



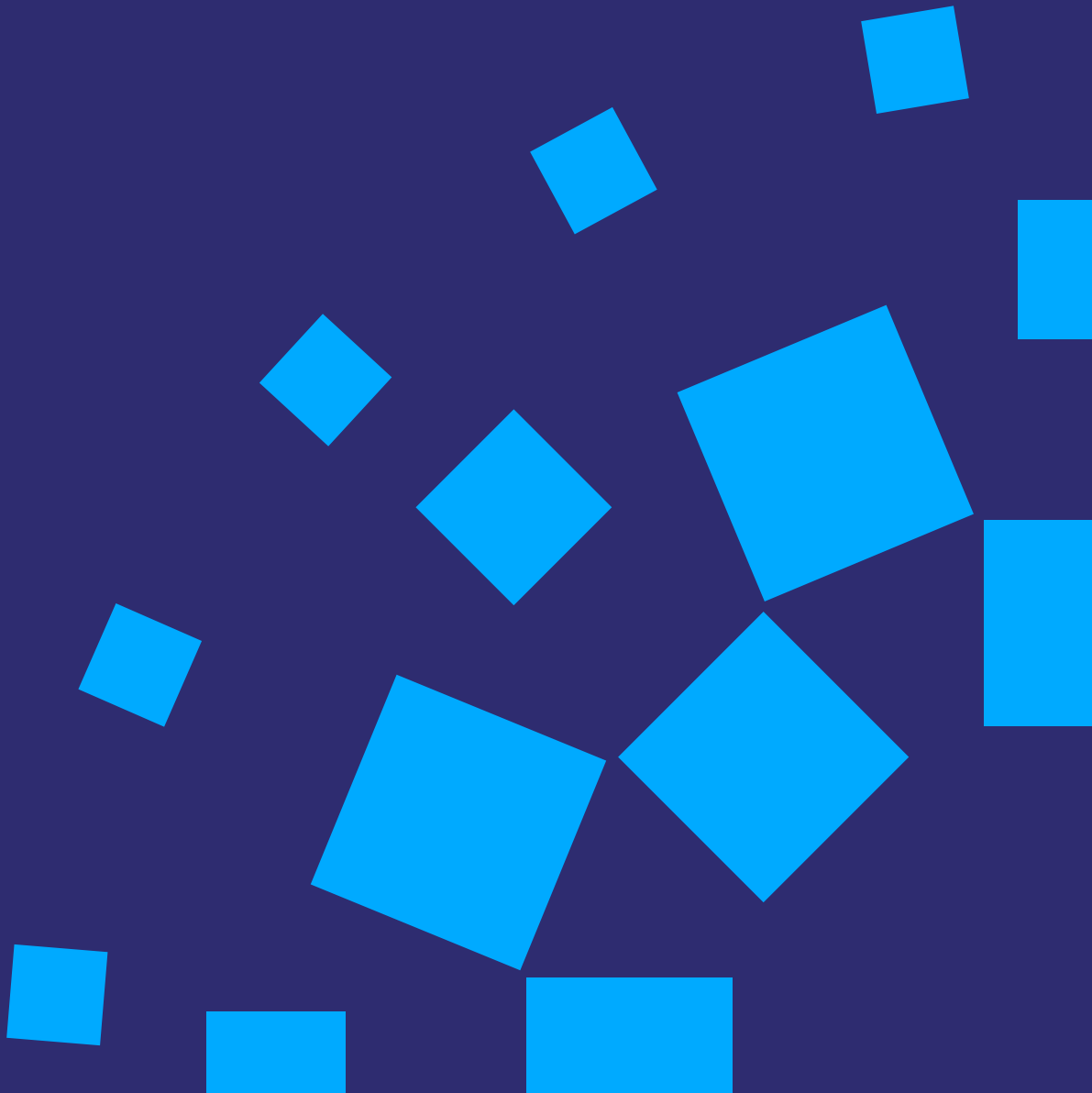
College of  
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**Vulnerability and Violent Crime Programme**

# Community Initiative to Reduce Violence (CIRV)

**Key findings and implications for practice**



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### Vulnerability and Violent Crime Programme (VVCP)

The College of Policing was awarded a grant through the Home Office Police Transformation Fund to develop the evidence base on vulnerability and serious violence. The programme focused on key areas of interest to policing, including knife crime, gangs, county lines, criminal exploitation of young people, and child sexual abuse and exploitation. This is one of nine summaries accompanying ten reports delivered as part of the VVCP.

If you have any questions about the VVCP, please email:

[research@college.pnn.police.uk](mailto:research@college.pnn.police.uk)

## Overview

The Community Initiative to Reduce Violence (CIRV) aims to reduce violent behaviour among suspected or known gang members and those at risk of gang involvement or criminal exploitation, by taking a coordinated and multi-agency approach. Individuals are offered a choice of whether or not to engage with CIRV. Those who choose to engage receive support from a Navigator and from other agencies tailored to their circumstances and needs. For individuals who choose not to engage, CIRV can use disruption and enforcement activities to stop their offending behaviour.

### Does it work?

There are indicative findings from quantitative data to suggest programme participants who engaged with CIRV made positive progress towards resolving the issues they faced. This was demonstrated by improvements in scores from the Young Person's Star and Justice Star tools. Numbers are small and it was not possible to establish a comparison group so it is not possible to exclude the possible impact of other factors. That said, findings from in-depth interviews highlighted that operational and strategic staff, programme participants and their families perceived CIRV to be a success. They felt CIRV had helped reduce offending behaviour and involvement in gangs, changed the direction of individuals' lives who were involved in criminal activity and positively changed their perceptions of the police and support services.

### Background

#### **About this report**

This report summarises the findings of the full independent evaluation of CIRV undertaken by the National Centre for Social Research as part of the College's Vulnerability and Violent Crime Programme (VVCP). This summary describes how CIRV works in practice and outlines key findings from the impact, process and cost analysis aspects of the evaluation. Emerging implications for practice are also discussed.

[Read the full CIRV report](#)

## What is CIRV?

CIRV has been led and delivered by Northamptonshire Police since February 2019 alongside a range of partners and support services. CIRV aims to take a coordinated, multi-agency approach to reduce violent behaviour among suspected or known gang members and those at risk of gang involvement or criminal exploitation.

Potential programme participants come to the attention of the CIRV team through either:

- A referral from a professional (eg, from a local school), member of the community, parent or self-referral.
- The CIRV team drawing on police or partnership intelligence and information, and proactively searching Public Protection Notices for individuals who might be suitable for the programme.

The referrals are discussed at multi-agency triage meetings chaired by CIRV's deputy lead. The primary purpose of the meeting is to consider the referrals made to the programme and agree what level of intervention may be required for each individual.

A central part of CIRV involves police officers giving these potential participants the choice of stopping their engagement in violence and associated crimes. Those who choose to stop receive support from police officers in partnership with others (eg, a career advisor or an ex-gang member as a mentor), and partner agencies. This support depends on the circumstances and needs of the individual. If individuals are unwilling to engage with CIRV, officers can use disruption and enforcement activities to tackle their offending behaviour.

Staff delivering CIRV are encouraged to use their professional judgement and expertise to support participants, guided by three 'golden rules' (does the action feel like the right thing to do; does it progress the participant towards their goal; is the participant contributing in some way too). There is no specified point at which engagement ends but individuals may stop being a participant in the programme when a positive outcome, such as gaining employment, is reached.

## How was the intervention evaluated?

Following the development of a logic model for CIRV ([Figure 1](#)), a mixed-methods design was developed, including three evaluation strands:

- Impact evaluation (whether it works).
- Process evaluation (how it works).
- Cost analysis (how much it costs).

### Impact evaluation

The impact evaluation drew on three sources of quantitative data for the evaluation:

1. Northamptonshire Police's Serious Crime Matrix (SCM), which is used to profile people suspected to be involved in or at risk of becoming involved in gang violence or associated crime.
2. Monitoring information used by the CIRV team to track young people and adults referred to the programme. Monitoring information included referral data, 'de-selection' data, Young Person's Star (for those under the age of 18) and Justice Star (for those aged 18 and above), which assesses individuals on domains including housing, health and mental health, life skills and relationships with others.
3. A bespoke survey completed by a sample of programme participants to collect additional information about the profile of young people and adults engaging in CIRV.

The quantitative data provides descriptive information about the context of running CIRV in Northamptonshire, the process of programme participants being referred to CIRV, the profile of programme participants engaging with CIRV and indicative evidence concerning programme participants' behaviour, attitudes and resilience.

## Process evaluation

The process evaluation included 15 in-depth interviews with CIRV strategic and operational staff and delivery partners. Five interviews were conducted with young people and adults engaged in CIRV ('programme participants') and four with their parents/carers. Interviews focused on participants' views and experiences of CIRV's set-up and delivery, and its perceived impacts and outcomes on the programme participants, their families and local community.

Observations were conducted at a multi-agency triage meeting with the CIRV team and partners where 49 cases were discussed, providing a more detailed understanding of CIRV delivery. A call-in event was designed to inform potential participants about CIRV, the consequences of being involved with gangs and to prompt conversations about CIRV with relevant professionals. A focus group with five call-in session speakers was carried out, exploring their perceptions of the delivery of a call-in event, to raise awareness of CIRV and its potential impacts on young people.

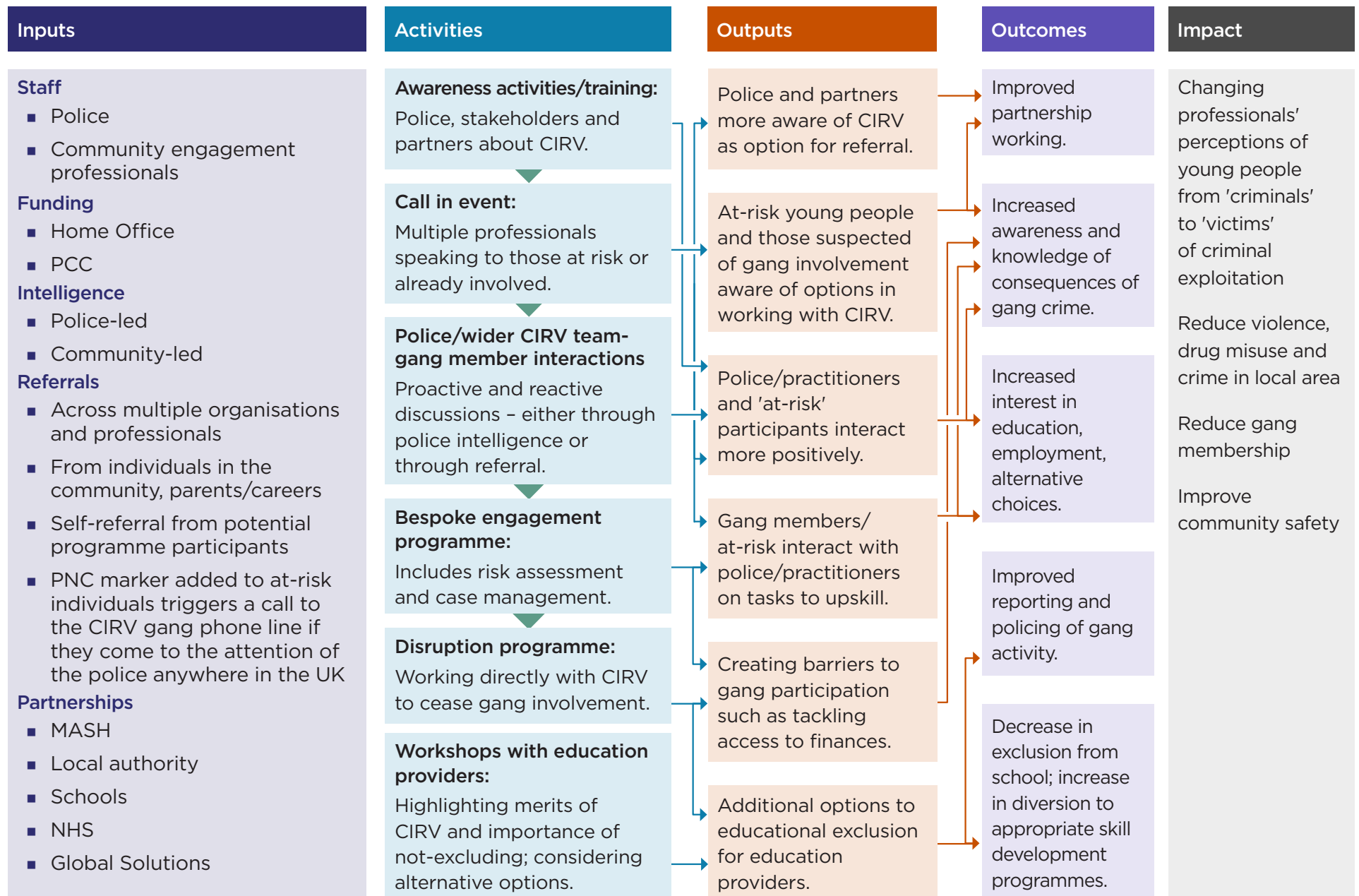
## Cost analysis

For cost analysis, data was collected from the programme leads using a pro-forma. Cost was divided into four categories:

1. 'One-off' implementation costs. Fixed costs associated with the set-up or early roll-out of the programme. For example, training costs for new staff, development of a website, developing outcome indicators or raising awareness about the intervention.
2. Staff time costs. Estimated using the mid-point of staff pay bands, accounting for the proportion of the time they spend each month working on the intervention.
3. Marginal financial costs. Equipment, expert advice, rent, utilities and bills, and any other goods or services purchased on a regular basis.
4. Other variable costs. Printing, events, other services purchased externally, ongoing training and support.

The 'per-participant' cost uses the volume of people recorded as assigned to a Navigator, or receiving alternative support, regardless of whether they engaged or were disrupted. However, the interventions may approach or consider a greater number of individuals. Costs are presented at 2019 prices and have not been adjusted for inflation.

**Figure 1: The CIRV logic model**





## How did the intervention perform?

Evidence is presented using the EMMIE framework, which was developed to help practitioners and decision-makers understand and access the evidence base quickly and easily. The EMMIE framework describes findings across five dimensions:

<b>Effect</b>	Impact on crime or offending	Does the evidence suggest that the intervention led to an increase or decrease in crime or offending, or that it had no impact?
<b>Mechanism</b>	How it works	What aspect(s) of the intervention could explain this effect?
<b>Moderators</b>	Where it works	In what circumstances and contexts is the intervention likely (or unlikely) to work?
<b>Implementation</b>	How to do it	What conditions should be considered when implementing an intervention locally?
<b>Economic cost</b>	How much it costs	What direct or indirect costs are associated with the intervention, and is there evidence of cost benefits?

### Effect: what was the impact of the intervention?

Evidence on the overall impact of the intervention is limited by both the duration of the evaluation period and available data sources. In the absence of longer term data, the best available measures of change were used to give an indication of potential impact. Future follow-ups using longer term data would help us to understand better the overall impact of the intervention.

Quantitative analysis suggests that programme participants engaged with CIRV made positive progress towards resolving the issues they faced. Data from Young Person’s Star outcomes suggests that under 18s engaging with CIRV felt they were making progress towards resolving the issues they faced, whether this was around housing, health or life skills.

For adults, Justice Star scores suggest that CIRV had also helped adults feel they were tackling their issues. However, due to the small number of individuals with both baseline and follow-up scores (n=14), results should be considered with caution.

As numbers are small and it was not possible to establish a comparison group, it is not possible to exclude the possible impact of other factors.

Findings gathered from the interviews and observations highlight the perceived effects that CIRV had on programme participants in the following ways:

1. CIRV staff, programme participants and parents described how CIRV had **helped to increase awareness and knowledge** around the consequences of gang-related activity and associated crimes.
2. CIRV was felt to offer programme participants the chance to **change the direction of their lives**. CIRV supported young people to avoid exclusion from school and divert them from engagement with the criminal justice system. It also increased access to education, training and employment (ETE) and other support services, such as careers advice and housing services.
3. Engagement with CIRV was perceived as having a **positive impact on programme participants' relationships, health and outlook**. Programme participants described how CIRV had helped improve their relationships with others, including with family members and friends.
4. **Changing perceptions of the police and support services among young people/adults**. One view among strategic and support provider staff was that the programme helped participants to see the police as 'real people' who wanted to help them. Strategic staff also felt that this could increase programme participants' willingness to engage with and trust other support services.

The disruption pathway led to arrests being made and increased police intelligence on 'disruption targets', meaning CIRV may have also played a role in improving community safety. Contact between operational staff and young people meant they generated intelligence and information that would not have been known otherwise, including information around safeguarding those not involved with CIRV.

Staff also highlighted how measures of ‘success’ varied according to the individual taking part in the programme. Just meeting their Navigators once a week could be classified as a significant positive outcome for some participants.

Two key impacts on police staff and delivery partners were reported:

1. **An increased awareness of young people’s vulnerabilities and the challenges they face.** One view was that increased awareness was felt to have further shifted staff engagement and language from a punitive to a more supportive approach. This was evidenced through the high volume of referrals from across the force.
2. **A positive impact on their role, including improved job satisfaction, skillset and decision-making skills** because of CIRV’s person-centric delivery model. Operational and strategic staff described how the CIRV team were ‘empowered’ to be creative and use their skills to engage and support programme participants, which differed from other police approaches. In addition, the CIRV team generally felt that they worked well together, which was felt to limit stress and have a positive impact on staff wellbeing.

## Mechanism – how did it work?

Qualitative evidence highlighted four key mechanisms:

1. Young people/adults were given the choice of either engaging in CIRV and receiving support services focused on the underlying causes of their behaviour, or being a ‘disruption target’ for a more punitive approach.
2. Programme participants (generally those who were higher risk and with more complex needs) were allocated to a Navigator who took ‘ownership’ of a case and provided case management and support. Navigators played a central role in communicating with the programme participant, support providers and other agencies working with them, such as schools, to help ensure a consistent and joined-up approach.
3. The regular ongoing contact, open discussion and trust developed between the CIRV team, partner agencies and programme

participants was felt to support positive change (young people and adults moving away from gang-related crime and engaging with CIRV).

4. The adaptable nature of CIRV meant that programme participants' attitudinal and behavioural needs could be addressed quickly and effectively, alongside other potential areas of support, such as accommodation and education, training and employment (ETE).

## Moderator – where did it work best?

The quantitative analysis does not provide evidence of moderator effects. Programme participants' outcomes varied with age. Adults were more likely to have issues with their accommodation than under 18s, for example. Adults had a statistically significant improvement in their accommodation circumstances after engaging with CIRV.

## Implementation – how to do it

Staff, programme participants and parents identified specific factors that they felt underpinned CIRV's success, both for individual programme participants and for the programme itself. Successful participants reportedly displayed a willingness and motivation to change, and a clear commitment to CIRV. Programme participants and parents saw the success of CIRV as a two-way process, with programme participants and Navigators working together to bring about change.

The evaluation identified a number of areas where specific implementation features were felt to be key to the delivery of CIRV. These areas are explained below.

### **CIRV's values were considered important to the consistency of the approach, in particular:**

- **The adoption of a proactive, problem-solving and holistic approach to address the underlying causes of engaged programme participants' behaviour** rather than adopting a more punitive approach.
- **Trusting professional judgement and a responsive approach.** Decision-making was guided by the 'golden rules' and a bespoke

engagement pathway for each programme participant. This approach reportedly empowered staff to address problems in the way they felt was most appropriate, tailoring the programme's resources used for each case.

The **disruption pathway was felt to act as a deterrent for individuals who would not engage with the CIRV team**. The prospect of regular police presence was felt to help people reassess whether they wanted to engage with the programme.

#### **Day-to-day ways of working that underpinned the CIRV approach:**

- **Providing a 'safety net' around the individual.** CIRV works as a 'package of support' with Navigators taking ownership of individual cases and facilitating access to other agencies. It was felt this holistic approach may have provided participants with a different experience to their prior contact with agencies, which may have lacked this joined-up approach.
- **Ongoing engagement, open discussion and trust developed** between the CIRV team, partner agencies and programme participants.
- **The speed with which CIRV engaged with programme participants after referral.** Navigators had helped programme participants access services quickly, for example around accommodation and support. The speed with which engagement and support was provided was felt to be different to typical experiences with other agencies.

#### **Features of CIRV's leadership and infrastructure that were felt to be important in delivery:**

- **Composition of the team.** The CIRV team comprised both police and non-police staff, including mentors/ex-gang members who may have had similar experiences to programme participants, enabling them to tailor their response to different needs.
- **The need for strong oversight and a committed team.** The operational team (navigators and officers) felt supported by their supervisors. The value of having different staff strengths across the CIRV team, alongside a shared understanding and belief in the

programme's aims and ethos, was felt to facilitate close working relationships.

- **Having a supportive infrastructure and systems in place.** The CIRV team used a non-police building at no cost, which was easily accessible to non-police partners and programme participants. They also used a centralised IT system, which allowed all the information about a case to be easily accessible across the CIRV team and provided an audit trail of actions.

### **Involvement of partners was felt to be important to the success of CIRV:**

- **Stakeholder engagement.** The programme relies on close working with a broad range of partners who have a shared understanding of its aims to deliver a 'person-centric' approach and coordinated response. Maintaining positive working relationships with partners, and looking for additional agencies who offered a wider range of support and opportunities, was felt to be important to the success of the intervention.
- **Raising awareness about CIRV and working with other groups.** Increased awareness about CIRV in general and with specific groups, such as parents of participants, was felt to be important. Increasing awareness was felt to help stakeholders and participants understand the programme's supportive and non-judgemental approach and facilitate their engagement.

### **Challenges of CIRV**

Staff reported a number of challenges that they faced with CIRV. Some of these challenges related to the initial engagement of individuals on the programme, but challenges also emerged once individuals were engaged with CIRV. These challenges included:

- **Potential participants' negative perceptions or previous engagement with the police** could be a barrier for initial and ongoing engagement.
- **Perceived negative financial repercussions** of moving from gang-related offending and associated crime to legitimate employment.

- **Individual circumstances** could present a challenge to both initial engagement, where an individual may have difficult personal circumstances or may not be used to having a consistent authority figure in their life, and to ongoing engagement: individuals may not necessarily disengage out of choice, they may become homeless or the behavioural change required may be too extensive.
- **Lack of negative consequences** for some people if they did not engage.
- **Limited access to the full range of support.** Accessing the full range of support services could be challenging, especially where funding or specific qualifications for participants were required.
- **The impact parents/carers may have on programme participants' engagement.** Staff and parent participants highlighted the importance of extending the offer of support to programme participants' parents.
- **Reviewing and improving communication across the CIRV team could help the programme.** Conveying information about changes to the programme could be hard to communicate in emails, and team-wide meetings were difficult to convene. The CIRV team have developed a user manual that is intended to give an up-to-date overview of the programme. However, the team felt that setting up in-house learning sessions would provide them with the opportunity to reflect on delivery so far, and generate 'lessons learnt'.

Regarding the **replicability** of CIRV, other police forces are currently considering setting up the programme. For CIRV to be successfully set up and delivered in any area, strategic staff felt it needed to be transferred as a 'complete package'. Strategic staff described how the CIRV model had been successfully adapted for delivery given the area's local context and type of gang activity. However, the balance between retaining the programme's core model and principles alongside adapting its delivery for the local context is a key consideration for any further roll-out.

## Economic cost – how much is it?

To assess the sustainability of the programme, cost data was collected from the intervention team. The full cost breakdown, by category, is presented in the table below. Costs are presented as a three-year average to account for the costs associated with set-up and initial roll-out, which tend to be higher than typical running costs for established interventions.

Cost type	Average cost per year (over three years)
'One-off' implementation costs	£5,000
Staff time costs	£640,000
Marginal financial costs	£60,000
Any other variable costs	£15,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>£720,000</b>

**Source: CIRV financial pro-forma return**

Based on the number of individuals assigned a Navigator or otherwise supported through the intervention (n=605), the estimated 'per-participant' cost is £1,190.

Almost all costs associated with running CIRV were staff costs. This included 16 strategic and operational staff within the police force: the intervention lead and deputy lead, a sergeant, four Disruption Officers, seven Navigators and two administrators. Most of these staff worked full-time. In addition to operational staff, the programme also funded external support staff. The support staff included two careers advisors, one employment support worker, two peer mentors/ex-gang members, three Adverse Childhood Experience (ACE) Support Workers and two life coaches. Any other variable costs included ongoing costs such as materials, purchase cards, printing and running the call-in event.

CIRV relies heavily on partner organisations providing services to help the cohort it engages with at no cost. For example, the CIRV team is based in facilities provided to them at no cost by a local company, Goodwill Solutions. Some single-agency support was, however, funded directly by CIRV.



## Conclusion

CIRV targets young people and adults at risk or involved in gangs and associated crime. For those who choose to engage, CIRV supports the individuals to help improve their circumstances, support their needs and reduce their involvement in criminal activity. CIRV can also use enforcement to disrupt individuals who are unwilling to engage with available support services.

All of those interviewed were generally positive about the impacts that CIRV had on programme participants. Reported impacts included:

1. Reduced violence and gang membership.
2. Helping programme participants to change the direction of their lives for the better.
3. Improved relationships, health and outlook.
4. Changing participants' perceptions of the police and support services.

Qualitative findings were supported by quantitative evidence of change observed through the Young Person's Star and Justice Star data indicators.

A key challenge for CIRV is its sustainability. The tailored 'person-centric' approach makes resource planning challenging as the level of support required for each participant depends on their individual circumstances and needs. CIRV is also heavily reliant on the services delivered by partner organisations. The wide range of organisations affiliated with CIRV ensures that Navigators can provide individuals with support tailored to individual's needs. However, accessing this full package of support may be challenging if it requires additional funding.

The adaptability of CIRV may help it overcome the differences of implementation in different local contexts. Further research is needed to provide stronger evidence about the causal impact of CIRV, particularly against its longer-term objectives of reducing involvement in gang violence and associated crime.

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