot<sup>38</sup> which they use as a data capturing platform with a view to making changes and improving the data on outcomes should the course continue.

- 4.65 The impact of the support provided for victim-survivors and their families is cited as:

*'Prior to delivery after the prison IOM contacted the victims for consent to share their information with us at the Foundation, our victim support worker then worked with the individuals to offer them support and signpost them to specific groups which can support the individual specific needs such as: woman's aid, together women's project and women's centres'<sup>39</sup>.*

### Prison evaluation

- 4.66 HMP Wealstun are keen to evaluate this programme to see to what extent it meets their own objectives. The Head of Reducing Offending has asked a member of staff to investigate this and to carry out an internal evaluation, although they are also keen to look at the RedQuadrant findings to see what can be learnt. All the programmes that they commission that are not validated by an appropriate external body need to meet the criteria set out in the Effective Regime Interventions Guidance issued in 2002<sup>40</sup> and to be in line with What Works principles. These state that the primary or major objective is to change prisoners' behaviour. Thus, the prison staff wish to ensure that Tackle-It complies with the criteria set out in this guidance.

### Accreditation

- 4.67 Many DVPPs that are commissioned in this country are accredited by Respect. Tackle-It is not an accredited programme, although LRF had considered whether this was feasible at an early stage. It is likely that this would take two years or so to achieve and would be difficult when funding is only made available for a year at a time [prison representative interview]. In addition, it is different from the majority of DVPPs since it is delivered in prison and sport forms an integral major component of the intervention (although this does not mean that obtaining accreditation would not be possible). The course leader who originally set up the course had received training from Respect, though it is not clear whether accreditation was ever considered at that time. This does place Tackle-It at

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<sup>38</sup> Upshot are a Community Interest Company who look at ways of supporting organisations in monitoring, evaluating, and learning systems to help organisations to measure their impact, see [www.upshot.org.uk](http://www.upshot.org.uk)

<sup>39</sup> Ibid

<sup>40</sup> Prison Service Order PSO 4350 Effective Regime Interventions 2002

something of a disadvantage compared to other DVPPs which are accredited since commissioners are more likely to choose an intervention which has been through the accreditation process. It may also be more challenging to gain accreditation for a programme delivered in a prison, given the necessary restrictions imposed.

4.68 The LRF have been discussing how best to evaluate some of their interventions including Tackle-It with an external organisation, Upshot CIC<sup>41</sup>, who run an online system to help funders and service delivery bodies across the third sector to better manage their data, improve performance, track progress and report against outcomes, with the aim of evaluating their impact. This has led to productive discussions focusing on how outcomes can be linked to domestic abuse offences being committed, consideration of short-term outcomes of the programmes linked to what is being done in the sessions and creating an offender timeline to which weekly notes can be added, then linking that to outcomes.

### Costs and value-for-money of Tackle-It

4.69 The cost of the intervention for the year is £25,640. This comprises:<sup>42</sup>

Activity	Cost (£)
Project Delivery	5,040
Prep for Delivery	600
Victim Support Worker	14,000
Perpetrator Key Worker	5,000
Resources and Management	1,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>25,650</b>

4.70 LRF were funded to run two blocks of Tackle-It during the year 2021-22; each block comprises 36 hours of classroom delivery over 6 weeks, 20 hours of the VSW's time for 14 weeks (four weeks pre and post course delivery plus the 6 weeks during delivery). Additional perpetrator work is also included (10 hours per week for 10 weeks – two weeks pre- and post-delivery plus 6 weeks during delivery).

4.71 Our assumptions in assessing value-for-money are listed below:

<sup>41</sup> See [www.upshot.org.uk](http://www.upshot.org.uk)

<sup>42</sup> VRU Costings September 2021 delivery

4.72 In assessing unit costs, we have noted that although 16 cases were supported, the intention was to support a greater number, and we therefore assume that a standard level of activity would be of the order of 30 clients per year – which implies a unit cost of £855.

4.73 The next issue is a review of the impact of the scheme on outcomes. As noted earlier, the recidivism rate after one year is c13%. We scale this up by a factor of 23% to account for an anticipated recidivism rate of 16% after two years<sup>43</sup>. We then compare this against a benchmark of 25.3% which we obtain as the average out of studies in the USA<sup>44</sup>, Scotland<sup>45</sup> and UK<sup>46</sup>. The difference is of the order of 9.3%.

4.74 We next multiply this against the social costs of domestic violence, for cases of ‘high risk’ (a category that we believe is appropriate given that the perpetrators are in prison). Our key source for the assessment is research from 2019<sup>47</sup> and we have also added in potential children’s services costs.

4.75 The table below shows social costs and impact on those costs by category.

	Social cost (£) per client	Impact on social costs (£)
<b>Wellbeing</b>	56,885	5,315
<b>Lost output</b>	16,965	1,585
<b>Health services</b>	2,805	260
<b>Criminal Justice System</b>	2,280	215
<b>Other public sector</b>	3,780	355
<b>Total</b>	<b>82,715</b>	<b>7,730</b>

<sup>43</sup> the scaling factor of 23% is based on a statistic quoted in the 2013 Ministry of Justice study the *factors associated with proven re-offending following release from prison: findings from Waves 1 to 3 of SPCR*. This study states a finding that "each unit increase in [a particular risk factor] was associated with a 153% increase in the odds of re-offending at one year, and a 188% increase in the odds of re-offending at two years" (p25). The ratio between 188% and 153% is 1.23.

<sup>44</sup> Speights et al (2019) Recidivism in Nevada: A Closer Look at Trends in Domestic Violence, Appriss, <https://apprissafety.com/blog/trends-domestic-violence-related-recidivism-a-nevada-case-study/>

<sup>45</sup> <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/more-domestic-abusers-reoffend-despite-new-laws-9fnlb89ww>

<sup>46</sup> see [http://nomsintranet.org.uk/roh/official-documents/What\\_works\\_-\\_Domestic\\_violence\[1\].pdf](http://nomsintranet.org.uk/roh/official-documents/What_works_-_Domestic_violence[1].pdf)

<sup>47</sup> Oliver, Alexander, Roe and Wlasny, "The economic and social costs of domestic abuse", Home Office research report 107.

4.76 Compared to the unit cost per client of £855, the gains to public services are some £830, while the overall benefits to society are some £7,730 per case.

4.77 The above is very much an assessment of average wellbeing and public sector savings from reductions in domestic abuse. If, however, the effect was to ensure that a homicide was prevented, the effects would be far greater, as shown below<sup>48</sup>:

<b>Effect on social costs (£) of avoiding a domestic homicide</b>	
<b>Physical and emotional harm</b>	2,082,000
<b>Lost output</b>	255,000
<b>Health services</b>	1,000
<b>Victim services</b>	5,000
<b>Police costs</b>	12,000
<b>Other CJS costs</b>	801,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,156,000</b>

## Conclusions

4.78 Tackle-It appears to have potential to fulfil an otherwise unmet need for some of the large number of domestic abuse offenders in HMP Wealstun for an intervention to address domestic abuse. It seems unlikely that this cohort would receive another DVPP intervention, at least whilst they are in prison, and it cannot be assumed that they would automatically receive an intervention following their release. Tackle-It is therefore helping to meet this need.

4.79 Providing an intervention such as this in prison which also takes account of the needs of the victim-survivors would appear to be of considerable benefit. If the course continues, since much depends on the quality of the teaching, further evidence may be needed to ensure that the course is delivered to a high standard and that the course materials are the best that they can be to support the offenders' learning. Although it may be more straightforward to commission an accredited course, there are several reasons why it may be difficult for the LRF to

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<sup>48</sup> 'The economic and social costs of crime - second edition' by Heeks et al (2018), Home Office, [http://www.antonioacasella.eu/nume/Heeks\\_july2018.pdf](http://www.antonioacasella.eu/nume/Heeks_july2018.pdf)

obtain accreditation given the challenges of delivering it in a prison and the short-term nature of funding available and there are not thought to be many prison-based courses specifically focused on domestic abuse offenders.

4.80 It should also be recognised that, whilst only commissioning interventions that are accredited may provide reassurance for commissioners, this may equally stifle innovation and new approaches. It would also exclude small, local providers for whom the length of time it takes, and the difficulties associated with meeting the Respect standard may be prohibitive<sup>49</sup>.

4.81 Whilst the anecdotal findings about previous course participants suggest that the intervention may be preventative in terms of recidivism, further evidence is needed to establish clearly that this was the case. This could be achieved by collecting data comparing a cohort who receive the intervention with a cohort who do not. However, longitudinal data would be needed for both groups and it is recognised that this may be difficult to obtain.

4.82 If funding is discontinued from the second quarter in 2022/23, it is hoped that the prison may be able to continue to meet the costs of delivery. It is unlikely that Tackle-It could be rolled out to other prisons in the area since only HMP Wealstun takes those prisoners with domestic abuse histories and a reasonably long sentence.

4.83 The prison staff were strongly supportive of Tackle-It as one element of their strategy to reduce reoffending and to prevent the domestic abuse behaviour becoming more entrenched. To conclude with the words of a member of staff in the prison:

*'We want these guys to come out and understand what they're doing is wrong. And so that when they do go out, they're able to maybe stop, think and understand what they're doing and act in a certain way within relationships and hopefully reduce the risk so that we're able to protect those individuals that potentially could get into a difficult situation with these perpetrators.'* [Representative of prison staff.]

4.84 The course could be continued and scaled up within the prison, with several courses being run each year to meet the demand which undoubtedly exists amongst the 160 or so offenders who have domestic abuse as an index offence.

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<sup>49</sup> Westmarland and Zilkova, op cit, page 6.

## List of recommendations for Tackle-It

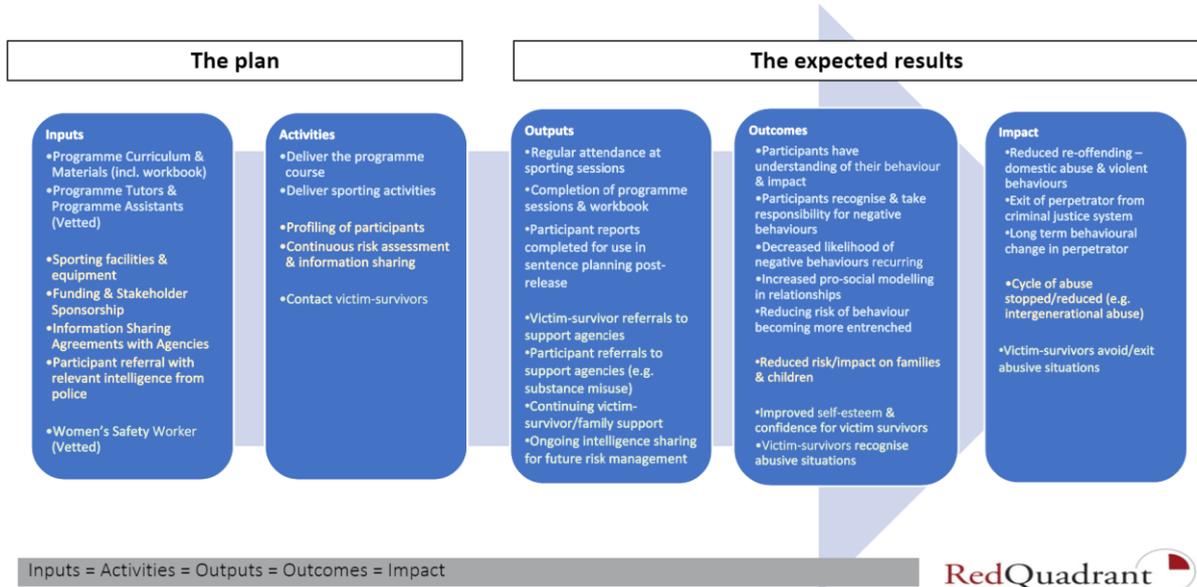
- 4.85 **Recommendation 1:** If the WYVRU continue funding Tackle-It, they should include in the conditions for the grant the need for a more robust form of evaluation to measure reoffending by course participants. Ideally, this should include collecting longitudinal data to measure recidivism and comparison with a cohort of prisoners not receiving the intervention. It should also include a systematic view of victim-survivors' wellbeing and satisfaction with the service.
- 4.86 **Recommendation 2:** If the intervention is continued, it should be ensured that it is accessible for a diverse population so that the needs of prisoners who might find it more difficult to participate fully are met (e.g.: in terms of language or learning difficulties).
- 4.87 **Recommendation 3:** If the funding does not proceed beyond June 2022, on the grounds that the project is intended to become 'business as usual', can no longer be funded by the WYVRU or the VRU no longer wish to fund it, the LRF should be encouraged to:
- seek alternative sources of funding to allow the course to continue given the high level of demand at HMP Wealstun. This would help to ensure that all those who may benefit from the course are able to do so;
  - look at the possibility of rolling out the intervention to other prisons elsewhere with similar cohorts of prisoners;
  - look at how the intervention could be evaluated more robustly (see Recommendation 1);
  - review the course materials to ensure that they are of the highest standard and up to date. In particular, the course booklet should be professionally designed and updated, perhaps in discussion with course participants, so that it is more relevant to the Tackle-It course, and the questions asked are clearer;
  - consider the possibility of accreditation and discuss with Respect whether this is likely to be feasible and what it would involve.
- 4.88 **Recommendation 4:** The WYVRU may wish to look at Tackle-It as one of a whole range of interventions for perpetrators of domestic abuse including those in the community and those in prison to ensure that there are opportunities for offenders at every stage of their rehabilitation journey.

## Appendix 1: People interviewed – Tackle-It

Name	Organisation	Role
<b>Dan Busfield</b>	Leeds Rhinos Foundation	Head of Partnerships and Development
<b>Anne Collinson</b>	Leeds Rhinos Foundation	Victim Support Worker
<b>Susan Field</b>	HMP Wealstun	Head of Reducing Reoffending
<b>Imran Sodhu</b>	HMP Wealstun	Senior Probation Officer, Head of Offender Management Delivery
<b>Dane Weatherill</b>	Leeds Rhinos Foundation	Partner Schools Officer (course trainer)

## Appendix 2: Theory of Change

# Theory of Change – Tackle It



## 5 Gangs and Violence Reduction programme at HMP Leeds with Catch22

5.1 In this section, we look at the aims of the Gangs and Violence Reduction programme run by Catch22 at HMP Leeds, how young people are identified and supported, the approaches taken by the caseworkers, and the way it fits with WYVRU's strategic objectives. We then assess the benefits and the challenges of delivery and comment on its effectiveness and cost-effectiveness. A list of the stakeholders interviewed is set out at Appendix 3.

### Aims of the Gangs and Violence Reduction programme

- 5.2 The main aim of the programme, as set out in the Grant Agreement, is to reduce the risk posed by gang affiliated individuals, both in their involvement in violent incidents within the custodial estate and in the community post release.
- 5.3 The programme also aims to support HMP Leeds to improve the knowledge and awareness of staff on gang-related issues and behaviours, including how these translate into custodial settings, to increase staff confidence in managing challenging prisoners.
- 5.4 The service has five distinct elements, each of which are considered by Catch22 to be vitally important when maintaining safety within the prison, and supporting people to change their behaviour:
- **Early Identification and Coordinated Intelligence:** Gang practitioners work with new arrivals to the prison to identify risks and potential points of tension, before putting a plan in place to prevent gang-related incidents.
  - **Interventions:** The R.O.A.D (Rehabilitation Offering Another Direction) programme is delivered as part of all Catch22 services. Catch22 uses a restorative approach to provide space for individuals to reflect on their experiences and to set prosocial goals for their lives.
- 5.5 The R.O.A.D programme encourages participants to think about and evaluate their past choices and address the consequences of their behaviour. The programme seeks to encourage participants to consider alternative pro-social life options and opportunities moving forward. Exercises are designed to challenge pro-criminal attitudes, allowing other prisoners to challenge their peers' behaviour towards victims, staff, and each other. Improving communication skills in conflict situations and developing prisoners' use of active listening and peer listening skills, is also a focus. The programme has been designed in an interactive manner, which

Catch22 says is pertinent to the targeted cohort based on research they undertook in 2014, “Gangs in Prison: The nature and impact of gang involvement among prisoners”<sup>50</sup>.

- 5.6 The aims of the R.O.A.D programme are to: (i) Promote an alternative pro-social life direction; (ii) Identify positive relationships within social circles; (iii) Improve communication skills in conflict situations; (iv) Improve perspective taking and empathy; (v) Develop an understanding of the consequences of violence; (vi) increased awareness and understanding of the impact of stereotyping; and (vii) Identity and how these are linked to decision making.
- 5.7 Catch22 says that the R.O.A.D. programme has been developed with “research in mind, striving to influence and reduce reoffending rates and to also significantly improve custodial behaviour”. The programme is facilitated over a period of five days and is delivered to approximately 10 to 12 participants per programme.
- **Case Management (including mediations & conflict resolution):** Individual sessions allow the Catch22 gang practitioners to track progress of the prisoners worked with. In the event of a violent incident, the team facilitate mediation sessions between all parties to resolve the issue and find a way forward.
  - **Resettlement:** Working closely with resettlement teams, the gang practitioners ensure that gang-related issues are considered before release and that prisoners have all the support, they need to sustain the progress achieved.
  - **Establishment Connectivity & Staff Training:** The Catch22 gang practitioners work with the prison establishment by collaborating with key departments and agencies. They work with senior management teams, violence reduction teams and all individuals involved in maintaining a safe and secure period in custody as well as delivering staff training and awareness sessions to share their learnings, and to support staff to understand and manage complex and challenging prisoners.

## Evidence base for the approach taken by Catch22

- 5.8 In 2019, Catch22 published the report: Gangs in Prison, Violence reduction and rehabilitation<sup>51</sup>. The report said:

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<sup>50</sup> [Dawes Unit research - Catch22 \(catch-22.org.uk\)](https://catch-22.org.uk)

<sup>51</sup> [Gangs-in-prison\\_5-Online.pdf \(catch-22.org.uk\)](https://catch-22.org.uk)

*They [gang practitioners] work within the prison, developing intelligence with other prison teams and arranging resettlement with services in the community. Working within, yet independent of, the prison regime gives Catch22 a unique and advantageous position. It means we're able to build trusted relationships with prisoners, without being the ones who directly enforce punishment and security measures.*

5.9 In terms of impact, the report highlighted that:

*Our award-winning and innovative Gangs and Violence Reduction Custodial Service has been recognised as highly effective:*

*1. BUTLER TRUST AWARD received in 2015 for the services provided by HMP Thameside Gang Service. The Head of Custody referred to the "Commitment, passion and belief" delivered by our team to create a safer environment at HMP Thameside. Violent incidents reduced from 86 to 26 per month, resulting in 60 fewer victims and "60 fewer families worried about the safety of their loved ones in custody".*

*2. HM CHIEF INSPECTOR OF PRISONS, Peter Clarke, said: "HMP Thameside's partnership with Catch22 to reduce gang violence was innovative and effective" following an inspection by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons, published in 2017.*

*3. BUTLER TRUST CERTIFICATE received in October 2018 for the services provided by HMYOI Feltham Gang Service: "There is documented evidence of positive behavioural changes in well over half of course participants which has had a positive impact on reducing violence at Feltham."*

5.10 The Youth Endowment Fund toolkit, which summarises the best available research evidence about different approaches to preventing serious youth violence, sets out the evidence base for Cognitive Behavioural Therapy. It says:

*Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) aims to help children and young people become more aware of these negative thoughts and learn to change or manage them. The therapist might work with a child to explore how their assumptions relate to reality, better understand other people's behaviour and motivations, and use problem-solving skills to cope with difficult situations.*

*CBT can be used with children who are demonstrating challenging behaviour, children in custody, or their families. It can be delivered in a range of community or custody settings, usually by trained psychologists who have post-graduate training or professional certification. It is typically an intensive intervention which takes place over a short period of time. On average, interventions last for 15 weeks with about 3 hours per week of support.*

*On average, the impact of CBT on violent crime is likely to be high.*

*CBT is effective in both reducing crime overall and behaviours associated with crime and violence. The research suggests that, on average, CBT has reduced crime by 27% and reduced the prevalence of behavioural difficulties. It has tended to have greater impacts when working with children who had previously had more contact with the criminal justice system.*

- 5.11 This suggests that there is a degree of evidence supporting the approach taken by Catch22 at HMP Leeds. Whilst the intervention for the Catch22 programme is much shorter than that highlighted by the Youth Endowment Fund Toolkit (five days of support, instead of fifteen weeks), the evidence supports the Cognitive Behavioural Therapy approach taken by the R.O.A.D programme.
- 5.12 The assessment of the programme in HMP Thameside's partnership with Catch22 by the Chief Inspector of Prisons provides compelling evidence for the approach taken. That report<sup>52</sup> said:

*The prison's impressive approach to gang affiliations and associated violence, which we saw during the last inspection, had developed further. Catch 22 workers with experience of working with gangs continued to work closely with agencies in the prison and the community to support violence reduction. They met new arrivals to identify any risks and any gang affiliations that could lead to violence. They liaised with safer custody staff to maintain a database of gang affiliations, which helped ensure that the location and movement of prisoners avoided potential conflict. They were visible around the prison and also provided two groupwork programmes to address gang-related violent behaviour.*

*Allegations of violence, particularly bullying, were treated consistently and were investigated promptly by full-time violence reduction coordinators. The network of violence reduction prisoner representatives on each wing were well supported by the violence reduction team, but their role was not fully understood by staff and prisoners*

*The prison's partnership with Catch 22 to reduce gang violence was innovative and effective. Catch 22 workers met new arrivals to identify gang affiliations that could lead to violence. A database of gang affiliations helped to ensure that rival gang members were kept apart. Two groupwork programmes addressed gang-related violent behaviour.*

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<sup>52</sup> [Report on an unannounced inspection of HMP Thameside by HM Chief Inspector of Prisons 2-3, 8-12 May 2017 \(justiceinspectorates.gov.uk\)](https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk)

- 5.13 We therefore conclude that the approach taken by Catch22 is underpinned by a good evidence base and evidence of real-world positive impact.

### **Strategic fit with WYVRU's objectives**

- 5.14 The January 2021 Strategic Needs Assessment, prepared by the West Yorkshire Violence Reduction Unit highlighted, under the "priority themes" heading, that:

*The Criminal Justice thematic work stream aims to establish interventions in a range of community and secure settings, designed to divert young people from custody or to reduce reoffending.*

And went on to say that:

*The Catch22 Gangs and Violence Reduction Services support the management of prisons by reducing the risk of violence and aggression posed by gang-involved prisoners. It focuses on offering alternatives to the status and safety provided by gangs, which has been shown to be more effective than the suppression-only approaches used in many prisons. This was delivered under the VRU in 2019/20 funding period and will now continue in Q3 and Q4 of the 2020/21 period.*

- 5.15 However, although the 2021 Strategic Needs Assessment does say that the Catch22 programme "was delivered under the VRU in 2019/20 funding period and will now continue in Q3 and Q4 of the 2020/21 period", there is little discussion of the rationale behind this funding decision, other than the broad ambition to "divert young people from custody or to reduce reoffending".
- 5.16 The same is true for the January 2022 Strategic Needs Assessment and accompanying Response Strategy.
- 5.17 We therefore conclude that, whilst there is a strategic fit under the general ambition of "reducing reoffending", we cannot say that there is a direct link between the evidence base set out in the Strategic Needs Assessment and the programme provided at HMP Leeds.

### **Benefits**

- 5.18 As noted above, the overall aim of the Catch22 programme is to reduce the risk posed by gang-affiliated individuals, both in their involvement in violent incidents within the custodial estate and in the community post-release.
- 5.19 Between the Q1 and Q3 reporting periods (i.e., April 2021 to January 2022) the programme had almost doubled the number of people it had expected to reach or

engage with. During this period, Catch22 had reached or engaged with 1398 people, against a target of 750 as set out in the Grant Agreement.

- 5.20 The Catch22 Gangs and Violence Reduction Service Coordinator reviews all those under 35, to see if they have any record of conflict within the prison. Where necessary, feedback on the individuals is provided to the prison staff to try and minimise any conflict occurring within the prison.
- 5.21 Meetings are also held between the Catch22 Coordinator and prison staff to talk through any issues relating to the highest risk prisoners, including how best to mitigate potential violence. The Catch22 Co-ordinator attends the weekly Safety Intervention Meetings, to discuss complex cases within the prison, and has regular discussions with the various prison departments (e.g., education or activities). The Co-ordinator also produces a monthly report for HMP Leeds, including the Head of Reducing Reoffending and Governor of Safer Custody.
- 5.22 The ability of the Co-ordinator to gather intelligence on prisoners and report that to the prison staff is seen as a real benefit of the programme.
- 5.23 Of the 1398 individuals initially screened by the Catch22 Coordinator, 199 were identified as being suitable for the programme. At the end of the programme, individuals are assessed to see which of their identified vulnerabilities have been addressed.
- 5.24 At the end of Q3 for the fifty-six individuals, the data showed that, of those that had completed the programme:

<b>Which vulnerabilities were addressed through the intervention?</b>				
	<b>Achieved</b>	<b>Not Achieved</b>	<b>Not Yet Completed</b>	<b>No Support Needed</b>
<b>Education/ Training</b>	15	4	14	23
<b>Substance misuse</b>	17	24	13	2
<b>Mental or emotional health</b>	33	0	14	9
<b>Offending behaviour</b>	41	1	14	0

- 5.25 The changes to the individuals' strength and protective factors were also assessed. At the end of Q3 for the fifty-six individuals, the data showed that, of those that had completed the programme:

**Which strengths or protective factors were improved during engagement?**

	<b>Achieved</b>	<b>Not Achieved</b>	<b>Not yet Completed</b>	<b>No Support Needed</b>
<b>Relationships</b>	15	16	15	10
<b>Sense of Self</b>	28	5	15	8
<b>Community</b>	30	10	15	1
<b>Health</b>	9	15	15	17
<b>Values and beliefs</b>	29	7	15	5
<b>Education and Training</b>	8	27	15	6

5.26 What this appears to tell us is that the programme is more successful at addressing certain vulnerabilities, and certain strengths and protective factors, than others.

5.27 The vulnerabilities that seem to be particularly affected in a positive way are offending behaviour, and mental or emotional health. The strengths and protective factors that are positively affected include a sense of community, improved values and beliefs, and a sense of self.

5.28 These findings were also observed by the prison staff to whom we spoke. Feedback from prison staff was that those who had received support from Catch22 did show a reduced level of aggression in the prison.

5.29 Prison staff also said that the prisoners themselves spoke positively about the programme. We heard that the programme helped people feel included and given them a voice. Rather than simply sitting in a cell, they had a sense of being able to get in touch with people who acknowledge their feelings, which in turn give them some ability to make a more positive contribution.

5.30 As a programme designed to reduce the risk posed by gang affiliated individuals, the data and feedback from prison staff does suggest that it is having a positive effect – most notably on offending behaviour.

5.31 An additional benefit was that, if the Catch22 Coordinator identified that support was needed on an issue not covered by the programme (e.g., resettlement), then they would either support the prisoner to make a referral to an appropriate

service or make that referral on the prisoner's behalf. Whilst we did not see any outcomes data for these referrals, we do know that, between the Q1 and Q3 period, fifty-eight referrals to other services were made, which may not have happened without the involvement of the Catch22 Coordinator's presence in the prison.

## Challenges

- 5.32 As with all the programmes evaluated, Covid-19 had a significant impact on the delivery of Catch22's work.
- 5.33 Lockdowns in the prison have meant that access to individuals has been more difficult, with discussions held by telephone with people in their cells, rather than face-to-face. This led to a backlog of people for the Catch22 Coordinator to meet with and screen, who was operating on her own for the duration of the programme.
- 5.34 It also meant that there were significant delays in getting the group work started for the R.O.A.D. programme, and that the role-play element of the programme could not be used due to the need for social distancing.
- 5.35 Obviously Catch22 had no control over these challenges, and the feedback that we received was clear that the Catch22 Coordinator was working extremely hard in difficult circumstances to meet with people and to offer support through the programme.
- 5.36 It was originally envisioned that there would be 1.5 full-time equivalents working on the programme. However, due to delays in vetting and recruitment, only 1 FTE was working on the programme at the time of our evaluation, although we understand that there had been a further 0.5 FTE in post between April and August 2021.
- 5.37 Prison staff spoken with highlighted to us that, at any one time, the prison can hold up to 1,200 prisoners, which was too many people for one person on their own to work with. They felt that the programme could be having a greater impact if there were more staff working on it.
- 5.38 The prison staff were also unclear on the criteria being used to determine who would be supported by Catch22. We were told that there are a lot of short sentence prisoners at HMP Leeds, and it was not clear if these were the people being selected for the programme.

- 5.39 Whilst it seems clear that the programme was having a positive impact on reducing offending behaviour within HMP Leeds, it was much less clear whether the programme was having a similar impact on those released from the prison.
- 5.40 We must therefore conclude that, because of the positive data outcomes and the feedback from prison staff on the ability of Catch22 to gather and report valuable intelligence on prisoners, there is good evidence that HMP Leeds has benefited from this programme but the extent of its impact on the wider community is unclear.

### **Effectiveness of the Catch22 programme at HMP Leeds**

- 5.41 The aim of the programme is to reduce the risk posed by gang-affiliated individuals. Of the fifty-six people that participated in the programme, 59% (thirty-three out of fifty-six) self-reported that their offending behaviour had been addressed. This is a very positive indicator of programme success.
- 5.42 It is also very positive to see that several protective factors (i.e., those that reduce the likelihood of violence and offending), including community, improved values and beliefs, and a sense of self, were also positively addressed.
- 5.43 The approach taken by Catch22 meant that there were regular reporting and communication channels open to those working at HMP Leeds, and so valuable and sensitive information on prisoners could be easily shared and acted upon. It also allowed Catch22 to make referrals to other agencies where appropriate, further ensuring that vulnerable prisoners had the opportunity to receive the help and support they needed.
- 5.44 These findings are particularly positive, given the challenges faced throughout the funding period – notably the restrictions due to Covid in HMP Leeds, the fact that only one person was doing most of the work for much of the time, and the high numbers of prisoners to be screened before those suitable for the programme could receive support.
- 5.45 However, given these challenges, we are unable to evidence that the programme was successful at reducing offending behaviour following release from HMP Leeds. It is possible that, with more time available, the programme would have gathered evidence to show that, on release from prison, individuals had reduced or stopped their offending behaviour.
- 5.46 For this evaluation, we must conclude that the positive impacts on reducing offending behaviour can only be shown within HMP Leeds, as it is much less clear

whether the programme was having a similar impact on those released from the prison.

### Costs and value-for-money of the Catch22 programme at HMP Leeds

The amount granted to Catch22 for this programme by the West Yorkshire Violence Reduction Unit was £60,000. The costs can be broken into the following categories:

Role	Cost (£)
1x Gangs & Violence Reduction Service Coordinator	28,653
0.5 Gangs & Violence Reduction Project Worker	12,999
0.2 Gangs & Violence Reduction Cluster Manager	8,268
Insurance	80
IT	360
Programme Costs	3,200
Contingency & Management	6,440
<b>Total</b>	<b>60,000</b>

5.47 As can be clearly seen, most costs are for those running the programme at HMP Leeds or providing support (the Cluster Manager). As the 0.5 Gang & Violence Reduction Project Worker was not available during the whole contract period, Catch22 have identified an underspend of £6,871, which will either be returned to the Violence Reduction Unit or carried over into the following year – depending on future commissioning decisions.

### Value for money

5.48 The Grant Agreement sets out that the programme will “reduce the risk posed by gang affiliated individuals, both in their involvement in violent incidents within the custodial estate & in the community post release”.

5.49 During the programme there was only one Gangs & Violence Reduction Service Coordinator working in HMP Leeds. She was supported by colleagues (the cluster manager) within Catch22 to analyse and assess the data gathered.

5.50 Everyone we spoke with were clear that the Catch22 Coordinator was working hard to meet, assess and support prisoners and staff within HMP Leeds. We therefore consider that the cost of the Catch22 Coordinator does represent good

value for money, given her efforts in the prison, and the outcomes the programme has achieved, against the challenging backdrop of Covid-19.

5.51 As we discuss above, it seems clear that the programme is having a positive effect on reducing violence within HMP Leeds. It is less clear if the programme was having a similar impact on those released from the prison.

5.52 The Youth Endowment Fund toolkit, when considering the cost-effectiveness of Cognitive Behavioural Therapy approaches, highlighted that:

*“On average, the cost of CBT is likely to be high. Estimates suggest the cost per participant is likely to be thousands of pounds. CBT is an intensive intervention and requires a trained therapist. The cost per participant will vary depending on the therapist works with individuals or a group.”*

5.53 When assessing value-for-money we have used the following assumptions.

5.54 In assessing unit costs, we have proceeded on the basis that though £60,000 was budgeted, in practice only £47,000 was used. We further note that some 54 clients were substantially engaged, and so we calculate an indicative unit cost of £870 per client.

5.55 The next issue is a review of the impact of the scheme on outcomes. We have taken the findings from the Catch 22 data return to the WYVRU which considered “Which strengths or protective factors were improved during engagement?” and scaled the implied proportional improvement rates relating to protective factors set out in “Measuring changes in likelihood of offending”<sup>53</sup>. The table below shows our indicative modelling.

	Weights	Proportional Improvement
<b>Accommodation / Community</b>	0.023	76%
<b>Employability</b>	0.010	21%
<b>Sense of self / Lifestyle</b>	0.075	69%
<b>Drug misuse</b>	0.059	23%
<b>Thinking and behaviour</b>	0.020	33%
<b>Values and beliefs / Attitudes</b>	0.061	76%

<sup>53</sup> See Howard, P. in “A compendium of research and analysis on the Offender Assessment System (OASys) 2009-2013”.

5.56 These figures imply a reduction in risk of the order of 13.8%.

5.57 We next multiply this against the social costs of gang crime. Our key source for the assessment is research from 2019<sup>54</sup>, and we have also added in potential children’s services costs.

5.58 Our basic approach is to determine a weighted average economic cost of crime, considering the frequency of the different types of crime. Our source for costs is the 2011 Integrated Offender Management value for money toolkit guidance, with proportions with respect to the NHS and Criminal Justice System taken from Duborg and Hamed (2005) Economic and Social Costs of Crime<sup>55</sup>. Our initial source for proportions of crime is data by offence and the total number of offences by young people reported in Youth Justice Board Youth Statistics 2013/14 (p30-31). We have further considered a much greater risk than average of homicides (though this proportion is still relatively low).

5.59 The table below shows social costs and impact on those costs by category.

	Social cost of gang offence (£) per client	Social cost of gang offences over medium-term (6 offences) (£) per client	Estimated effect in reducing social costs (£) per client
<b>Wellbeing</b>	4,873	29,235	4,035
<b>Lost output</b>	971	5,830	805
<b>Health</b>	343	2,055	285
<b>Criminal Justice System</b>	2,348	14,085	1,945
<b>Total</b>	8,535	51,205	7,070

5.60 Compared to the unit cost per client of £870, the gains to public services are some £2230, while the overall benefits to society are some £7,070 per case.

<sup>54</sup> Oliver, Alexander, Roe and Wlasny, “The economic and social costs of domestic abuse”, Home Office research report 107.

<sup>55</sup> Duborg and Hamed (2005) Economic and Social Costs of Crime, Home Office report 30/05

## Conclusions

- 5.61 Our evaluation highlighted a lot of good work arising from the overall programme provided by Catch22. This was particularly positive, given the challenges of accessing prisoners faced by the Service Co-ordinator because of Covid-19.
- 5.62 Against this challenging backdrop, the programme still achieved positive outcomes, with 59% of those on the programme self-reporting that their offending behaviour had been addressed. It was also very positive to see that several protective factors (i.e., those that reduce the likelihood of violence and offending), including community, improved values and beliefs, and a sense of self, were also addressed.
- 5.63 Whilst we were not able to evidence that the programme was successful at reducing offending behaviour following release from HMP Leeds, it may be the case that, with more time available, the programme would show similar positive outcomes for those released from custody. However, for now, we must conclude that the positive impacts on reducing offending behaviour can only be shown within HMP Leeds, as it is much less clear whether the programme was having a similar impact on those released from the prison.
- 5.64 Nevertheless, this is a programme that has achieved positive outcomes and has demonstrated value for money.

## List of recommendations for Catch22 programme at HMP Leeds

- 5.65 **Recommendation 1:** If the WYVRU were to fund this programme again in future, and wished to focus on achieving the same outcomes (i.e. to reduce violence within HMP Leeds and on release), we would advise that: (i) the screening and referral process capture details of those likely to be released during the funding period; and (ii) the programme set out how it will assess behaviour change for those released.
- 5.66 **Recommendation 2:** Discussions between Catch22, staff at HMP Leeds and the WYVRU should be clear on which prisoners were being selected for the programme and why. This should include whether those prisoners were subject to short sentences. This would help support Recommendation 1.
- 5.67 **Recommendation 3:** As HMP Leeds is a clear beneficiary of the programme, greater partnership working between Catch22 and prison staff should be encouraged. For example, joint screening and identification of those suitable for the programme may reduce the burden on the Catch22 coordinator, freeing her up to support more prisoners.

5.68 **Recommendation 4:** The data collected by Catch22 is very valuable, but not easily identifiable from the standard data returns that go to the WYVRU. Consideration should be given to providing this data (which is already collected) to the WYVRU, to help them better understand the impact the programme is having.

### Appendix 3: People interviewed – Catch22 programme at HMP Leeds

Name	Organisation	Role
<a href="#"><u>Anna Smith</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Catch22</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Gangs and Violence Reduction Service Co-ordinator</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>Joe Raby</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Catch22</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Cluster Manager</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>Rhia Vassallo</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Catch22</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Senior Operations Manager</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>Lynne James</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>HMP Leeds</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Custodial Manager</u></a>

## 6 Custody Diversion programme with St Giles Trust

### Custody Diversion – prevention and support at a “teachable moment”

- 6.1 In this section, we look at the aims of the Custody Diversion programme run by St Giles across West Yorkshire, how young people are referred into the programme, the approaches taken by the caseworkers, and the way it fits with WYVRU’s strategic objectives. We then assess the benefits and the challenges of delivery and comment on its effectiveness and cost-effectiveness. A list of the stakeholders interviewed is set out at Appendix 4.

### Aims of the Custody Diversion programme

- 6.2 The aim of the programme is to engage with young people at a ‘teachable moment’ when they have been arrested and may be more open to accepting support that will move them away from criminality and towards a more positive lifestyle.
- 6.3 What differentiates the programme running in West Yorkshire from other similar programmes, is that the St Giles case workers, who provide the support to young people, have lived experience themselves of serious youth violence and criminality.
- 6.4 The programme, which originally began at Elland Road Police Station in 2019, has since been expanded to cover all five districts in West Yorkshire to ensure that the service received is consistent across the county. The programme is currently funded until March 2022.
- 6.5 Once a young person is referred to St Giles, they are assigned a case worker. That case worker will then meet with the young person and complete a needs assessment. This typically takes place the same or following week after the referral has been submitted. The case worker will talk to the young person about the support they need, and what the young person should expect from participating in the programme.
- 6.6 Over the following weeks and months, the case worker will meet with the young person, typically on a weekly or fortnightly basis, for an hour or two (although it can be longer, depending on need) to talk about the issues affecting them, to offer advice and guidance, and to help them achieve more positive outcomes – such as improving school attendance or attainment, preparing a CV or applying for work, or attending music or sporting classes.

- 6.7 The case worker will complete a monthly narrative for each young person they work with, which considers what has worked well and less well. They will also complete a monthly performance report, which is scored against the needs assessment to determine if progress is being made.
- 6.8 A young person will have been considered to have “completed” the programme only after the case worker is satisfied that their offending behaviours have been significantly addressed, and the risk of them falling back into vulnerability or crime have been significantly mitigated. We were told that a case worker will often have concerns about signing off a young person from the programme, as doing so may lead that young person to lose their motivation to change and improve. Keeping them “on the books” also provides reassurance to the young person that they have a trusted person to call should they need to talk.
- 6.9 Funding for the programme goes from the WYVRU to Wakefield Council, who in turn fund the West Yorkshire Liaison and Diversion Service to commission St Giles to provide the custody diversion service. This is because it has not been possible, since 2019, for the St Giles workers to pass the necessary vetting procedures to allow them access to the custody suites. The vetting issues are entirely a result of the fact that St Giles uses workers who have been through the criminal justice system to provide the support to the young people in custody (i.e., they have “lived experience” of the CJS). However, because of their past criminal activities, the workers consistently fail the necessary vetting checks.
- 6.10 As the West Yorkshire Liaison and Diversion Service do operate in the custody suites, they are able to initiate the discussions with young people in custody and, where appropriate, make the referral to St Giles who will then follow up with the young person after they are released.

### **Evidence base for a “custody diversion” approach**

- 6.11 Much of the national evidence base for the custody diversion approach considers the impact of Liaison and Diversion Services. Whilst this can provide a good comparator, the significant difference between custody diversion schemes run only by Liaison and Diversion Services and the approach taken across West Yorkshire (where Liaison and Diversion Services and the St Giles teams work closely together) is the element of lived experience brought by the St Giles case workers.
- 6.12 We shall therefore separately consider the evidence base for (a) custody diversion programmes run by Liaison and Diversion Services, and (b) programmes using lived experience to reduce offending.

## Liaison and Diversion Services

- 6.13 A Liaison and Diversion Service identifies people with mental health, learning disabilities, substance misuse or other vulnerabilities encountering the justice system. They will then assess and refer the identified individual to an appropriate treatment or support service. The aim of the Liaison and Diversion Service is to improve overall health outcomes, and reduce further police contact and re-offending rates.
- 6.14 On 12 November 2020, the House of Commons Justice Committee published their report: Children and Young People in Custody (Part 1): Entry into the youth justice system. In that report, the Committee specifically considered the role of Liaison and Diversion Services. The Committee said<sup>56</sup> that:

*“In regard to the Youth Liaison and Diversion Service, the Ministry of Justice state that “they help the judiciary divert vulnerable offenders to the most appropriate place of treatment at sentencing, which might include community treatment not custody”. The Royal College of Psychiatrists state that:*

*“Further downstream on the pathway to custody, Youth Liaison & Diversion Services (YL&DS) aim to improve early identification of a range of vulnerabilities, (including but not limited to mental health, neurodevelopmental, substance misuse, personality disorder and learning disabilities), in people coming into contact with the criminal justice system. This often involves seeing young people whilst they are in Police custody or engaging with them soon after police contact.*

*Following assessment by a YL&D worker, individuals can be referred to appropriate treatment services so contributing to an improvement in health and social care outcomes, which may in turn positively impact on offending and re-offending rates.”*

They continued:

*“The effectiveness of Youth Liaison and Diversion Services and how many people have been diverted as a consequence of these services is currently unknown. Lucy Frazer QC MP [Minister of State for Justice] told us that research was being carried out, but it is related to the adult and not youth estate”.*

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<sup>56</sup> [Children and Young People in Custody \(Part 1\): Entry into the youth justice system - Justice Committee - House of Commons \(parliament.uk\)](#). Paragraphs 47 to 54

6.15 Whilst the Ministry of Justice has not completed any evaluation into the effectiveness of Liaison and Diversion Services, there have been several other studies. An evaluation report in 2020<sup>57</sup> concluded that:

*“There were statistically significant reductions in the amount of offending following contact with the L&D service (whether one or two contacts), regardless of offence type. Statistically significant reductions were also observed in use of the four most commonly used legislative powers for detaining patients in hospital on mental disorder grounds, regardless of offending status (prolific/non-prolific)”.*

*“Our results indicate positive associations between the L&D interventions and change in offending and use of compulsory hospital detention. Whilst our research does not allow a direct causal relationship to be established in either area, the findings go beyond other impact assessments of L&D which have either been with small samples or relied only on qualitative data or expert opinion”.*

6.16 It should be noted that most individuals assessed during this evaluation were aged 25 or over. Of the 4,465 cohort, only 1,230 (or 28%) were aged 24 or under.

6.17 However, the findings from this evaluation are extremely positive and clearly suggest that Liaison and Diversion Services can, and do, have a significant impact on reducing offending for those identified in custody and subsequently supported.

6.18 The report continued:

*“It is clear from our data that an L&D intervention is co-related with beneficial change for individuals and society more generally beyond simply providing support and advice to individuals. We are not able to say definitively what aspects of the intervention had most impact and the reality is probably that it varied from individual to individual. In our opinion it is possible that L&D intervention provided an opportunity for individuals to connect, or in many cases, reconnect with mental health (MH) services for treatment or support”.*

*“It is also possible that the added support provided by the L&D teams, especially the initial extended involvement of L&D Support Workers to help individuals attend and make the most of appointments with GPs, Community MH Teams, Housing and Benefits Offices, may have been an important factor”.*

*“Previous research has also indicated that L&D is seen as providing expert support and advice from MH nurses co-located with the police and*

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<sup>57</sup> [\(PDF\) Are Liaison and Diversion interventions in policing delivering the planned impact: A longitudinal evaluation in two constabularies? \(researchgate.net\)](#)

*improves communication and knowledge and policing response between police and NHS staff enabling better decisions to be made more quickly”.*

## Lived experience in CJS Settings

6.19 In 2019, the Criminal Justice Alliance published the report, Change from Within<sup>58</sup>. This report considered the role of people with lived experience as part of the paid criminal justice workforce.

6.20 The assessment drew on discussions with those who had lived experience, as well as some of their employers from the voluntary, public, and private sector. Discussions were also held with voluntary organisations who employ those with lived experience, including User Voice, St Giles Trust, The Forward Trust, Peer Power, Prison Reform Trust, and Working Chance.

6.21 The key findings from the report concluded that:

*“The meaningful inclusion of people with lived experience in the criminal justice workforce, not just in voluntary and consultative roles, but as paid employees, influencers, and leaders, is crucial to (re)build a system that learns from those with crucial insights into the challenges that undermine the system’s key objectives.*

*People with lived experience can provide enormous benefit to organisations working in the criminal justice sector. Their involvement in designing, delivering, and managing services, as well as influencing policy and practice remains an underexplored – and undervalued – area.*

*People with lived experience often make resilient, highly motivated, empathetic, and knowledgeable employees, managers and leaders who can effectively engage service users, make credible links with the communities’ organisations are serving, and provide fresh thinking, ideas, and solutions”.*

6.22 In an August 2021 blog post responding to the Government’s ‘Beating Crime Plan’, the Revolving Doors Agency wrote about the need to break the cycle of crisis and crime<sup>59</sup>. The Revolving Doors Agency are a charity that creates and shares research to break the cycle of personal crisis and crime – the “revolving door”. In their post they wrote:

*“We believe that a reset of the criminal justice system must be underpinned by: An understanding of how the current system design either helps or hinders people to avoid or exit the criminal justice system,*

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<sup>58</sup> [Change-From-Within-FINAL-online.pdf \(criminaljusticealliance.org\)](#)

<sup>59</sup> [To truly beat crime, we need to break the cycle of crisis and crime, Revolving Doors \(revolving-doors.org.uk\)](#)

*by consulting with people with lived experience of police contact, courts and tribunals, ‘through the gate’ support when leaving prison, probation services, and community sentences”.*

6.23 This is a view shared by the Centre for Justice Innovation, who wrote in 2020<sup>60</sup>:

*“PCCs’ work can be greatly enriched by involving people with lived experience of the criminal justice system in the design, commissioning and implementation of policies and programmes. Recruiting and consulting with people with lived experience improves PCCs’ understanding of how to prevent crime and re-offending in their areas”.*

### **Evidence base conclusion**

6.24 We therefore consider that there is a good evidence base underpinning the approach taken in West Yorkshire to closely align the work of the Liaison and Diversion Service and the lived experience of the St Giles case workers.

### **Strategic fit with WYVRU’s objectives**

6.25 The Strategic Needs Assessment published by the West Yorkshire Violence Reduction Unit in January 2021, said that:

*“The Criminal Justice thematic work stream aims to establish interventions in a range of community and secure settings, designed to divert young people from custody or to reduce reoffending.*

*Following on from discussions at the Reducing Reoffending Board meeting in July 2020, engaging with a wide range of key stakeholders, the VRU extended the service offered by St Giles Trust across West Yorkshire to provide the “lived experience” model within all 5 districts. This was to ensure that the service received under the Custody Diversion project, is consistent across the county”.*

6.26 This programme is therefore entirely consistent with the 2021 strategic objectives of the West Yorkshire Violence Reduction Unit.

6.27 The Response Strategy Refresh 2022, published by the West Yorkshire Violence Reduction Unit sets out seven ambitions that provide the framework for their focus and delivery. The first of these ambitions is:

*“Reducing the risk of young people entering the criminal justice system and reducing reoffending”.*

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<sup>60</sup> [public\\_safety\\_public\\_trust.pdf \(justiceinnovation.org\)](https://public.safety.public.trust.pdf(justiceinnovation.org))

6.28 The accompanying 2022 Strategic Needs Assessment, when discussing the views of community members, says:

*“...they [community members] discussed that supporting parents/guardians to provide diversionary activities for their children or guidance on how to support them out of a situation should they feel/find their child on the periphery/involved in gangs/violence, would be a positive way to reduce levels of knife crime and violence”.*

6.29 The aim of the Custody Diversion programme, which seeks to reduce reoffending by providing support to children and young people, therefore remains wholly consistent with the objectives and ambitions of the West Yorkshire Violence Reduction Unit.

### **Referrals into the Custody Diversion programme**

6.30 The Liaison and Diversion Service has a worker based in each of the four custody suites across West Yorkshire. That worker will speak to an arrested young person and ask them if they want to receive support from a St Giles worker.

6.31 If the young person indicates their wish for support, then the Liaison and Diversion Service worker will complete a referral form, which is then sent to St Giles. The St Giles team leader, who receives the referrals and assigns the case workers, sits alongside the Liaison and Diversion team in the council building a short distance from the Elland Road police station.

6.32 St Giles will then assign one of the case workers based across West Yorkshire to contact with the young person. This, typically, takes place the same or following week after the referral has been submitted.

6.33 During our interviews with the St Giles case workers, we were told that most of the referrals come from Leeds and Kirklees, where there are more gangs. We were also told that referrals from Halifax and Wakefield were fewer and less likely to be “the right fit” for this programme.

6.34 When we spoke with local practitioners, it was clear that, whilst many referrals to St Giles do originate from the Liaison and Diversion Service operating in the custody suites across West Yorkshire, referrals are also received from social care, the police, and schools. The data for Q3 provided by St Giles showed that 60% of referrals originated in the custody suites, whilst the remaining 40% came from other agencies (such as social care, the police, and schools).

6.35 However, when referrals do come from social care, the police and schools, these agencies are asked to complete a referral form to Liaison and Diversion. This

ensures that the Liaison and Diversion Service retains a full picture of all the young people referred to and working with the St Giles case workers.

6.36 Feedback about the referrals process was very positive from all those spoken to during the evaluation. Only one concern was highlighted to us (in relation to social care being charged for referring a young person to St Giles). However, we determined that this was due to a miscommunication and misunderstanding.

6.37 We therefore conclude that the referral process, whether it be from the custody suites or from partner agencies, works well and that the young people are contacted swiftly following the referral.

### **Access to the custody suites for the St Giles case workers**

6.38 As noted above, referrals from the custody suites come via the Liaison and Diversion Service workers, because the St Giles workers are currently unable to pass the necessary vetting procedures allowing them access to the custody suites.

6.39 Each of the St Giles case workers brings lived experience of being involved in the criminal justice system, but this also prohibits them from being able to pass the necessary vetting checks.

6.40 A report commissioned by the West Yorkshire Violence Reduction Unit in April 2020<sup>61</sup>, said:

*“As it stands, the project is unable to fulfil its intended potential because caseworkers currently are not permitted to engage young people in the custody suite itself, apparently because of their offending histories and the fact that Elland Road has category A status”.*

6.41 For this evaluation, the Violence Reduction Unit wished to better understand whether the programme was failing to meet its full potential, because the St Giles case workers were not able to speak directly to the arrested young people in the custody suites and had to rely on the referrals coming from the Liaison and Diversion Service workers.

6.42 The feedback on this issue, from those working for St Giles and from the Liaison and Diversion Service, was split.

6.43 On the one hand, it was argued that if St Giles had direct access to the arrested young people, they could better explain the offer and support available, which

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<sup>61</sup> J H Consulting; Evaluation of the St Giles trust Custody Diversion project, April 2020

should lead to more young people agreeing to be referred into the Custody Diversion programme.

- 6.44 It was felt that, in the absence of St Giles having direct access, young people were less likely to engage with the Liaison and Diversion Service and the police. It was argued that many young people do not want to cooperate or engage with others after they have been arrested, but that they might do if the person seeking to engage with them had lived experience.
- 6.45 However, the counter argument we heard was that, because young people do not want to cooperate or engage with others after they have been arrested, they would see everyone trying to talk to them in the custody setting as “the police”. Both the acting St Giles team leader and Liaison and Diversion Service custody workers shared this view. Indeed, the Liaison and Diversion Service custody workers said that they were occasionally associated with the police, and so found it difficult to engage with the young people.
- 6.46 The argument here was that, having distance (time and geography) from the custody setting made it more likely that the young person would engage. They would be less hostile or defensive, and more open to receiving support.
- 6.47 When asked if it was a “deal breaker” that the St Giles case workers could not directly access the young people in custody, most of those we spoke to replied “no” - including some of those that felt having St Giles in the custody suites would be beneficial.
- 6.48 We have been told throughout the evaluation that allowing the St Giles workers into custody is expected to be trialled in Bradford. As it has been almost three years since this was originally highlighted as a potential issue, we are sceptical as to whether there is likely to be any significant movement on this matter in the next six to twelve months. This of course is dependent on whether the Violence Reduction Unit chooses to continue funding St Giles to run this project.
- 6.49 For now, we must conclude that, whilst there might be some additional benefits from having the St Giles case workers in the custody suites, the lack of vetting does not appear to be a significant obstacle to the smooth running of the programme.
- 6.50 Indeed, if the feedback from some of those spoken with is correct, the current arrangements may be more beneficial to the success of the programme.

## Benefits

- 6.51 The Head of the Liaison and Diversion Service told us that he had been working with the St Giles Trust on the Custody Diversion programme for some time and spoke very positively of the service provided. He said that the St Giles workers were integrated into the work of the Liaison and Diversion Service, even though they were not based in the custody suites.
- 6.52 He said that the programme provided *“a great pathway into other services – including elements of education and employment training”*, and that the work was not just about young people who come into police custody, but also those who receive a “no further charge” or who are released under investigation.
- 6.53 He said that he sees a significant number of young people that come through the system, but who do not get any support or interventions because they are not charged or do not meet local thresholds. He said that a strength of the St Giles programme was that young people, who might not otherwise receive assistance from the statutory providers, could be included on the programme to get the support they need.
- 6.54 This was a view that was shared by almost all those that we spoke to throughout this evaluation. When we spoke with other Liaison and Diversion Service workers; those who sit under Leeds Children’s Social Services; police officers engaged with the programme; and to the grandmother of a young person currently receiving support, we heard a very consistent and positive story.
- 6.55 There was a clear view that the lived experience brought by the St Giles workers was both unique in West Yorkshire and a key factor in what made the programme successful. Some of the Liaison and Diversion Service workers told us how having a person with lived experience helped to break down barriers with the young person and build a relationship of trust – which could be much harder to do for those working in the statutory sector.
- 6.56 The grandmother of a 14-year-old currently receiving support whom we interviewed, also felt that the lived experience of the St Giles case worker made a real difference in communicating with her grandson. She explained that the case worker was able to get her grandson to engage in conversations, which had not been the case prior to St Giles working with him about six months prior. She said that her grandson had respect for the case worker and was mindful of what they told them about making better life choices.

- 6.57 She said that her grandson had not been involved in criminality for some time now, and was doing work experience at school, which she felt would not have happened if it had not been for St Giles. However, she did say that social workers continued to believe that he was being exploited by the gangs that had caused him to be arrested in the first place. Nevertheless, she had nothing but praise for the St Giles case worker and fully believed that her grandson would not have made the progress he had without them.
- 6.58 One police officer we spoke to said that she believed that the programme was having a positive impact on Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) and crime reduction. The officer told us that, on her visits across the force area to conduct focused deterrence work, she had seen more positive engagement with young people in the community. She felt that the St Giles case workers were able to connect effectively with young people, and this helped to break down some of the barriers between the young people, the police and Liaison and Diversion Service.
- 6.59 Another benefit, identified by almost all those we spoke to, was the partnership working between St Giles and the other services operating across West Yorkshire. This was particularly the case for the Liaison and Diversion Service, who held weekly meetings with the St Giles case workers, but it was also true for those we spoke to from other agencies and organisations who said that their working relationships with St Giles were very good.
- 6.60 Overall, all those to whom we spoke were very positive about the Custody Diversion programme, particularly the lived experience brought by the St Giles case workers and the way that they worked effectively with other agencies and organisations across West Yorkshire.

## Challenges

- 6.61 Whilst it was clear that all those we spoke to, were very positive about the Custody Diversion programme, it was harder to demonstrate or evidence that the programme was having a positive impact on reducing crime and ASB.
- 6.62 The data collected by St Giles showed that, at the end of the Q3 reporting period (beginning of January 2022), they had worked with 325 people. The self-reporting data for these individuals showed that:
- 21% (68) of young people reported that they had improved their relationship with families
  - 12.3% (40) of young people reported that they have improved their relationship with peer networks

- 20.3% (66) of young people reported that they have gone on to further education and training, and improved their employment status
- 8.3% (27) of young people reported that they no longer go missing from home
- 4.3% (14) of young people reported that they have gone on to secure employment
- 14.5% (47) of young people reported that they have improved their engagement with school
- 5% (16) of young people reported that they have exited gangs completely and are no longer involved in County Lines
- 29.23% (95) of young people reported that they have improved wellbeing, confidence, and self-esteem.

6.63 In assessing this data, we fully accept that: (i) not all these individuals will have been on the programme for the whole Q1-Q3 periods (i.e., April 2021 to January 2022); and (ii) that behaviour change takes time.

6.64 We also take the view that those areas that have improved (notably: well-being, confidence, and self-esteem; relationship with families; and gone on to further education and training or improved their employment status) are all protective factors, i.e.: those factors which reduce the likelihood of adverse or harmful outcomes to the young person, including offending.

6.65 However, the data is clear that, over the first nine months of this programme, only a small number of young people have either exited gangs completely or stopped going missing (a factor that may put them at risk of criminal exploitation by gangs or demonstrate that they are already involved with gangs).

6.66 These findings may suggest that: (i) more time is needed to see greater positive change in gang activity or going missing; (ii) that the programme should be more targeted on supporting those in gangs or those who go missing; or (iii) a combination of both.

6.67 Another challenge that was highlighted to us was whether the programme had sufficient capacity to support those young people who were referred into the programme. Almost all those we spoke to agreed that more resources would lead to increased capacity of the programme.

6.68 As of February 2022, St Giles had 258 open cases. Of these 258, approximately 50 are on hold as the young person is not yet ready for support, and 16 are being “stepped down” so that they can be closed shortly. Of the remaining 192, the

young people are being supported by a case worker or case holding team leader. Of these: 45 have had 20+ contacts; 65 have had 10+ contacts; and 87 have had 5+ contacts.

- 6.69 We were advised by St Giles that the staffing and manager complement for this programme was four FTE caseworkers, and one FTE Team Leader. If 192 cases are currently open and being actively worked on, this suggests a caseload of 48 cases per caseworker.

### **Effectiveness of the Custody Diversion programme**

- 6.70 The feedback from all those we spoke with about the Custody Diversion programme was very positive, and there was a clearly expressed feeling that the programme was making a positive difference.
- 6.71 The data gathered by St Giles over the first nine months of the programme shows that there has been some positive impact in terms of young people's relationships with their families. There is also a positive impact whereby some young people are going on to further education and training or improving their employment status.
- 6.72 It is also clear that there is a positive improvement in several protective factors, including: the wellbeing, confidence, and self-esteem of those young people on the programme; improved relationships with their family; and going on to further education and training, or improved their employment status. These are all positive changes that should not be lightly discounted.
- 6.73 However, the programme has seen a small positive impact with those factors that can be directly linked to crime and vulnerability of being exploited by criminals, namely the number of young people who have either exited gangs completely or stopped going missing.
- 6.74 This may be because the programme is less effective than hoped for, or it may be that behaviour change away from criminality simply takes a longer period to occur. For this evaluation, we cannot say which of these possibilities reflects the situation in West Yorkshire.
- 6.75 At this stage, there is no reason to suggest that the programme is not working. Many of the young people that come into the programme will have a range of risk factors, including: their associations with other gang members; speech and language difficulties; lack of suitable role models; poverty; or other forms of vulnerability. This may indicate that they need either more time on the

programme, or more intensive support whilst on the programme, for it to show a greater impact on reducing criminality and vulnerability.

### Costs of the Custody Diversion programme

6.76 The Grant Agreement says that, for the period of 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022, the total funding for the Custody Diversion programme will be £200,585.52.

6.77 We were informed that the totality of the funding went to the Liaison and Diversion Service, who sub-contract St Giles to operate and run the programme. We were also told that the Liaison and Diversion Service made no profit from this arrangement.

6.78 Only one of the stakeholders spoken with (the lead officer at St Giles) could provide any details on how the funding was used. We were informed (during February 2022) that the breakdown of the funding was:

	Cost (£)
<b>Staffing (based on caseworker and case holding team leaders)</b>	130,342.38
<b>Manager undertaking Risk Review, Case planning &amp; Safeguarding</b>	12,562
<b>Travel and subsistence</b>	5,289.96
<b>Client Costs</b>	4,408.89
<b>Peer Advisor Training &amp; Costs</b>	3,100
<b>Training</b>	2,600
<b>Overheads &amp; Administrative Costs</b>	2,000
<b>Total</b>	40,282.19

## Back-office and staff costs

- 6.79 The overheads and administrative costs included: mobile phones; office rental and associated utilities; accreditation for information security; Quality Assurance; Human Resources; Finance and Payroll; IT support; senior management support; fundraising; and communications.
- 6.80 We were also told that there was an “in-kind” contribution from the Liaison and Diversion Service that included performance and data lead time; support from youth pathway leads to complete referrals and support home visits; Liaison and Diversion Service manager time to review project performance; and undertaking partnership development and stakeholder engagement work.
- 6.81 As noted above, we were advised by St Giles that the staffing and manager costs related to four FTE caseworkers, and one FTE Team Leader (after November 2021, this changed to 0.5 FTE Team Leader and an additional 0.5 FTE caseworker). This suggests an average salary of £31,756 per individual ( $\frac{£130,342.38 + £12,562}{4.5} = £31,756$ ). Whilst we are supportive of any organisation paying its staff a good wage, we do note that this is higher than many youth worker salaries, with comparable levels of responsibility.

## Value-for-money of the Custody Diversion programme

- 6.82 Before we look at whether the Custody Diversion programme provides value for money, it may be helpful to consider: (i) the costs of preventing the types of crimes that could be prevented by this programme; and (ii) existing evidence on the cost-effectiveness of similar work conducted by the Liaison and Diversion Service.

## Economic costs of crime

- 6.83 The 2018 economic and social costs of crime report<sup>62</sup> said that the total cost for the police and wider criminal justice system for the crime of “violence with injury” was £2,500 (£1,130 for policing and £1,370 for the wider CJS). For a homicide, the total costs were £812,940 (£11,960 for policing and £800,980 for the wider CJS). These costs do not include costs for health, victim support or other services.
- 6.84 These costs are broadly like those used in the July 2020 Youth Violence Commission Final Report<sup>63</sup>. In that report, which used the 2018 report as a basis for their analysis, they concluded that the total cost for a “non-fatal injury” was

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<sup>62</sup> [The economic and social costs of crime second edition - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/682256/ad2256_a0f38547a4134e0cb923905486bcc186.pdf)

<sup>63</sup> [ad2256\\_a0f38547a4134e0cb923905486bcc186.pdf \(yvcommission.com\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/682256/ad2256_a0f38547a4134e0cb923905486bcc186.pdf)

also £2,500 (£1,130 for police and £1,370 for other CJS costs), and for a homicide was £812,900 (£11,900 for police and £801,000 for other CJS costs).

6.85 These figures indicate that, if the Custody Diversion programme prevented one homicide or 61 incidences of violence with injury or non-fatal injury, then the programme would have covered the policing and CJS costs. As we have seen, as of February 2022, there were 192 young people currently being supported by a case worker or case holding team leader. To see a reduction of 61 incidences of violence with injury or non-fatal injury, would mean that almost one in three of the young people being supported would have to reduce their violent behaviour. The self-reported data does not suggest that this is a likely outcome.

### Cost effectiveness of the Liaison and Diversion Service

6.86 When we considered the evidence base underpinning the approach taken by Liaison and Diversion services, we looked at the evaluation published by Kane and Co on such interventions<sup>64</sup> That evaluation concluded:

*A very significant investment has been made into L&D services across the Health and Criminal Justice Systems and this study points to what appear to be related positive impacts. Our findings appear to confirm that investments in L&D are worthwhile from an individual's point of view but also from an economic standpoint. The reduction in offending post-intervention is statistically significant for all of the frequent, volume crime types examined in the study.*

*If the Economic and Social Costs of Crime (ESCC), (Heeks, Reed, Tafhiri, & Prince, 2018<sup>65</sup>) estimation and multiplier models were applied to the reduction in offending data that we found, the economic impact would be considerable. These ESCC estimates consider three main cost areas: costs in anticipation of crime, for example the cost of household security and insurance; costs as a consequence of crime, for example the cost of property stolen or damaged; costs in response to crime, for example costs to the police and criminal justice system.*

*Using the reduction in offending as the baseline and applying the model's multipliers in just the two study Forces the economic impact would represent a major economic gain (multipliers use a fixed formula to estimate the impact of unreported crime within a given offence category). With L&D due to be available to all English Forces in 2020, the total beneficial economic impact could potentially be very high.*

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<sup>64</sup> [Are Liaison and Diversion interventions in policing delivering the planned impact: A longitudinal evaluation in two constabularies? - Kane - 2020 - Criminal Behaviour and Mental Health - Wiley Online Library](#)

<sup>65</sup> [The economic and social costs of crime \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)

6.87 As can be seen, that evaluation also used the 2018 report on the economic and social costs of crime to determine that “The reduction in offending post-intervention is statistically significant for all of the frequent, volume crime types examined in the study”.

### **Value for money and cost-effectiveness of the St Giles Custody Diversion programme**

6.88 The Grant Agreement for the programme states that St Giles expect to “engage with up to 200 young people across West Yorkshire throughout this project”. This is the only measure set out in the Grant Agreement.

6.89 By the end of Q3, St Giles had already far exceeded the expected number of young people reached or engaged with, as they had engaged 325 young people.

6.90 However, we are also interested to know what outcomes have been achieved by the programme, to help us determine value for money. In determining this we have made the following assumptions:

6.91 As we saw in the Challenges section above, whilst there had been improvement in several protective factors during the first nine months of the programme, only a small number of young people have either exited gangs completely or stopped going missing.

6.92 In assessing unit costs, we have proceeded on the basis that project budget was £200,000 or so. We further note that, based on Q3 returns, a full year level of support of around 320 clients seems plausible as if the pandemic disruptions had not taken occurred, and so we calculate an indicative unit cost of £630 per client.

6.93 The next issue is a review of the impact of the scheme on outcomes. As noted earlier, around 5% of participants were able to leave gangs. Our assumption also is that improvements in attitudes and other factors affecting re-offending also apply to those in the cohort for those who were not gang members, and so we model indicatively a further 5% of such participants undertaking desistance because of the programme. These figures imply a reduction in reoffending of the order of 10.8%.

6.94 We next multiply this against the social costs of gang crime. Our key source for the assessment is Home Office research from 2019<sup>66</sup> and we have also added in

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<sup>66</sup> (Oliver, Alexander, Roe and Wlasny, “*The economic and social costs of domestic abuse*”, Home Office research report 107).

potential children’s services costs. We use the same assessments as for the HMP Leeds/Catch 22 project.

The table below shows social costs and impact on those costs by category.

	Social cost per offence (non-gang)	Social cost per client (non-gang)	Social cost per offence (gang)	Social cost per client (gang)	Average social cost per client	Impact on social cost per client
<b>Wellbeing</b>	3,004	4,505	4,873	29,235	12,750	1,275
<b>Lost output</b>	1,191	1,785	971	5,830	3,135	315
<b>Health</b>	620	930	343	2,055	1,305	130
<b>Criminal Justice System</b>	1,349	2,025	2,348	14,085	6,045	605
<b>Total</b>	6,164	9,245	8,535	51,205	23,235	2,325

6.95 Compared to the unit cost per client of £630, the gains to public services are some £735, while the overall benefits to society are some £2,325 per case.

## Conclusion

6.96 Everyone with whom we spoke about the Custody Diversion programme was very positive about its impact, and there was a real feeling that the programme was making a positive difference.

6.97 The data gathered by St Giles over the first nine months showed that there was a positive improvement in several protective factors, including: the wellbeing, confidence, and self-esteem of those young people on the programme; improved relationships with their family; and going on to further education and training, or improved their employment status. There was also some positive impact in terms of young people’s relationships with their families.

6.98 These are all positive changes that could lead to a reduction in violence, and so should not be lightly discounted.

6.99 But it was also the case that the programme had seen a small positive impact with those factors that can be directly linked to crime and vulnerability of being exploited by criminals, namely the number of young people who have either exited gangs completely or stopped going missing.

6.100 There may be good reasons for this – the programme could be less effective than hoped for, or it may be that behaviour change away from criminality simply takes a longer time to occur. For this evaluation, we cannot say which of these possibilities reflects the situation in West Yorkshire.

6.101 If the programme were commissioned again, we believe that there is room to tighten some of the administrative elements, to better demonstrate how the programme is achieving value for money.

### List of recommendations for the Custody Diversion programme

6.102 **Recommendation 1:** if the programme were commissioned for another year by the West Yorkshire Violence Reduction Unit, we recommend that any future Grant Agreement be clearer on the outcomes to be achieved. The current agreement only requires that St Giles engage with up to 200 young people but says nothing about the outcomes it expects that engagement to achieve.

6.103 **Recommendation 2:** that clearer metrics and reporting mechanisms be put in place to better understand the impact that the programme is having on reducing crime and vulnerability of being exploited by criminals. This is because we are unable to say why there has only been a small positive impact on young people exiting gangs or from going missing.

6.104 **Recommendation 3:** that consideration be given to locating the case workers in those areas of greatest demand. It was not always clear whether the case workers were based in the areas where gang-related referrals were made.

6.105 **Recommendation 4:** that consideration be given to back-office and support costs being shared between St Giles and the Liaison and Diversion Service. Given that they already work very closely together, closer sharing of functions should provide benefits to both organisations.

6.106 **Recommendation 5:** that St Giles and the WYVRU consider the pay scale for the caseworkers and team leaders against local equivalents, to determine if the funding available could be used to recruit additional caseworkers. If so, this would increase the capacity of the programme.

#### Appendix 4: People interviewed – St Giles Custody Diversion programme

Name	Organisation	Role
<b>Iain Hadley</b>	St Giles Trust	Yorkshire Manager
<b>Clint Hepworth</b>	Liaison and Diversion Service	Senior Manager
<b>Kelly Ormston</b>	St Giles Trust	Operational Lead
<b>Martin Harriott</b>	St Giles Trust	Team Leader
<b>Joanne Ross</b>	Safe Project	Caseworker
<b>Lucy Loftus and Kelly Connolly (joint discussion)</b>	Liaison and Diversion Service	Team Manager
<b>Khi Smith</b>	West Yorkshire Police	Leeds District Child Exploitation team
<b>Sarah Fyfe</b>	West Yorkshire Police	Seconded to the Liaison and Diversion Service
<b>“Julie”</b>	n/a	Grandmother to young person on the programme

## 7 Police control room IDVA with Leeds Domestic Violence Service

### Domestic abuse in West Yorkshire

- 7.1 The high level of domestic violence and abuse offences in West Yorkshire is described in chapter 6 and in the Strategic Needs Assessment<sup>67</sup> (SNA) on Serious Violence in West Yorkshire. Domestic abuse is a major problem in West Yorkshire, with over 54,000 recorded domestic abuse offences in West Yorkshire between October 2020 and September 2021 in the monitoring period for the SNA (74% of victims are female and two-thirds are under 40 years of age)<sup>68</sup>.
- 7.2 During the period covered by the SNA, there was an increase in domestic offences, reflecting the 6% increase seen nationally<sup>69</sup>. It is thought likely that this is a consequence of the Covid-19 restrictions<sup>70</sup>. Children were present at more domestic incidents during the pandemic, an anticipated change given the closure of schools. 44% of incidents with a child present involved a repeat victim.
- 7.3 However, whilst convictions for domestic abuse are in line with similar police force areas, the actual number of convictions recorded for domestic abuse offences in West Yorkshire is low – 3187 in 2018/19, a conviction rate of 4.46%<sup>71</sup>. The likelihood of prosecution stands at 42% of victims that support prosecution<sup>72</sup>. Low rates of conviction for domestic abuse offenders may contribute to a lack of confidence amongst victims in the police, courts, and ancillary services of the criminal justice system, potentially leading to under-reporting and worsening of the problem<sup>73</sup>.
- 7.4 Since May 2020 to April 2021, the numbers of calls to the Leeds Domestic Violence Service (LDVS) helpline trebled and quadrupled at times and requests for refuge accommodation outstripped demand by a factor of 30. There are approximately 60 domestic abuse calls per day in Leeds<sup>74</sup>.

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<sup>67</sup> Serious Violence in West Yorkshire, Strategic Needs Assessment (January 2022), op cit.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid, page 55.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid, page 55.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid, page 29.

<sup>71</sup> Serious Violence in West Yorkshire, Strategic Needs Assessment (January 2021), page 57. See

<https://staging.westyorks-ca.gov.uk/media/6995/wy-vru-needs-assessment-january-2021.pdf>

<sup>72</sup> West Yorkshire VRU Unit Evaluation, final report, Sheffield Hallam University (March 2021), page 101.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid.

<sup>74</sup> SNA (2022), op cit.

- 7.5 The initial bid for the IDVA in police control room project set out further details of the incidents recorded in West Yorkshire. 57.5% of incidents have a medium or high DASH score<sup>75</sup>, 54.5% are violent incidents and 48.5% are repeat victims<sup>76</sup>.
- 7.6 Note that we refer to victim-survivors in this chapter as ‘she’ and perpetrators as ‘he’ which reflects most cases. However, we recognise that this will not apply in every case given that there are a both some male victims of domestic violence and some female perpetrators.

### **Police Control Room IDVA – an intervention to improve victim support**

- 7.7 In this section, we look at the aims of the Police Control Room (PCR) Independent Domestic Violence Advocates (IDVAs), how this is delivered in Elland Road Police Station, the way in which it operates and how it fits with the WYVRU’s strategic objectives. We then assess the benefits and the challenges of delivery and comment on the effectiveness and cost-effectiveness. A list of the stakeholders we interviewed is included at Appendix 1.

#### **Role and location of IDVAs**

- 7.8 IDVAs ‘support victims of domestic abuse to become safer, sooner. They work tirelessly to be advocates for victims at their most vulnerable.’<sup>77</sup> They help people to navigate services following disclosure about abusive family members or partner/ex-partners and work with local specialist services to provide longer-term support for women. The key aspects of their role include independence, providing assistance and advice, a focus on victims’ safety and the ability to co-ordinate a range of services across agencies on behalf of victims.<sup>78</sup>
- 7.9 Although the majority of IDVAs are based in community settings, there are many arrangements whereby they work at least part-time in statutory settings (e.g.: health, housing, police or court settings) in order to achieve more effective partnership working with those agencies.<sup>79</sup> It is recommended that IDVAs are managed by specialist domestic violence projects irrespective of their location, mainly to maintain their independence, and to be able to access advice from other

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<sup>75</sup> The Domestic Abuse, Stalking and Honour-Based Violence Risk Identification, Assessment and Management Model was developed in 2009 for all professionals working with victims of DVA and implemented across all police services in the UK. The questions are empirically based and intended to ensure that help can be offered as quickly as possible.

<sup>76</sup> Bid to West Yorkshire VRU, evidence paragraph.

<sup>77</sup> SafeLives, website, see safelives.org.uk

<sup>78</sup> Amanda L Robinson, University of Cardiff, Independent Domestic Violence Advisors: a process evaluation. 24<sup>th</sup> November 2009, page 4.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid, page 6.

IDVAs.<sup>80</sup> There have been several evaluations of IDVAs based in health and other settings including police stations<sup>81</sup>. For example, one study described an IDVA in a police station in North London with a caseload of 238 over two years (in this study, the victim-survivors were generally seen face-to-face by the IDVAs). This study found that locating support in a police station enabled access to services for victim-survivors and enhanced law enforcement responses<sup>82</sup> and concluded that IDVAs in police stations can directly influence responses and undertake comprehensive risk assessments.<sup>83</sup> The specific advantages of such a scheme were identified as including:

- Access to police information systems and databases which were useful for comprehensive risk assessments;
- Daily contact with police officers and prosecutors enabling strong relationships to be forged and opportunities to change practice;
- The link with the police enhancing the reputation of the scheme at the local MARAC<sup>84</sup>.

## **Aims of placing IDVAs in the Elland Road Police Control Room**

7.10 In Leeds, IDVAs have been placed in settings other than specialist domestic abuse settings – for example, they are currently located in eight GP surgeries. The decision was taken to pilot placing IDVAs in a Police Control Room (PCR). Elland Road Police Station in Leeds was selected since it contains the main control room and acts as a hub for the whole of Leeds district which comprises police stations at Pudsey, Killingbeck and Stainbeck. It operates 24/7 and is overseen by a Hub Commander, a Chief Inspector. The hub has expanded in recent years and taken on staff such as a mental health nurse to help review call logs with a mental health element.

7.11 This project is intended to cover the whole of Leeds. The local authority and police were keen to see this project piloted and both agencies remain highly supportive of the project. It follows a similar pilot scheme in Leeds to place an IDVA in a police control car to accompany police officers to domestic abuse incidents. This

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<sup>80</sup> Ibid, pages 4 and 6.

<sup>81</sup> Coy, M and Kelly, L; Islands in the stream: an evaluation of four London independent domestic violence advocacy schemes (2016).

<sup>82</sup> Ibid, page 7.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid, page 14.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid, page 7. The MARAC is the Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference.

was discontinued in 2020 due to a lack of funding. The initial intention was to pilot the IDVA in the PCR for three months [LDVS representative interview].

7.12 The overall aim is to contribute to a reduction in serious violent crime by intervening earlier with the victim-survivor in standard and medium risk domestic abuse cases, particularly where there may otherwise have been a delay in contact with the victim (high risk cases are prioritised by the police and therefore excluded). This is intended to increase victims' engagement in services, support victims through the prosecution process and reduce the risk of ongoing abuse. The attrition rate (i.e.: the difference between the cases initially recorded and those that end in prosecution and conviction) for domestic abuse cases is notably high in West Yorkshire (see para. 7.3) and it can be assumed that supporting victim-survivors at an earlier stage may reduce this. It is also hoped that the IDVA will provide advice to the police to enhance the quality of their risk assessments and decision-making. There has been an increased emphasis on providing support for the children of victims during the lifetime of this project reflecting the emphasis placed by the VRU (and central government) on supporting young people impacted by violence.

7.13 The programme is run by Leeds Women's Aid who are the lead agency for Leeds Domestic Violence Service (LDVS), a consortium of three agencies commissioned by the local authority, working within a multi-agency framework. An experienced Independent IDVA is based in the PCR for six days a week (excluding Mondays) from 1330 to 2100 hours and carries out the following functions:

- Triage function as DVA incidents come in
- A point of contact for police officers on scene for queries and advice and awareness training where required
- To talk to the victim at the scene via telephone
- Review the DV incidents to direct the DV car to the right incidents
- Conversations with sergeant who is making the DASH risk decision
- Identify the calls that Leeds Domestic Violence Service (LDVS) can intervene with and prevent police needing to go out
- Review the standard log that would normally be followed up the next day, tasking other DVA specialists, and making referrals to other agencies e.g.: substance misuse
- Ascertain further information to inform risk

- Make automatic referrals into LDVS/early help
- Give advice on risk to add to DASH
- Link with mental health worker already co-located in Control Room where appropriate
- Make sure the correct support is being offered for children who are at the scene and appropriate referrals are being made.

### **Set-up and operation of the intervention**

7.14 The idea of the pilot was put forward in 2019 and an experienced IDVA, who already worked for LDVS, volunteered to fill the post (initially alongside some of her other existing duties). The project started in February 2020 and has been running for just over two years. It took some time to get off the ground: some of the issues encountered in starting up and running the project are summarised below:

#### **Security requirements:**

7.15 Placing civilian members of staff in a police and stations where they can access police IT and information systems necessitates a high level of vetting and it took some time to obtain clearance. It has inevitably also led to a long lead time when recruiting new staff.

#### **Impact of Covid-19 pandemic:**

7.16 The project went live in February 2020, around three weeks before the start of the Covid-19 pandemic. The pandemic inevitably caused difficulties for the project and the service was suspended completely for two weeks (as it was not possible for the IDVA to work from home given the need to access police IT systems). She was then able to return to Elland Road, but social distancing requirements made it difficult for her to share an office whilst complying with public health restrictions. This meant that the co-location of the IDVA with the police, one of the central tenets of this scheme, had to be stopped and the IDVA relocated to a separate room with the mental health nurse.

#### **IT and information requirements:**

7.17 The information systems used by the IDVAs are summarised below:

- **WebSTORM:** The police call logging system for all calls (to 999 or 101) to the police which enables them to deploy resources rapidly and records all the information relevant to an incident.
- **Niche:** The main police records management system which is used to record domestic incidents. A Niche record is raised if the call is converted to a crime report. A key word is included to identify the case as domestic abuse related.
- **On Track (run by Oasis):** The LDVS operating system. The IDVA can interrogate this system via their own laptops to see whether the caller is an existing client and what support is in place already. This information can be fed into the police systems as appropriate.

7.18 Access to IT/information was a major issue. It is essential for the IDVAs to access police information systems to monitor the call logs and find out what is happening, both in real time and retrospectively. The IDVAs have used the WebSTORM logs since the start of the project and recorded their actions on these. This was unsatisfactory since much of the police activity beyond the initial call is logged on the Niche system and the IDVAs were unable to use this. However, they have recently been trained to use this (between August and November 2021), enabling them to make a more effective contribution: they can now see what action is recorded after the call-out has been dealt with and can also record their own actions such as calls to the victim and referrals.

#### Data monitoring requirements:

7.19 The following data is recorded for the WYVRU to summarise the activity which has taken place for the purpose of monitoring the project:

- Target number of individuals and how many reached
- Demographics
- Staff and service user feedback
- Risks or concerns
- Case study
- Number of children in the house
- Area of Leeds
- Case grading – standard, medium and priority
- Date, time, and outcome of intervention

- Number initially refused and any reengagement – Confirmed DVA Specialist worker able to collate information
- Names of agencies referred into, including taken on to LDVS caseload, Mental Health worker and support for the child through worker in LDVS
- Links to Operation Encompass in Leeds
- Number. of staff trained
- Niche data – access long term data on those who have engaged with the service and those who haven't – prosecution numbers
- POWER form for those who are taken on to LDVS caseload.

## Staffing

7.20 The intention was to appoint two IDVAs, but this was not possible initially and only one IDVA was recruited. This remained the position for around eighteen months until July 2021 when four additional staff comprising two IDVAs and two domestic abuse support workers, were recruited (domestic abuse support workers are not qualified IDVAs though all of those who work in the PCR are at IDVA standard and ready to do the qualification<sup>85</sup>). They cover six days a week and there is a third who works occasionally, but one of the workers left towards the end of 2021 to take up another post, leaving a single worker on her own. The IDVA appointed at the start of the project has been promoted to a supervisory role within LDVS but continues to oversee the Elland Road IDVAs and still works in the PCR from time to time when necessary. This enables her to identify any problems and to provide supervision; she is currently looking at how the Niche records can be used to improve the information available to officers and the (police-based) domestic abuse researchers about the IDVA's involvement with individual clients.

## Workload

7.21 From our interviews, there appears to be ample work for the IDVAs given the volume of domestic abuse reports across Leeds. We were advised that there are up to 70 logs opened across Leeds per day which need resolution (around 30 at any given time) and that there is a 'constant conveyor belt of demand' [police representative], with spikes at certain times. It should be noted that the amount of time spent on each case varies significantly – not all cases can be followed up, much depends on the IDVAs, and the police assessment of the risks involved and

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<sup>85</sup> Email from Janet Taylor, 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2022.

the potential to intervene and provide support [see also paragraph 7.54 et seq. on effectiveness].

## Communications

- 7.22 The IDVA was given a police radio and trained to use it, but this proved to be difficult to operate for technical reasons and was later dropped in favour of a telephone. It is still possible for the IDVA to speak to the police officer at the scene where necessary.

## Strategic fit with WYVRU's objectives

- 7.23 At first glance, the aims of the IDVAs in the Police Control Room do not appear to fit easily with the overall aims of WYVRU or the Home Office mandates objectives – see paragraphs 3.4-3.5 above. However, domestic abuse has been given priority in West Yorkshire due to the scale of the problem (including the high rate of domestic abuse in younger people) and this is likely to continue given the high profile of VAWG generally at national level and the commitment of the PCC to tackling it across West Yorkshire. This includes a focus on supporting any children and young people who may be affected as victims, recognising the intergenerational impact of domestic abuse and the recent change in legislation that sees children who witness domestic abuse as victims in their own right<sup>86</sup>. The intervention is also intended to support criminal justice interventions by reducing the rate of attrition throughout the process. The monitoring of the project has been changed in recent months to align more clearly with the WYVRU's objectives, including the impact on the younger age groups.
- 7.24 Funding has been made available for tackling domestic abuse in West Yorkshire by the PCC and local authority though much of this has been focused on accommodation such as refuges and sanctuary schemes to enable victims to remain in their own homes by providing better protection.

## Benefits

- 7.25 The following benefits of the intervention were identified from the interviews with stakeholders and from the written information provided:
- 7.26 **Obtaining information on victim-survivors due to the independence of the IDVAs:** The IDVAs can elicit information which might not be forthcoming to the police at the initial call-out and thus provide a fuller picture of the victim-survivor's

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<sup>86</sup> Domestic Abuse Act 2021, section 3, see <https://staging.westyorks-ca.gov.uk/media/6995/wy-vru-needs-assessment-january-2021.pdf>

situation. This is partly because they can spend longer with the individual victim on the telephone but also because their independence from the police and other statutory agencies makes it easier for people to confide in them and to raise issues they may not wish to raise with the police. Information of this kind is kept confidential.

7.27 **Screening function:** The IDVAs screen calls, including some which the police have not yet been able to respond to, and offer advice to the victim-survivor. Once the police arrive, the IDVAs can offer advice to the police officer at the scene or speak to the victim-survivor directly. This means that the victims have a more immediate response from a holistic, victim-centred service than they would otherwise receive.

7.28 **Earlier engagement and support:** Unlike the more traditional IDVA role, the PCR IDVA provides short term support at an early stage and refers on to LDVS and other agencies for longer term support. One of the IDVAs told us:

*'Quite often, within the role, there was a large amount of emotional support given through the Elland Road Control Room project. The project was set up to assess the needs of the person reporting an incident of Domestic Violence or Abuse, either signpost them if that's what they wanted, or refer to other agencies or refer to our service to then do the linking.'* [LDVS representative]

7.29 There is a Daily Risk Assessment Meeting (DRAM) in Leeds, which was set up recently, as well as the twice-weekly MARAC; the IDVA attends the DRAM and the MARAC and can report any intelligence gathered from the PCR IDVA and on any action taken. This may mean that no further action is needed since the victim and family are already being supported and the IDVA may already have signposted them to relevant services. We were told that a high proportion of victims have been signposted to services before they are discussed at these meetings. This would seem to be a more efficient way of working and to cut down on delays in providing support.

7.30 Some victim-survivors have told the IDVA that the advice provided has helped them to take difficult, sometimes life-changing decisions (such as a woman who decided to move away with her son following the support received). We were also advised that for some victims, *'the biggest thing they want is to feel like they've been listened to, feel like they've been heard and then to be kept informed of what's happening.'* [GS, IDVA representative]

7.31 **Benefits of co-location and multi-agency working between police, LDVS and other agencies:** The benefits of co-location were apparent from interviewees who spoke

of the way in which staff in the PCR and in Elland Road more generally can work together. The co-location of the IDVA with the mental health worker and police officers (mainly CID) and sharing of information systems facilitates a pooling of information in individual cases (see below). More generally, this helps to forge key relationships and leads to synergy that would be difficult to replicate if the IDVA were based in a community setting. The co-location leads to a greater understanding between the police and the IDVAs of their respective roles and the challenges faced, but also some exchange of knowledge and expertise which is mutually beneficial. For example, the IDVAs can advise on the legal options available and on services such as local refuges.

- 7.32 It was clear from our interviews that the project relies considerably on the attributes and commitment of individual members of staff and that it has benefited from having enthusiastic and approachable individuals in the police station and at LDVS.
- 7.33 **Information sharing:** Since the IDVAs are co-located with the police, there is no formal information sharing agreement between them. Information sharing appears to work well with the IDVAs now having access to both police and LDVS systems and able to triangulate and share the information appropriately. Plans coming out of the DRAMs are circulated daily and the MARAC plans within a day or two of the meeting.
- 7.34 The sharing of information between the agencies and the IDVAs' access to police IT systems works well, enabling the IDVAs to access information at an earlier stage than their community-based counterparts and to share pertinent information held by LDVS with the police (including during a call-out – the fact that there are children in the home, for example). This dynamic sharing of information may lead to better decisions being made and a better overall assessment of risks which is helpful to victims and may increase the chances of offenders being brought to justice. The confidentiality of victim-survivors is given a high priority and LDVS only record general information on the Niche police system (for example, listing the services they have referred on to) rather than personal information that the victim would not wish to be shared with police. More detailed information may be stored on the LDVS system.
- 7.35 Improving the assessment of risk: The initial DASH score is undertaken by the police officer and looked at by the sergeant. The IDVAs do not therefore influence the initial risk assessment but are using their professional judgement and expertise to gauge the level of risk involved for the individual caller based on any additional information they are able to gather. It is therefore probable that the

IDVAs improve the overall assessment of risk for the individual victim and can feed this into the DRAM or take further action if indicated.

- 7.36 Continuity of care for victim-survivors: Although the IDVA generally will provide only the initial support (though she is encouraged to retain a small caseload of her own), victims are provided with ongoing support. There are strong links between LDVS and other agencies (both statutory and non-statutory) which mean that referrals can be made quickly and efficiently by the IDVA, and advice sought where needed. This can range from long term support being provided by LDVS or short-term support from other agencies such as Housing or a sanctuary referral<sup>87</sup> being made where needed. The changes made during the project to start the shift earlier in the day makes it easier for the IDVAs to make referrals the same day to, for example, Children's Social Care or the Early Help Hub (whereas previously, they were starting the shift at 4.00pm, shortly before those services close for the day). As one interviewee told us,

*'That's made it a lot easier to be able to talk to people first to make sure that the referrals that they want to do are correct.'* [LDVS representative – JT]

- 7.37 There is some follow-up to ensure that contact has been made and that the victim is satisfied with the support being provided:

*'We never just make a referral and leave the client and hope that it goes well... we always do some type of follow-up to check that contact has been made and they're happy with what's happened.'* [LDVS representative - EG]

- 7.38 **Reduced attrition rate due to early support:** The IDVA can spend some considerable time (up to a couple of hours) advising and listening to a victim-survivor following a call-out. She can set out the options that are available which may help to reduce the risk level and therefore the risk of repeat victimisation (which currently makes up around 48% of incidents reported to the police<sup>88</sup>). This may also increase the chance of the victim having the confidence to proceed with prosecution. The attrition rate of victims proceeding with prosecution was 58% at the time the original bid was submitted<sup>89</sup>.

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<sup>87</sup> A sanctuary scheme is a property where security measures have been installed in order that households at risk of domestic violence are able to remain safely in their own accommodation and where the perpetrator does not live in the property if they choose to do so. See Sanctuary schemes for households at risk of domestic violence, Communities and Local Government (Communities and Local Government). See [assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/6015/1697793.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/6015/1697793.pdf)

<sup>88</sup> Bid to West Yorkshire VRU, section on evidence.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid.

## Challenges

- 7.39 The following challenges were identified from the interviews with stakeholders in LDVS, the local authority and the police:
- 7.40 Setting up and running during the pandemic: The IDVA started at Elland Road a few weeks before the first lockdown; some of the difficulties experienced within the project were due to the Covid-19 pandemic. For example, the project was suspended for a while during the first lockdown and, even when she was able to return to Elland Road, the IDVA was not based in the PCR and was relocated to a separate room with the mental health nurse. It was therefore not possible to develop synergy or establish a relationship with police officers for some time. It was also isolating for new staff since it was difficult for them to form a relationship with their LDVS colleagues who were working from home, relationships which are key to the project. It has also been difficult to publicise the work that the IDVAs are doing to staff in Elland Road and the other police stations. The police have also had a high absence rate due to Covid-19 which has been disruptive and imposed even greater pressures than usual.
- 7.41 Data collection: The data monitoring requirements for the project were raised as an issue in interviews. These were felt to be cumbersome, placing a disproportionate burden on the IDVAs. Data needs to be recorded for the police, the WYVRU and LDVS. The data required by the WYVRU originally was y limited but increased as the project was extended so that additional information is now required on, for example, how many children are involved, the schools they attend, whether they are NEET90, and if they are known to youth offending. Although there is some overlap between the data collected on the Oasis system for LDVS and the WYVRU spreadsheet, the time needed to complete all the returns was felt to be high, and some interviewees felt that some of the information collected for the WYVRU lacked relevance. It was felt by LDVS interviewees that this was in part because the VRU objectives are mainly centred on young people and violence, and that the data collected therefore includes the impact of domestic abuse on the young people involved, but that this is less relevant to the interaction between IDVAs and victims.
- 7.42 This issue has been raised with the WYVRU but remains unresolved. LDVS have suggested that the data burden could be eased by streamlining the parallel data collection systems (they do submit their own Oasis data to the WYVRU). The time

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<sup>90</sup> Not in Education, Employment or Training

spent in completing the returns (estimated to be half an hour per shift) is felt to detract from the IDVA's main task of supporting victims.

- 7.43 Using police IT systems: It took some time for the IDVAs to be trained to use the Niche system – having access to the WebSTORM logs but not Niche limited what they could achieve. Any new members of staff will be trained to use Niche as part of their induction so that information can be shared effectively between the police and the IDVAs.
- 7.44 Communication and teamworking with the police: Despite co-location, communication, and liaison between the police and the IDVA have proved more difficult than anticipated. This was partly because of the impact of Covid-19 and the need to keep staff separate during the Covid-19 restrictions but even since these were relaxed, it has proved difficult for the IDVA to make herself known to the large number of staff, not only at Elland Road but at the other police stations. The number of cases referred from police to the IDVA has been lower than hoped initially and one IDVA expressed some frustration that many of the police staff, including some in the safeguarding team in Elland Road, are unaware of their role. The difficulties in keeping the project fully staffed have meant that each new IDVA must start to forge relationships anew. There has also been some misunderstanding about the IDVAs' role with some police officers assuming that they would pick up every case which was not the intention.
- 7.45 The lack of communication has made it difficult to realise the full potential of the intervention which relies on the effectiveness of the relationships between the IDVAs/LDVS and police, and mutual respect for and understanding of each agency's roles. Communicating information about the outcomes of the project to the police and resuming the briefing sessions that the IDVA and Hub Commander were delivering jointly to police teams throughout Leeds before the pandemic would help address this. More could be done if the capacity were available to ensure that the learning from the IDVAs is fed back to the police and used to enhance their skills and awareness.
- 7.46 Feedback to the police from the WYVRU: Despite the amount of data collected on this project and submitted by LDVS, we were advised that the summary of the data is not routinely fed back to the police by the WYVRU or LDVS. The police, therefore, do not regularly receive information as to whether the aims of the project are being met or see any quantitative data about the work that the IDVAs are carrying out in the PCR. The police therefore feel unable to judge to what extent the IDVAs are making a difference although recognise that their advice has

been welcomed by officers. The routine contact between the VRU and the project workers was felt to have been reduced because of staff changes in the VRU.

- 7.47 **Lack of capacity for project management:** The Hub Commander who oversaw the setting-up of the project had no dedicated resources for project management. The five Inspectors based in the hub had no spare capacity to help with this as they manage critical operational issues on a full-time basis. This meant that the Chief Inspector had to oversee the setting-up of the project and its ongoing operation, which proved challenging given the pressures on his time. This included oversight of the vetting, putting the IT arrangements in place, providing accommodation and training in police information systems including Niche and procuring ID cards. This has limited the time that the Chief Inspector has to spend on other aspects of the project which might make more impact (such as raising awareness of the IDVAs).
- 7.48 **Staffing:** The length of the vetting process has been an issue as this can be protracted given the need for a high level of security clearance. Once staff are appointed, they require training by LDVS before they can take up their position in the PCR which adds to the time needed to get staff in post. The first IDVA to take up post was initially part-time due to other commitments at LDVS. Because of the requirement to work outside normal office hours, staffing the project has presented some difficulties. The initial staffing model was based on the single IDVA appointed working overtime and this proved to be a costly way of achieving the staffing level needed. It was therefore decided to move to the current, more cost-effective staffing model, increasing the number of posts and not relying on overtime payments. From interviews, it also seemed that where there was a single IDVA in the post, this could be an isolating experience to begin with, particularly if they were also new to LDVS. Regular supervision is provided by the manager based at LDVS, but this has sometimes been difficult to deliver given the impact of the pandemic on staffing.
- 7.49 Turnover has also affected the ability of the project to deliver to optimum capacity. One of the Domestic Violence Support Workers left for a different role which led to a gap of around three months in replacing her because of the long lead time for recruitment. Once the vacant IDVA posts have been filled, this will allow for a reasonable amount of coverage (subject to confirmation that the funding will continue). We were advised that two more staff have been vetted and would be starting training. The police representative interviewed commented on availability of the IDVAs:

*'We got some feedback from officers that they liked [the IDVA] when she made contact with them and they were saying things like when's that*

*[IDVA] working again? She was just really good when she was working so we knew it was appreciated by the officers, but she just wasn't around enough to be able to evaluate it. Now we've got three of them providing better coverage.'* [Police representative]

7.50 LDVS are considering the feasibility of having a relief team in place so that there is a bank of staff who can be drawn on as and when needed, perhaps one night or so each month. However, the uncertainty over funding makes it particularly difficult to recruit to the project when the longer-term future of the project was not guaranteed beyond (initially) a three-month period. These appear to be difficult posts to recruit to: the individuals need to be resilient and assertive to make their potential contribution better known and to work effectively with police officers of all ranks and across all the police stations in Leeds. The anti-social hours worked may also present difficulties. We were told that there are currently recruitment difficulties across the sector, heightened by the pandemic.

7.51 **Diversity and accessibility:** It is difficult to ascertain whether accessibility has presented significant issues for the project, but it is noted that reliance on telephone calls as the sole means of communication could limit its reach. Some people might not feel confident in speaking to the IDVA on the telephone and difficulties such as not being able to speak English well or suffering from a hearing impairment might limit the effectiveness of the intervention. For example, one of the case studies records that:

*'There have been language barriers supporting the service user and although support was offered and accessed through a translation service you can never guarantee that the information discussed is correctly translated.'*<sup>91</sup>

7.52 Similarly, when a victim is affected by mental health problems, is intoxicated or high because of substance use, this can impede the effectiveness of any calls made and it is not always possible to follow this up later. We were advised that Language Line could be used if an interpreter was required (it is also used by the police) but it is possible, although there is no way of knowing, that some of the callers who did not return calls were reluctant or felt unable to engage with the IDVA by telephone. It is therefore worth considering whether the service could be made more accessible, for example, by providing a live online service or even face-to-face contact as in the North London scheme<sup>92</sup>.

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<sup>91</sup> Monitoring report – domestic abuse, interventions 2020-21 January – March 2021, case study

<sup>92</sup> Coy, M and Kelly, L; Islands in the stream, op cit.

## Effectiveness of IDVAs in Police Control Room

7.53 **Feedback from victim-survivors:** The feedback from victim-survivors that we have seen has been positive – although we did not contact any directly, some feedback is sought by LDVS and examples included in the monitoring returns. We asked interviewees what success would look like from victim-survivors’ point of view and were told that this included the ability to access the support needed at the time:

*‘Support in whatever capacity they want at the time, whether that is around the criminal justice system, or whether that’s practical, emotional, whatever is going to support them to be safe and to move’. [LDVS representative]*

7.54 Although there is no systematic measurement of feedback, a link is provided for clients to complete a feedback form should they wish to do so.

7.55 **Productivity:** Reading every case that appears on the police call logs is time-consuming but an essential element of the IDVA’s role. The IDVAs aim to look at all the calls logged, though the number of people with whom they engage directly is far lower. We were advised that reading each log can take around five to fifteen minutes depending on its complexity and there may be up to forty that have come in during the last 24 hours to be looked at in any one shift. The IDVAs then need to make a professional judgement as to whether to attempt to call the victim-survivor and offer help based on the information gleaned from the log. Several people who are telephoned do not answer, even if their call to the police was very recent, or they may ask to be rung back which may not be convenient for the IDVA. People who may be perpetrators or any third-party callers (i.e.: those ringing to report a domestic abuse incident they have witnessed or suspect) are not contacted. There have been sessions, we were advised, where no callers were reached or engaged with successfully though this is unusual. The time spent on each case varies considerably: a particularly complex case can take up to two hours. The conversion rate of logs to calls made is therefore variable but is a reasonable indicator of productivity.

7.56 **Subjectivity in call selection:** We observed that the selection of victim-survivors called is down to the judgement of the IDVA based on who she thinks is most likely to benefit, her capacity and the availability and willingness of the victim-survivor to accept the call at that time which is partly down to chance. There is no way of knowing whether the callers reached are those at the highest risk or those who are likely to benefit most from the support that the IDVA can offer.

- 7.57 **Measurability:** Looking at the outcomes for this project, it is hoped that the intervention of the IDVA in the PCR will help to contribute to a reduction in violent crime by intervening earlier with the victim in standard and medium cases to increase engagement in services and reduce the risk of ongoing abuse<sup>93</sup>. It is hoped that this will also enable victim-survivors to pursue a criminal justice pathway where appropriate (thereby reducing the rate of attrition which may be higher when no support is in place). It is also hoped that the intervention will help to improve the quality of the overall risk assessment and enhance the way in which the perpetrator is managed [local authority interview]. Many of the victims are enthusiastic about the support they receive (see feedback on the monitoring returns).
- 7.58 Nevertheless, it is difficult to measure whether the support provided leads to a better outcome than if it was provided at a later stage through a community based IDVA (i.e.: following referral by the police or other agencies to LDVS after the DRAM) and therefore whether these aspirations are met. Measuring this would require a counterfactual to compare several cases in which there has been IDVA involvement (through looking at those cases where the key word, Operation Jewel, is cited on the Niche case file) with cases in which the IDVA was not involved or where support was provided by the police DV co-ordinator<sup>94</sup>. The outcomes selected could include victim satisfaction and case attrition rates. Whilst this has not proved feasible so far, it might be worth considering if the project continues and if it is possible to collect this data systematically.
- 7.59 **Causality:** There will be callers who turn down the initial offer of help and who decide not to support a prosecution, but later decide to ring the LDVS helpline – in some cases, even when the IDVA has spent a long time advising an individual victim-survivor. Whilst this may be as a direct result of an IDVA’s call, this is unlikely to be attributed to her intervention even if this is mentioned. Whether the intervention is leading to greater safety and to better criminal justice outcomes is therefore for many reasons difficult to establish for this project (as there is no direct basis for comparison) but that does not mean that the IDVAs are not providing valuable support or helping to improve the safety of victims. There were many examples of victims being offered help such as knowing more about the options available:

*‘Even if it helps people to recognise that what they’re going through is DV, because not everybody that calls the police does - even though they’ve called the police – they might not recognise that its domestic*

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<sup>93</sup> Grant agreement, page 35.

<sup>94</sup> The police DV co-ordinators are civilian staff who research cases for the police officers.

*abuse so making people aware of services, making people aware of their options and that, if they decide not to support a prosecution, then we can support them to get a non-molestation order or to get support around children's contact or services for children, so even if it makes people more aware of other options, I think that's positive.'* [JT, LDVS representative]

- 7.60 **Impact on quality of policing response:** It was anticipated that the co-location of the IDVA in the PCR would lead to some knowledge/skills transfer and we were told that this expectation had been met to some degree, particularly with the experienced IDVA who was initially placed in Elland Road; for example:

*'There's got to be some value in those cross-discussions....and you can arrive at better outcomes when you're sharing dynamically knowledge, information, risk in that setting. I think you are kind of checking what each system or partner knows about an individual. And I think that you tend to end up with better decisions.'* [Police representative]

- 7.61 The police safeguarding team frequently consults the IDVAs on issues such as obtaining non-molestation orders and the fact that the IDVA is contacting victims means that they have fewer referrals to make themselves, since it has already been done in some cases (and this is clear from the Niche record). The co-location of the IDVA in the PCR makes this easier than it would otherwise be if the police had to contact them at a community-based location. The IDVA has also been able to take on additional related work such as advising women who attend the police station in person to seek information on their partner under Clare's Law<sup>95</sup>. There appears to be greater potential for exchanging information and for the police officers to take on board the contribution made by the IDVAs which could improve the overall response.

- 7.62 **Capacity and workload:** The initial staffing level was inadequate to meet the aims of the project since the IDVA post could only be staffed for a very limited time, and if she was out of the office due to sickness or annual leave, for example, there was no cover available. Increasing the number of IDVA posts and changing the way in which they were paid (i.e.: by not relying on overtime payments) has proved to be a better, more cost-effective way of staffing the project. However, there has been a lack of capacity because of staff vacancies, but plans are in hand to remedy this if funding is secured for 2022-23.

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<sup>95</sup> This enables the police to disclose information to a victim or potential victim of domestic abuse about their partner's or ex-partner's previous abusive or violent offending. See [www.gov.uk/government/publications/domestic-abuse-bill-2020-factsheets/domestic-violence-disclosure-scheme-factsheet](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/domestic-abuse-bill-2020-factsheets/domestic-violence-disclosure-scheme-factsheet)

- 7.63 As far as workload is concerned, there are undoubtedly some peaks and troughs with Fridays, Saturdays and Sunday mornings being particularly busy. There was a period early on when there were few WebSTORM logs to triage but this was due to the impact of the lockdowns which made it difficult for people to report domestic abuse to police when they were likely to be at home with the perpetrator. However, we were told that the IDVAs are currently busy all the time.
- 7.64 Because of the demands of the work, it is generally possible to look at the live or very recent logs only. The IDVAs may also contact officers enroute to a scene, though it is more likely, given the time frame for emergency calls, that the IDVA gets through to an officer when they are at the scene or after the officer has left. It has not been possible to do as much 'live' work as intended, i.e.: to contact the officer via radio or telephone while he or she is out on a call and aid the victim. Looking at cases that have been closed could also prove useful in terms of identifying victim-survivors in need of support, but this has been difficult due to the lack of capacity and there may also be data protection issues that would need to be addressed. Where it has not been possible to get hold of somebody by telephone during the IDVA's shift, an opportunity may be lost to contact that victim and to provide early support. [*DVA interviews.*]
- 7.65 **Improving the overall risk assessment:** The IDVAs do not carry out the DASH risk assessment since this is the responsibility of the police. However, the work that they do can enhance the quality of the overall risk assessment since the IDVA's independence and the time spent in talking to the victim so soon after their initial call-out can encourage the victim-survivor to provide more detailed information about their situation and an opportunity for them to access information from the IDVA about their options. Whilst the value of this is difficult to measure accurately, the information could be critical in helping to identify the level of risk and therefore to reduce the risk of further harm. For example, in the words of one interviewee:

'We know from our organisation,...quite often, victims don't always understand what's been said to them, what's been done, what's going to happen going forwards, and actually having a DV advocate there who can speak to the client who can explain things to them, who can put support into place straightaway, would potentially assuage any doubts that they were having, give them a bit more confidence and belief to support police processes and also, look at the risk....The DASH CAADA<sup>96</sup> has a

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<sup>96</sup> DASH CAADA scores: the scoring system developed by the Corporate Alliance Against Domestic Abuse (now Safe Lives) as a consistent and simple tool for practitioners who work with adult victims of domestic abuse to help them identify those who are at high risk of harm assessing risks, see

grading system, it's clearly scored, but within that you also need to incorporate professional judgement. So, there are cases that have been graded as medium, and we might look at it having had a conversation with a client in a less structured manner. We're not just asking the DASH questions; we're having a conversation about what's happening. There can be more natural disclosures, there can be more openness.... I have worked with many clients through this project who have said to me, the police didn't listen to me, they didn't explain things to me, I didn't know what was happening.' [LDVS representative]

## Costs and value-for-money of IDVAs in Police Control Room

7.66 **Number of cases:** The grant awarded to meet the cost of the programme for 2021/22 was £49,974 which was intended to benefit:

- 90 people aged 24 and under
- 450 people aged 25 and above
- 100 children and young people directly, 300 indirectly.

7.67 It was assumed that there would be around 30 cases open at any one time.

7.68 It was difficult to discern the exact number of cases supported by the IDVAs. The two main source of information are the Oasis reports which are submitted to LDVS and the quarterly returns to the WYVRU. However, the information contained does not necessarily tally. Thus, we have relied on the returns submitted to the WYVRU for our analysis, although the Oasis returns provide interesting data on the type of support provided for individual clients. There are several different Oasis reports including: admissions into support, outputs and processes, and outcomes for cases closed. The outputs report includes, for example, the areas in which the victims have been supported, whilst the outcomes report shows the reasons the case was closed, the type of abuse, the perception of the client's safety compared to when the case was opened, and outcomes in terms of accommodation, health, and justice.

7.69 The following was derived from the monitoring data showing the project reach with the reach being the number of calls where support was provided:

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Total
<b>2020/21</b>					195 (including 43 people aged 24 and under)
<b>2021/22</b>	24 (including 6 under age 24)	75	84	-	183

7.70 A previous evaluation carried out for the WYVRU which included this project found that:

*'The services did not meet the expected number of contacts for 2021 (600), and this is likely to be because of issues relating to the COVID-19 pandemic, but it did reach 146 victims (452 victims were contacted in 2020).'*<sup>97</sup>

7.71 The data submitted quarterly to WYVRU provides information about the number of calls made, the number of individuals reached and the number of individuals that engaged. For the quarter 3 data for 2020-21, for example, this was as follows [note that these numbers are approximate as they are presented in the form of a bar chart]:

- Number. of calls made: 123
- Number of individuals reached: 44
- Number of individuals that engaged: 32

Thus, it appears that the IDVAs reached 36% of people they tried to contact, and, of those, there was a conversion rate of 73% into the numbers who engaged. This is a high conversion rate and many of those who did not engage will have received support during the initial call and may well seek help in the future. The comments shown reflect the fact that even where they choose not to pursue support at that time, the victim-survivors appreciated the call and that the impact was therefore positive. The total number of calls made over the quarter, however, seems lower than we would have expected (123 over three months, six sessions per week i.e.: around 1.7 calls per session).

<sup>97</sup> Coleman C, Whitfield K, Bradshaw H. et al, West Yorkshire Violence Reduction, Unit Evaluation, Final Report, Sheffield Hallam University (March 2021).

7.72 The more detailed data submitted for Q3 2021-22<sup>98</sup> which is drawn from the OASIS case management system gives a different set of data, i.e.:

- Total number of forms logged: 363 (this would represent around 5 calls per session)
- Of whom, 97.5% were survivors.

7.73 This also shows that most callers (nearly 92%) come from Leeds. The primary purpose of the contact, the support needs for each client, and the signposting and referral undertaken by the IDVAs are also logged. The average time spent per contact is logged as 11.32 (we assume minutes).

7.74 However, the data return that was submitted to the WYVRU for Q3 and Q4 records [though we assume this to be for Q2 and Q3]:

- Number of total referrals received: 159
- Number of people reached/engaged this quarter: 95
- Number of contacts with those people engaged this quarter: 95
- Successful programme completions: 90

7.75 It is unclear which set of data more accurately reflects the calls being made and the conversion to the numbers of individuals who engage.

### Costs:

Total costs were as follows:

Year	Cost (£)
2019-20 [Q3-Q4 only]	29,547
2020-21	71,456
2021-22	49,974

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<sup>98</sup> Oasis reporting STW – PCR – Q3 Oct – Dec 2021 report date 12/01/2022

The costs for the first quarter of 2021/22 were shown as:

Cost (£)	
Salaries	5513
Overheads	1861
Management Fee	3047
<b>Total for first quarter</b>	<b>10,421</b>

Thus, there was a variance (i.e.: underspend) for Q1 of £2,073.

7.76 These costs were lower than the cost of the programme when it was funded initially – costs were brought down by changes to the staffing model since the IDVA was originally paid overtime for working outside the agreed hours. This was addressed by changing the core hours worked and increasing the number of staff to provide cover.

7.77 Useful comparative insights into costs are available from a police station based IDVA in Barnet (the programme was known as DVSS)<sup>99</sup>:

*‘The cost of providing support to each victim-survivor was calculated using the basic formula developed in a recent multi-site IDVA scheme evaluation [9]: division of an IDVA salary plus on-costs by annual caseload. While Howarth et al used an estimated average caseload of 100 cases, the figures presented here are based on actual caseload per IDVA. The calculation therefore divided the IDVA salary plus on-costs by the number of service users in the database. The results show the average cost was £364 per case at DVSS ...’*

7.78 Our calculation of unit costs for the scheme is in line with that case study, since a cost of £49,974 for a client group of 183 represents a level of the order of £270 per case.

<sup>99</sup> Coy, M and Kelly, L, ‘Islands in the Stream’, op cit. See [www.trustforlondon.org.uk/publications/islands-stream-evaluation-independent-domestic-violence-advocacy-scheme/](http://www.trustforlondon.org.uk/publications/islands-stream-evaluation-independent-domestic-violence-advocacy-scheme/)

## Cost-effectiveness

- 7.79 The key benefit of the scheme is that clients are reached more quickly at times of crisis, at a point at which they are more receptive to advice and insight.
- 7.80 We do not have quantitative data on the outcomes of the project, so for insights into the expected level of benefits we have drawn on the academic literature. One study we looked at provides a way to gain insights into the effect of quicker access to an IDVA on outcomes<sup>100</sup>.
- 7.81 A table in that study presents findings that cessation of abuse increases to a level of 62.4% when support is given in a hospital setting, compared to a level of cessation of abuse of 48.3% when support is given in a community setting. The difference amounts to a 14% improvement in outcomes. Until results are available on actual outcomes of the West Yorkshire scheme, we believe that this represents a plausible starting point for consideration of the effects of an IDVA in a PCR, though we would discount the impact by a factor of a half to reflect other factors that may be present in a hospital setting which may not apply in a PCR (over and above the quicker access to advice).
- 7.82 The table below presents an analysis of benefits, showing the social cost per client associated with an instance of high-risk domestic violence, and the effect of reducing those costs by a factor of 7%, which is our assumed impact given the insights from the literature.

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<sup>100</sup> Halliwell, G. et al (2019), 'Cry for health: a quantitative evaluation of a hospital-based advocacy intervention for domestic violence and abuse', *BMC Health Services Research*, 19, [718 (2019)]

	Social cost per high-risk case of domestic violence	Projected impact of scheme in lessening social costs per high-risk case
Physical and emotional harm	56,885	4,010
Lost output	16,965	1,195
Health services	2,805	200
Misc victim services	205	15
Housing services	805	55
Police costs	1,510	105
Criminal legal	400	30
Civil legal	165	10
Children's services	2,975	210
<b>Total</b>	<b>82,715</b>	<b>5,830</b>

7.83 In return for expenditure of £270 per case, there is a reduction in social costs of some £5,830, of which £625 relates to public services.

## Conclusions

7.84 It is difficult to conclude definitively to what extent this project meets its aims. Despite it having been in place for two years, it still feels fairly that the project is at an early stage in its implementation, understandably so, given that it took some time to get off the ground and that the pandemic then caused considerable disruption to its operation. In addition, the ability of IDVAs to contribute meaningfully was limited by the fact that they were only trained to access data on Niche relatively recently and were until then having to look at the WebSTORM logs in isolation which contain less detailed information. The ability they now have to look at both has undoubtedly enhanced the potential contribution made by the IDVAs since they have a broader picture of the action taken in response to each call logged and can also input data themselves to show what they have done, thereby keeping the police officers involved in the case informed.<sup>101</sup>

<sup>101</sup> An earlier evaluation of this intervention noted the preference of interviewees for a better system for sharing information and records to assist in unity across the service since, at the time that was completed, the IDVAs had not been trained to use the Niche system. See Coleman C, Whitfield K, Bradshaw H. et al, op cit, page 92.

- 7.85 Staffing problems have also been a limiting factor and means that it has been difficult to realise the full impact of the project. The expansion of the IDVA posts, the increase in the hours worked and change in the staffing structure have, however, been helpful and mean that victims and the police are receiving a more consistent response than they did when there was only one IDVA in post and when the hours worked were shorter. The change in the hours worked has facilitated closer liaison with other local services during normal working hours.
- 7.86 There are ways in which the scope of the intervention could be widened, for example, having an IDVA in the police patrol car and being able to see victims face-to-face in the police station. The former approach was piloted in Leeds and stopped due to Covid-19, but funding had in any case ceased. Operating the IDVA in the PCR together with an IDVA in a patrol car would offer some advantages since the two roles would be complementary and would enable face-to-face contact with the victim to take place and provide her with an opportunity to talk to someone other than a police officer at a time of crisis. Similarly, being able to have face-to-face contact in the police station might also be worth considering should the opportunity arise.<sup>102</sup>
- 7.87 Our study found that there was potential for the IDVAs to make more impact and to be embedded more fully into the domestic abuse police response team. The IDVAs could work more closely alongside the police than they do currently – this may come with time if the service continues. For example, rather than the police completing a referral form for a victim, they could speed up the process by speaking to the IDVA directly who can then respond immediately. This does happen but we were advised that this is not routine.
- 7.88 The fact that the project has not been able to demonstrate definitively that it has fulfilled its potential completely does not, in our view, mean that the approach is fundamentally flawed. Rather, it seems to us that this reflects the challenges involved in bringing third sector workers into a police environment which represents a major cultural shift. This requires time to reach its full potential, particularly given the restrictions imposed in the last two years by the pandemic and the difficulties encountered in staffing the project effectively and consistently. In the words of one interviewee:

*'If the DV support worker was included in a more frontline manner, they would probably have a much better success rate with individuals wanting support and having a better relationship with them as the police.'* [LDVS representative]

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<sup>102</sup> This has been done in other areas – see Islands in the Stream, op cit, page 16.

- 7.89 The lack of measurability is clearly an issue – both in terms of measurement of the outcome for the victim of the support offered but also the impact on attrition of the criminal justice proceedings. The IDVA may expend a considerable amount of energy on a particular case and then find that the victim declines to prosecute on that occasion (although many victims will have several encounters with police before they proceed with legal proceedings). Again, it may be that the IDVA has still helped to improve the outcome for that victim, for example, by improving the safety plans that she has put in place which may pay dividends in other ways.
- 7.90 The feedback from victim-survivors who have been contacted by the IDVAs that we have seen on the monitoring returns was positive, with many expressing gratitude for the support provided and the ability to discuss their situation, for example:

*'You have no idea how helpful you have been! I honestly can't tell you! This is the best Safety Plan I have completed with a professional. Thank you.'* [Victim-survivor]<sup>103</sup>

## Future of the project

- 7.91 Although the project has been operating for two years, it still feels to be at an early stage given the difficulties encountered in establishing it and the issues encountered in keeping it fully staffed. Any decision as to whether funding should continue beyond June 2022 will depend on the availability of funding for the coming year and relative priorities. It may be that alternative funding sources may be found, such as the local authority who are supportive of this initiative, but this is by no means certain, particularly given the lack of clear data to show that the aims and objectives of the scheme have been met. The uncertainty over long-term funding, as for many innovative projects of this kind, is likely to make it difficult for people to commit to taking up IDVA posts which needs to be addressed.

## List of recommendations for IDVAs in Police Control Room

- 7.92 **Recommendation 1:** Whilst the need for data collected specifically for monitoring is recognised, we recommend that thought should be given from the start of every project as to whether the returns required are proportionate and streamlined so that project workers do not spend too long in completing data returns. We recommend that the data burden for this project should be reduced if possible and the data recorded just once (i.e.: extracted from the LDVS system and used to inform WYVRU).

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<sup>103</sup> Project monitoring report, Jan – March 2021.

- 7.93 **Recommendation 2:** We recommend that if this project proceeds, the partners work together to achieve more systematic integration between the police and the IDVAs in the PCR with a view to transferring skills, information, and expertise. The IDVAs need to work as members of an integrated multi-agency frontline team within the PCR. This would enable them to contribute to cases in real time rather than having to wait for referrals or for an examination of the calls logged on WebSTORM.
- 7.94 **Recommendation 3:** We recommend that wherever possible, additional resources are made available by the VRU to enable project management support to be provided for new projects and projects that are being extended to avoid placing an excessive burden on frontline staff.
- 7.95 **Recommendation 4:** We recommend that feedback is given to police and to providers by the VRU to ensure that they know what is being achieved by the project and whether outcomes are being met. Effective feedback on the outcomes of individual projects such as this one is an essential element of strategies for tackling violence<sup>104</sup>.
- 7.96 **Recommendation 5:** People who do not have English as a first language and those who find using the telephone difficult including those with neurodiversity issues or hearing impairment may find it more difficult to access support by telephone. We recommend that LDVS looks at the way in which victim-survivors are contacted to ensure that it is as accessible as it can be for people who may find communication by telephone challenging.

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<sup>104</sup> A whole-system multi-agency approach to serious violence prevention, A resource for local system leaders in England. HM Government (October 2019).

## Appendix 1: People interviewed - IDVAs in Police Control Room

Name	Organisation	Role
<b>Eleanor Grundell</b>	LDVS	(Currently) Team Leader, Access and Assessment Team, formerly IDVA in Police Control Room
<b>Jude Roberts</b>	Leeds Council	Safeguarding and Domestic Abuse Manager, Safer Stronger Communities, Domestic Abuse Perpetrator Lead
<b>Geraldine Scott</b>	LDVS	Domestic Violence Support Worker, Elland Road Police Station
<b>Janet Taylor</b>	Leeds Domestic Violence Service (LDVS)	Operations Manager, Community Services
<b>Chief Inspector Dan Wood</b>	Elland Road Police Station	Hub Commander, Leeds District Police HQ

## 8 HMYOI Wetherby Violence Reduction Programme

### Aims of the Violence Reduction programme

8.1 The stated aim of the programme at HMYOI Wetherby is to “contribute to a reduction in knife-related violence and reoffending after leaving custody”. The programme seeks to achieve this through three discrete elements:

- Four 15-week programmes delivered to small groups of up to eight participants
- Mentoring sessions to 10-15 individuals
- A training and guidance session for prison staff.

8.2 The programme, provided by St Giles, uses workers who have lived experience of the criminal justice system, to work with those young people identified for participation on the programme.

### Four 15-week programmes delivered to small groups

8.3 Each of the four programmes were designed to run concurrently, for one morning a week. The weekly sessions focus on tackling perceptions around knife crime and violence, and consider the following topics:

- Reasons why young people carry a knife, and the risks involved
- The long-term psychological and physical effects of youth violence
- Responses to emotional triggers, through exploring the Trigger Cycle
- Conflict resolution, enabling young people to stay safe without carrying a weapon.

8.4 In total, the programmes are expected to reach 32 participants in HMYOI Wetherby.

### Mentoring sessions to 10-15 individuals

8.5 The mentoring sessions are designed to support the group work carried out during the 15-week programmes. The mentoring sessions are one-to-one discussions with between ten and 15 of the young people participating in the group programmes.

8.6 The support centres around a co-produced action plan for each individual, focusing on ‘where are you going’ and ‘what’s holding you back’. The action plan

might include goals around building and maintaining relationships or attending purposeful activities or education.

#### A training and guidance session for prison staff

- 8.7 The training, for a minimum of 40 staff, should help professionals: (i) recognise key signs and indicators that young people are at risk of involvement with youth violence; and (ii) develop initial long-term and solution-based approaches to prevent and reduce the risks associated with youth violence.
- 8.8 Each of the training sessions is 60 minutes long, followed by a 30-minute question and answer session.

#### Evidence base for the approach taken in HMYOI Wetherby

- 8.9 In 2019, the Ministry of Justice published the findings of a study that looked at adult group and gang-related offenders in custody and the community<sup>105</sup>. The report looked at “Identity Matters”, an intervention designed to be delivered to those whose offending is “group/gang” related, to address issues related to their offending.
- 8.10 Whilst the report noted that the small sample sizes used meant that the findings could not be considered conclusive, it did show that:

*“Overall, the feedback from participants, facilitators, and key stakeholders on Identity Matters (IM) was positive and considered it a suitable intervention suitable to address group/gang related offending was positive”.*

*“The programme’s modules and sessions were considered to address the factors which motivated individuals to engage in offending and the attitudes, beliefs and perceptions that enabled them to offend”.*

*“A number of sessions were noted as being particularly effective, especially the sessions related to “push” and “pull” factors in group offending. The structured and manualised format of IM was praised and considered by facilitators and stakeholders to be unique in the field”.*

- 8.11 Whilst these findings relate to adult offenders, it could suggest that the group and one-to-one approach taken by St Giles in HMYOI Wetherby might have beneficial outcomes for the young people on the programme.

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<sup>105</sup> [Identity Matters intervention for group and gang related offenders in custody and community: findings from a small-scale process study \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/424242/identity-matters-intervention-for-group-and-gang-related-offenders-in-custody-and-community-findings-from-a-small-scale-process-study.pdf)

8.12 In October 2019, a thematic inspection report by HM Inspectorate of Probation and HM Inspectorate of prisons, looked at “the experience of 50 children who were released between October 2018 and April 2019 from all five young offender institutions”<sup>106</sup>.

8.13 This was a useful inspection report to consider, as a key aspect of the St Giles programme is a focus on reducing knife-related violence and reoffending “after leaving custody”.

8.14 The inspection report found that:

*“As we described in our interim report, the work carried out within the YOIs often did not meet the individual needs of the child, so it was disappointing that community agencies were not meeting them either. For some YOTs, the geographical distance is a barrier to working face-to-face with children. We saw few efforts to work creatively in these circumstances. Ideally, both custodial and community agencies should work together to decide who is best placed to deliver work and then provide it. That should not be determined by rigid agency boundaries and agencies should challenge each other to provide better services to the child”.*

*“There are specific pre-release programmes provided while in custody; however, none of the children whose cases we inspected had attended one. With some exceptions, we found little delivered that was specifically focused on resettlement or aimed at preparing for release. There was little evidence of any YOT case managers advocating or pressing for interventions within the YOI that met individual resettlement needs”.*

8.15 In respect of Release on Temporary License (ROTL), the report found that:

*“With the exception of three cases, YOTs did not play any part in the provision of ROTL in the cases we inspected. Both YOI and YOT staff were passive participants in a process. In one case we saw, the YOT had recorded that the boy had not applied for ROTL, and this ‘saved the paperwork’. The child was told when he was eligible and little else happened. There was no recognition that ROTL should play an important part in preparing a child for release. It was merely viewed as one of a number of things that needed to be mentioned to the child. It was raised in the planning meeting and then largely forgotten about unless the child mentioned it. Whether it happened at all depended on the culture within the YOI; it was not always clear what the decision to allow ROTL was based on”.*

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<sup>106</sup> [Youth resettlement – final report into work in the community \(justiceinspectorates.gov.uk\)](https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/youth-resettlement-final-report-into-work-in-the-community/)

- 8.16 What this indicates to us is that a pre-release programme that focuses on the child or young person, such as that offered by St Giles, could be very beneficial in supporting the young person on release from custody.
- 8.17 It also suggests that, having the YOI staff taking a more proactive role in ROTL and preparing the young person for release would be beneficial. This is important as we were told that some of the young people at HMYOI Wetherby will be eligible for ROTL after completing the programme.
- 8.18 In our evaluation of the St Giles custody Diversion programme, we looked at the evidence base for using those with “lived experience” of the criminal justice system to provide support and interventions to young people. Whilst that evidence does show a positive benefit of engaging those with lived experience, we have been unable to discover any useful studies on the effectiveness of using people with lived experience in the secure estate or Youth Offending Institutions to inform this evaluation.

### **Strategic fit with WYVRU’s objectives**

- 8.19 In the January 2021 Strategic Needs Assessment, prepared by the West Yorkshire Violence Reduction Unit, one of the key findings was that:

*“HMYOI Wetherby is a clear outlier in terms of the rate of violence against both prisoners and staff, clearly demonstrating a need for intervention in custody to reduce violent offending”.*

- 8.20 In July 2021, the West Yorkshire Violence Reduction Unit published a Decision Paper, confirming:

*“After successfully working in partnership with HMYOI Wetherby in the second year of the VRU and using information from the Needs Assessment refresh, we agreed to go out to an EOI from experienced providers to work within this custodial setting. A total of £40,000 was made available, committed until 31st March 2022, to specifically look at addressing violence in a custodial environment and on release”.*

*“This included those whose offence is for serious violence and reduce reoffending on release. There are significant numbers of people in prison due to violent offences, demonstrating a need for intervention and whilst the number of reoffenders and reoffences have continuously dropped from 2008 to 2018 for all young people, the trends suggest that young reoffenders aged between 10 and 17 are continuing to become increasingly prolific”.*

*St Giles Trust were identified as the successful provider. The EOI has been attached as further information to this Decision Paper, with the overview being: “Our intervention will contribute to a reduction in knife-related violence and reoffending after leaving custody. To achieve this, we will recruit a Facilitator/Mentor, with lived experience of the criminal justice system, custody, and youth violence. They will be embedded within HMYOI Wetherby and will work closely with the prison to identify young people most at risk of violence and reoffending.”*

- 8.21 The decision to fund a programme at HMYOI Wetherby that focuses on “a reduction in knife-related violence and reoffending after leaving custody” (as set out in the decision paper and Grant Agreement), seems at odds with the evidence set out in the January 2021 Strategic Needs Assessment that the focus of the intervention should be on reducing violence within the estate itself.
- 8.22 We explored this issue in our discussions with those in the Violence Reduction Unit, and those providing the programme itself. All of those we spoke to agreed that addressing violence in the estate *and* on release were both important.
- 8.23 The lead for St Giles told us that “reducing offending on release starts within the estate – it is a continuum”. The Head of Security and Intelligence at HMYOI Wetherby, told us that “there is a need to reduce violence in the prison, and on release”. He also told us that some of those who had completed the programme would be eligible for Release on Temporary License (ROTL).
- 8.24 Whilst we fully understand and accept these arguments, we would recommend that future decision papers or Grant Agreements be clearer on the rationale underpinning how funding decisions align to the evidence and conclusions set out in the Strategic Needs Assessment.
- 8.25 In the absence of this there is a risk that, as appears to be the case at HMYOI Wetherby, the formal Grant Agreement says the focus of the programme will be on one thing (reduction of violence on release), when much of the expected work is in reality focused on another (reducing violence within the estate).

## **Benefits**

- 8.26 As noted above, there are three discrete elements to the programme: (i) four 15-week programmes delivered to small groups of up to eight participants; (ii) mentoring sessions to 10-15 individuals; and (iii) a training and guidance session for prison staff.
- 8.27 During this evaluation, we were able to identify benefits in respect of two of these elements: the mentoring sessions, and the training and guidance for staff. As we

could not evaluate the 15-week programmes, they are covered in the next section.

- 8.28 One of the key benefits (although this also presented a challenge) was the involvement of having workers from St Giles with lived experience of the criminal justice system to offer support to the young people at HMYOI Wetherby.
- 8.29 We were told that, by mid-January, some of the one-to-one mentoring sessions had begun and that some of the young people had really benefitted from speaking to a person with lived experience.
- 8.30 The case we were told about (from several of those we spoke to) involved a young girl who had connections to gangs in London. It seemed clear that, whilst she was unwilling to engage with the therapists at the YOI, she was open to talking with the St Giles worker, because she felt more comfortable speaking with someone who had experience of gangs and understood what she was going through. This was seen as a clear success of the programme and a validation of the approach taken to bring St Giles workers into the YOI.
- 8.31 Whilst this case clearly seemed to be a success story, we cannot draw conclusions about the overall programme from one case study that was seen as a success. As the one-to-one mentoring sessions had only recently started in mid-January (by mid-March, we were told that 10 young people were receiving the one-to-one mentoring support), there were no other compelling case studies available for us to draw any firm conclusions. Nevertheless, this one individual benefitted from the support available to her.
- 8.32 Another identified benefit was the training and guidance sessions for prison staff. We were told that these sessions were held at the start of the programme and were very well received by the staff that attended. In total, about seven sessions were held, covering topics such as county lines, gang-related incidents, and drill music.

## Challenges

- 8.33 Our key challenge was that we were unable to evidence any benefits in respect of the final element of this project, the four 15-week programmes delivered to small groups of up to eight participants. By mid-January, it was clear that the main element of the programme had not begun due to the Covid-19 outbreaks and the subsequent restrictions placed on HMYOI Wetherby. By mid-March, we were told that 10 young people were participating in the sessions.

- 8.34 Even if the programmes had been able to start in mid-January, there would not have been sufficient time available for them to be completed before the end of the Grant Agreement period (31 March 2022).
- 8.35 As a result, we were unable to evidence any “reduction in knife-related violence and reoffending after leaving custody”. If the programmes had been able to commence sooner, there may be some limited evidence of a reduction in violence or aggression within HMYOI Wetherby before 31 March though not of reoffending after leaving custody, but we cannot provide evidence to inform this evaluation.
- 8.36 It should be highlighted that none of those we spoke to blamed St Giles for the delays in starting the 15-week programmes. It was clear that all parties involved were very keen to begin work but were repeatedly delayed because of Covid-19 outbreaks and restrictions placed on HMYOI Wetherby.
- 8.37 Therefore, whilst the lack of positive outcomes for this work are very disappointing, they are not the fault of St Giles or the design of the programme itself.
- 8.38 A secondary challenge for this project came from the St Giles workers having lived experience of the criminal justice system to offer support to the young people. Whilst this was not a concern for the young people themselves, it was clear that it had caused some tensions with the psychologists working in the YOI.
- 8.39 Almost all those spoken with highlighted that the psychologist team were unhappy with non-accredited workers engaging with the young people in the YOI. They reported that the psychologists’ view was that support should not be provided by any organisation that did not use clinically approved methods, and they were particularly sceptical of bringing in those with “lived experience of the criminal justice system” to the YOI to engage and work with the young people. However, it was clear that the police and YOI staff felt that there was a need for those with lived experience to be available to offer guidance and support, and to share their own experiences of moving away from violence and offending.
- 8.40 The result of this tension was that time was taken up by several parties, including St Giles and the deputy prison governor, to manage these relationships. Ultimately, the decision on what services to allow in the YOI sits with the prison governor, who is supportive of the St Giles project.

### **Effectiveness of the HMYOI Wetherby programme**

- 8.41 Whilst there is some evidence that the programme may be having some positive effect through the mentoring sessions, we are unable to say that the programme

has led to any reduction in violence or aggression within HMYOI Wetherby, or that it has contributed to any “reduction in knife-related violence and reoffending after leaving custody”.

8.42 The training and guidance sessions for prison staff were well-received, but this feature of the programme is unlikely to have contributed to any significant reductions in violence or aggression – either within the YOI or on release from custody. Whilst all of those we spoke to said that the training and guidance was useful, we did not hear that it had led to any changes in the support available to young people.

8.43 If the programme had been able to have been delivered as originally intended, it is, of course, possible that we might have seen reductions in violence and aggression, but Covid-19 and the restrictions placed on the YOI have significantly disrupted the delivery of this work.

### Costs and value-for-money of the HMYOI Wetherby programme

8.44 The amount granted to St Giles for this programme by the West Yorkshire Violence Reduction Unit is £39,617. The costs can be broken into the following categories:

<b>Service management &amp; administration</b>	3,975.20
<b>Intervention Staff</b>	18,368.67
<b>Content &amp; co-design of sessions</b>	7,261.96
<b>Training</b>	1,490
<b>Travel</b>	1,000
<b>Consumables (e.g., stationary)</b>	500
<b>Set up and IT costs (including DBS checks)</b>	1,100

<b>Central costs</b>	5,921.17
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- 8.45 As can be seen, only 46% of the total cost for this programme was for the intervention staff delivering this programme. Whilst we fully accept and expect there to be costs associated with setting up and supporting the programme, we do consider that these indirect costs seem high.
- 8.46 We wished to better understand what the difference was between the “service management and administration” and “central” costs, which total £9,896.37 or almost a quarter of the total cost for this programme. We were informed that “service management and administration” refer to costs in respect of the day-to-day management of the programme, such as safeguarding or risk-assessments. “Central costs” refers to issues such as: mobile phones; office rental and associated utilities.
- 8.47 Whilst we have been assured that there is no “double counting” in the central costs between this programme and the Custody Diversion programme also provided by St Giles, we consider that, should the Violence Reduction Unit fund one external organisation to provide two or more programmes, that the back-office or administrative costs be considered in their totality and not on a project-by-project basis (unless there is a compelling reason). Doing so would remove any questions about the duplication of funding or using funding from one programme to offset costs in another.

## **Value-for-money**

- 8.48 The Grant Agreement sets out that the programme will “contribute to a reduction in knife-related violence and reoffending after leaving custody”, although, as we have discussed above, it was also hoped that the programme would lead to a reduction in violence within HMYOI Wetherby.
- 8.49 The Grant Agreement also sets out that the programme will deliver the following outcomes:
- 8.50 At least 70% of young people who participate in a session will report greater understanding of the factors that can lead to youth violence and knife crime;
- 8.51 At least 60% of young people who receive 1:1 mentoring will have reduced risk of reoffending;

- 8.52 There will be greater information sharing with professionals including prison staff, and applied learning to improve outcomes for other agencies.
- 8.53 By the end of Q3 (January 2022), because of Covid-19 and the restrictions placed on the YOI, there was insufficient data to show that the first two of these outcomes had been achieved. Feedback from the prison staff and police did suggest that the third outcome was achieved.
- 8.54 We have sought to find another comparable evaluation to determine if the programme, had it been able to have been delivered as originally intended, might provide value for money. However, we have been unable to find a comparable project to consider.
- 8.55 As a result, whilst we must conclude that the programme has not provided value-for-money, this is significantly due to the challenges faced by the St Giles team – namely the restrictions placed on HMYOI Wetherby during the Covid-19 pandemic, restricting the ability of the St Giles workers to deliver the programme as intended.

## Conclusion

- 8.56 As we have noted above, whilst there is some evidence that the programme may be having some positive effect through the mentoring sessions, we are unable to say that the programme has led to any reduction in violence or aggression within HMYOI Wetherby, or that it has contributed to any “reduction in knife-related violence and reoffending after leaving custody”.
- 8.57 If the programme had been able to have been delivered as originally intended, it is of course possible that we might have seen reductions in violence and aggression, but Covid-19 and the restrictions placed on the YOI have significantly disrupted the delivery of this work.

## List of recommendations

- 8.58 **Recommendation 1:** if the Violence Reduction Unit chooses to fund this work in future, we recommend that a clearer link be made between the objectives and ambitions of the programme, and the West Yorkshire Strategic Needs Assessment and Strategy documents. This should include, whether the programme is aimed at reducing violence within HMYOI Wetherby or reducing violence after release.
- 8.59 **Recommendation 2:** that sufficient time be given to ensure that the 15-week programme can be delivered, and that outcomes data can be collected.

- 8.60 **Recommendation 3:** that discussions take place as early as possible between the prison staff and psychologist team at HMYOI Wetherby to explain the rationale for using workers with lived experience.
- 8.61 **Recommendation 4:** that consideration be given to ensuring that a greater proportion of the allocated funding be spent on the intervention staff and frontline delivery.
- 8.62 **Recommendation 5:** if the Violence Reduction Unit chooses to fund one external organisation to provide two or more programmes, that the back-office or administrative costs be considered in their totality and not on a project-by-project basis (unless there is a compelling reason). Doing so would remove any questions about the duplication of funding or using funding from one programme to offset costs in another.

## Appendix 6: People interviewed – St Giles programme at HMYOI Wetherby

Name	Organisation	Role
Iain Hadley	St Giles Trust	Yorkshire Manager
Clint Hepworth	Liaison and Diversion Service	Senior Manager
Mark Firth	HMYOI Wetherby	Head of Security and Intelligence
Peter Homer	West Yorkshire Police	Liaison between St Giles and HMYOI

## 9 Lessons to be shared across the projects

- 9.1 Issues were raised in more than one project about the delays caused by the need for vetting the project workers, particularly where (a) the work would be taking place within a secure setting such as a police station or custodial institution or (b) those involved in delivery have lived experience of the criminal justice system. If it is not feasible to curtail the processes involved, the delays which this is likely to add should be factored into the project planning so that staff are not delayed in being able to start work on the project.
- 9.2 The data monitoring requirements were noted as being time-consuming in the IDVA project. It would be worthwhile to see whether these could be streamlined in some way so that they are proportionate and avoid placing any undue burden on the project staff.
- 9.3 Only commissioning interventions that are accredited in this way may provide reassurance for commissioners but may equally stifle innovation and new approaches and exclude small providers for whom the length of time it takes, and the difficulties associated with meeting the Respect standard are prohibitive.
- 9.4 The provision of project management support for those setting up new projects should be considered since this may put a considerable burden on agencies even if they are not directly responsible for running the project (e.g.: the IDVAs project was found to put a considerable burden on the police).
- 9.5 Using data and intelligence to achieve a shared understanding of current local issues, opportunities to implement interventions and evaluate their impact is key to the successful delivery of violence prevention strategies<sup>107</sup>. This applies both at the strategic level but also at the operational level if individual projects are to understand what lessons can be learned from the project and the innovative approaches that they are piloting. This feedback is essential in reviewing progress, adapting the methodology and achieving the collaborative working that underpins successful violence prevention strategies.

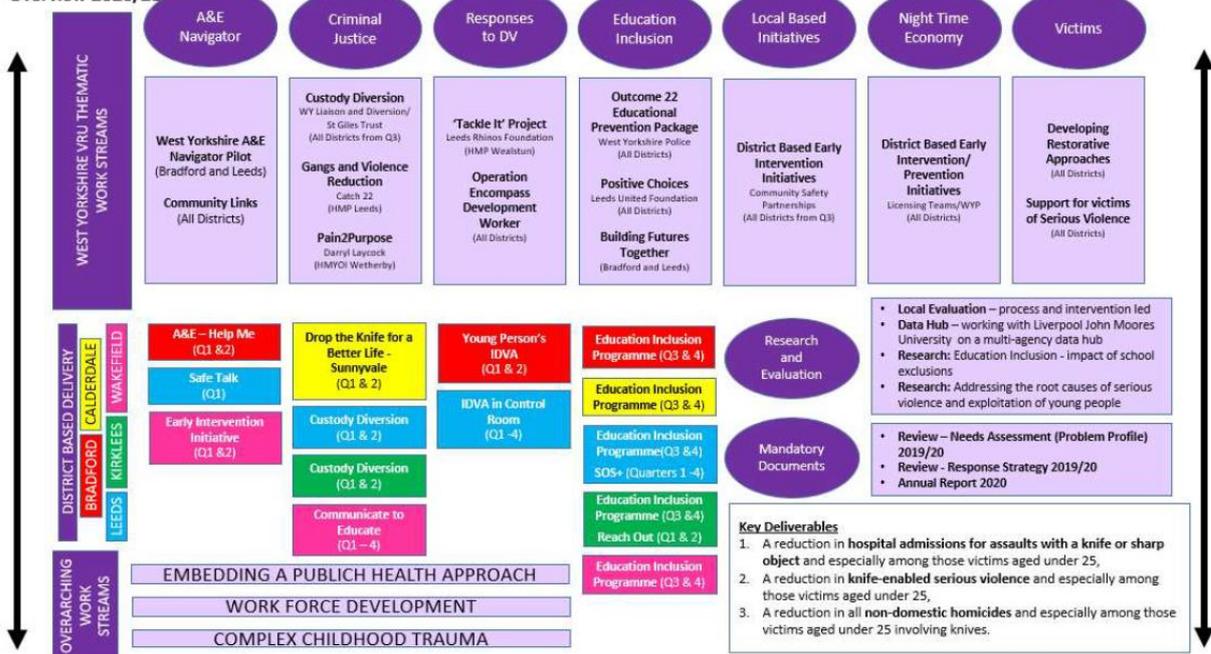
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<sup>107</sup> A whole-system multi-agency approach to serious violence prevention. A resource for local system leaders in England. Public Health England, HM Government. (October 2019), page 22, 34. See [assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/862794/multi-agency\\_approach\\_to\\_serious\\_violence\\_prevention.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/862794/multi-agency_approach_to_serious_violence_prevention.pdf)

# Appendix A, taken from WYVRU Response Strategy Refresh, January 2021, page 29

## Appendix 1 – Commissioned evidence-based 'test beds' and workstreams

Overview 2020/21



### List of abbreviations:

DA	Domestic Abuse
DRAM	Daily Risk Assessment Meeting
DV	Domestic Violence
DVA	Domestic Violence and Abuse
DVPP	Domestic Violence Perpetrator Programme
IDVA	Independent Domestic Violence Advocate/Adviser
LDVS	Leeds Domestic Violence Service
LRF	Leeds Rhinos Foundation
MARAC	Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference
OASys	Offender Assessment System
PCR	Police Control Room
SNA	Strategic Needs Assessment
VAWG	Violence Against Women and Girls
VRU	Violence Reduction Unit
VSW	Victim Support Worker
WYVRU	West Yorkshire Violence Reduction Unit