Home Office

A Practitioner Toolkit

Working with young people to prevent involvement in Serious and Organised Crime

Foreword

The Serious Organised Crime (SOC) Prevent team are responsible for developing policy aimed at stopping the SOC problem at source, by helping local and national partners identify, engage with and divert at-risk individuals from involvement in SOC.

Prevent is one strand of the government's response to SOC as outlined in the 2013 and 2018 SOC strategies.

This is not the same as situational crime prevention nor is it aimed at making victims more aware of their risks or criminal activity in general.

Through evaluation of funded interventions and research and consultation with stakeholders, evidence suggests that interventions can enable a pro-social path for individuals, contribute to a reduction in offending rates and have a positive impact on communities suffering from an insurgence of SOC. One study[1] estimated that the cost to statutory agencies of managing a family involved in SOC over a nine-year period was somewhere between £4 million and £6 million and involved 29 agencies. So, there is also an economic as well as social benefit to preventative interventions.

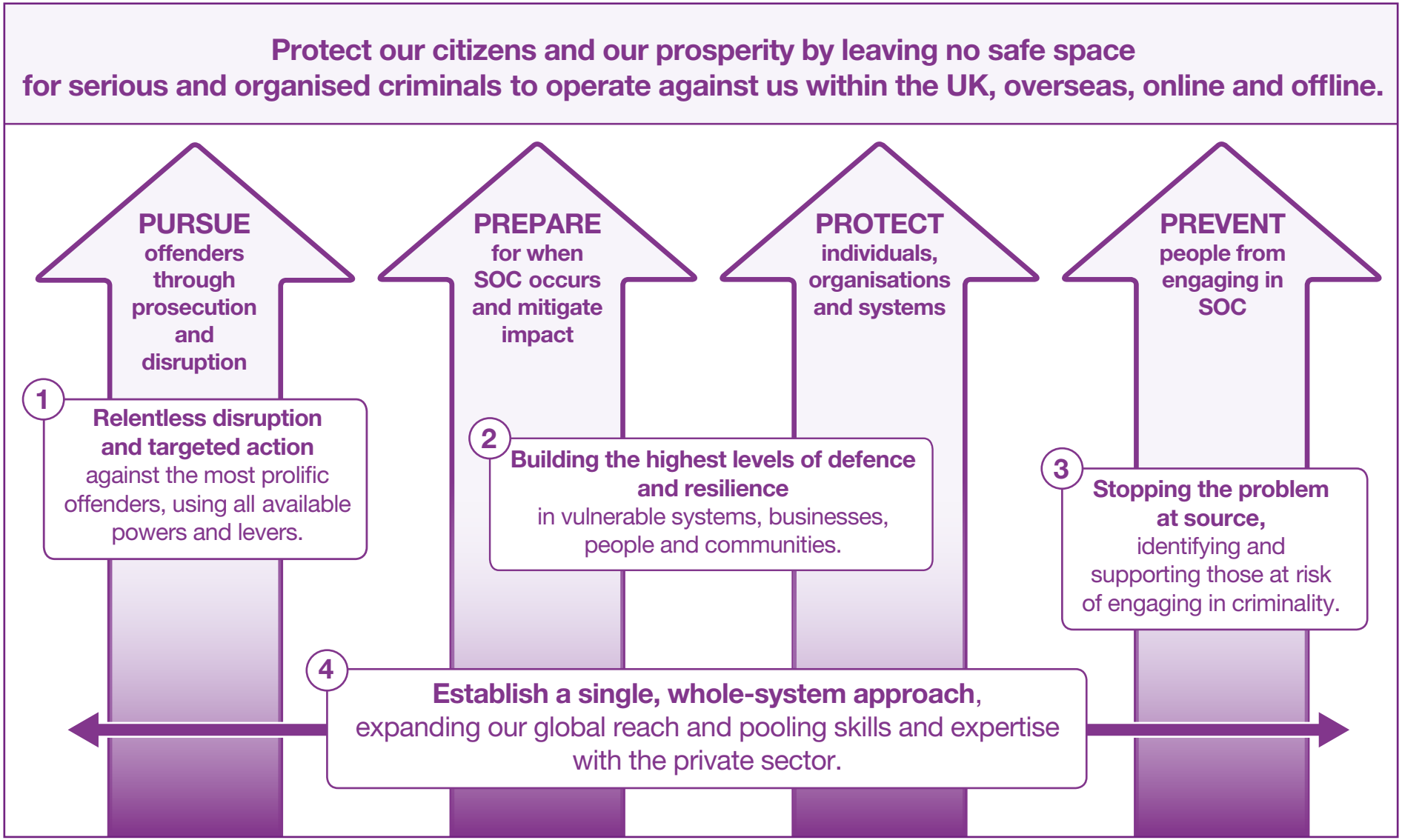
In 2015, we published our first Prevent guide[2] to support local partners in understanding pathways into SOC and develop locally tailored interventions. We have since enriched our knowledge and made progress with our commitments in the 2013 SOC strategy and so this toolkit builds on that guide.

However, this is an iterative process and we encourage practitioners to develop best practice and share knowledge on what has worked well for them.

[1] J. Pitts, T. Hope, M. Hurley and I. Mcgibbon (2017) Preventing Organised Crime

[2] **https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/individuals-at-risk-of-being-drawn-into-serious-and-organised-crime-a-prevent-guide**

Figure 1: Serious Organised Crime (SOC) Strategy framework



Introduction

What is Serious and Organised Crime (SOC)?

We define SOC as individuals planning, co-ordinating and committing serious offences, whether individually, in groups or as part of transnational networks.[3]

We make a distinction between Organised Crime Groups (OCG) and Urban Street Gangs. The differences are primarily about the level of criminality, organisation, planning and control. But there are connections between gangs and organised crime: urban gang members may engage in street drug dealing on behalf of organised criminals and some gangs aspire to and may become organised crime groups. Areas of high gang activity in the UK tend to be areas where organised criminals are most active.[4]

The main categories of offences covered by the SOC term are:[5]

- child sexual abuse and exploitation
- cyber crime
- drugs
- firearms
- fraud and other economic crime
- international bribery, corruption, sanctions contravention
- modern slavery and human trafficking
- money laundering
- organised immigration crime
- organised acquisitive crime

[3] HM Government (2018) Serious and Organised Crime Strategy
[4] HM Government (2013) Serious and Organised Crime Strategy
[5] National Crime Agency (2019) National Strategic Assessment

What is this toolkit and who is it for?

This toolkit is aimed at practitioners who want to facilitate delivery of an intervention to young people who are involved in or at risk of involvement in SOC. Most of the evidence and guidance here relates to those involved in the **supply of illegal drugs and firearms**.

The toolkit includes:

- guidance on what to consider when planning, implementing and evaluating an intervention
- types of interventions that can be used and associated outcomes that can be achieved
- relevant Home Office initiatives or publications
- an insight into elements of multi-agency partnership working that can enable effective Prevent activities

Our work involves three types of interventions. They are:

Primary interventions	Secondary interventions	Tertiary interventions
Aimed at young people who aren't necessarily involved in SOC offending but assessed as vulnerable. Interventions are intended to discourage young people from committing serious offences e.g mass participation interventions and awareness-raising sessions in school.	Aimed towards at-risk young people with emerging indicators of being drawn into SOC.	Aimed at the hardest to reach and most challenging young people. Interventions are intended to facilitate desistance from SOC.

This toolkit is focused largely on **secondary** and **tertiary** interventions. It breaks up the intervention journey into **six** key stages. But we appreciate it may not always be a linear approach. Practitioners may wish to dip in and out of specific sections depending on the guidance they require.

Thinking about evaluation from the start

What is an evaluation?

An evaluation examines how an intervention was designed and carried out and what the results were. It comes in two ‘flavours’ – process and evaluation.

Why is evaluation important?

Money is regularly invested in policies and interventions. But to know if the money has been spent on the right projects, or if themoney invested was proportionate to the issue it resolved, evaluation is important. Ideally most projects ring fence at least 10% of their budget (financially speaking this can be cash or time of staff invested) to ensure an adequate and thorough evaluation is carried out.

Defining and collecting success measures early on (baselining and benchmarking)

Having poorly-considered or badly-defined success measures prior to implementation and not collecting baseline data are two of the commonly reported mistakes made in evaluation. **To capture the impact of your intervention, you need to have established a benchmark from the outset** (i.e. the base level for the key success measure prior to implementing an intervention). So it is important to be thinking about evaluation when you are planning your intervention. More information on evaluations can be found in the **Evaluation section**.

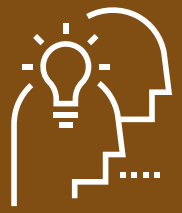
1

Understanding the SOC threat in your area

2

Identifying target cohort

3



Engagement strategies

4

Interventions

5

Exit strategies

6

Evaluating your intervention

Data collection

1. Understanding the SOC threat in your area

Understanding the SOC threat in your area

To ensure that you target the right people and provide an effective intervention that addresses their risks and vulnerabilities, it's important to understand the SOC threat in the area. The following information sources may help:

SOC Local Profile

This is a report that outlines the threat from SOC within a specific local area. The contributors may differ, but the local police force and crime commissioner will have ultimate responsibility for the document.

The Home Office recommends that such a document is classified at 'Official' so interested partner agencies, including third sector organisations, can access the information. For more information on what a local profile document should look like, please take a look at our **guidance**.[6] To access a copy, either contact your local police force or local PCC (police and crime commissioner) who you can search for **here**.[7]

Local SOC partnership boards and Community Safety Partnerships

Your local SOC partnership board will also have insight into the local SOC threat. Introduced following the SOC Strategy 2013, SOC partnership boards are multi-agency forums which aim to understand the current and emerging threats to communities from SOC and to drive localised activity to tackle issues identified. If you don't have a direct link into this, it would be worth speaking to your Community Safety Partnership (CSP) or any local safeguarding boards.

Organised Crime Group Mapping (OCGM)

Your local police force may be able to share information from the OCGM. The tool is a way to identify, assess and manage organised crime. An OCGM management report carries the protective marking equivalent to the government security classification marking 'Official Sensitive'. Police staff should take responsibility to filter sensitive information around intelligence and operational activity before sharing management reports with partner agencies.

Multi-agency safeguarding hubs (MASH)

A MASH is a single point of contact for all professionals to report safeguarding concerns. As such it is a good source of insight into safeguarding concerns which could indicate a SOC threat in the area.

Locality reviews

Your area may have participated in a one-day locality review through the Association of Town and City Management and Home Office Violence and Vulnerability Unit. This includes a rapid assessment of gang activity in the area which can help understand the SOC threat. We know that areas of high gang activity in the UK tend to be areas where organised criminals are most active.

Third sector organisations

Third sector organisations often have a wealth of knowledge on the SOC threat in the community. For example, statutory guidance states all children who go missing should get an independent Return Home Interview within 72 hours. The information gathered should be shared with relevant agencies, including law enforcement. Catch 22 is an example of a third sector organisation who conducts these interviews and information collected by them has contributed to Prevent and law enforcement activities in relation to Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE).

[6] Home Office (2014) Serious and Organised Crime Local Profiles: A Guide **https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/serious-and-organised-crime-local-profiles**

[7] HM Government (2013) Serious and Organised Crime Strategy

2. Identifying target cohort

Identifying target cohort

Who are you trying to help?

For secondary and tertiary interventions, you will be working with young people at risk of being drawn into or already involved in SOC.

To identify whether you are putting your resources into the right place, you may want to consider if there is evidence to show a clear link to an OCG. (As mentioned earlier, this information may be available through your local police force and information they have from OCGM.)

There is no single pathway into SOC but there are several risk factors that can increase a person's chance of being involved. We tend to categorise risk factors into four broad areas:[8]

- **criminality**: individuals displaying certain offending patterns may progress into SOC
- **ability**: those in specific professions, or with certain skillsets may be targeted for recruitment by SOC gangs
- **networks**: individuals with access to criminal networks through family, intimate relationships, peer groups, friends and employment may be at risk of involvement in SOC
- **identity**: upbringing, lifestyle, motivation and attitude can impact involvement in SOC

For more information on this, see pages 6 to 13 of our **2015 guide**.

In 2016, the Home Office funded Project Engage which, led by Greater Manchester Police, sought to effectively identify individuals at risk of involvement in SOC. The programme identified several common factors among participants. They include:[9]

- involvement in antisocial behaviour
- drug and alcohol misuse
- mental health problems
- living in a neighbourhood known to have SOC activity
- not in education, employment or training (NEET)
- if in education – low attainment, have numerous exclusions, not in mainstream education
- violent behaviour
- impulsiveness
- risk-taking behaviour
- parental hostility towards authority figures
- lack of engagement with professionals

[8] Home Office (2015) Individuals at risk of being drawn into Serious and Organised Crime

[9] Specialist Crime Solutions (2017) How to identify and work with individuals vulnerable to involvement in Serious and Organised Crime, and J. Pitts, T. Hope, M. Hurley and I. Mcgibbon (2017) Preventing Organised Crime

Urban Street Gangs (USGs)

OCGs have traditionally been the wholesalers of drugs and USGs the street retailers. However, USGs are now becoming increasingly involved in the wholesale of drugs.[10] For example, in Merseyside, young people are forming gangs and are frequently becoming involved in crime that is focused on a business-based model driven by profits. Therefore, it is important to consider that young people involved in USGs may have stronger links to SOC than previously thought.

Women that may be at risk of SOC offending or involved in SOC offending

Although fewer women are known to be SOC offenders and there is no single pathway identified, their relationships with men are perceived as being at the heart of their association with SOC.[11] OCGs are increasingly using women and including their female partners or looser associations to conduct or facilitate criminal activity.

As with many young individuals and women being drawn into SOC offending, there is a significant overlap between victim and offender which can vary depending on the crime type. For example, women are known to be groomed and forced into relationships with gang members as part of county lines offending.

Although there are many ways women get drawn into SOC, where they are involved they tend to be in supportive or passive roles such as:

- allowing their premises to be used as ‘safe houses’ to store illicit commodities and firearms as well as a place of respite
- driving offenders to facilitate criminal activities
- permitting vehicles and bank accounts to be used by OCG subjects to mask their criminality
- providing false and misleading alibis to disguise their partner’s criminality
- cuckooing (drug dealers take over their home to use it as a base for drug dealing)
- playing a matriarchal role, offering cooked meals, which becomes a draw for young vulnerable individuals from chaotic homes

There are several other considerations that may suggest someone is at risk of being drawn into SOC. They are described in the following paragraphs.

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)

ACEs are negative experiences and events occurring in childhood including:

- physical, sexual or emotional abuse
- physical or emotional neglect
- witnessing violence involving family members
- substance misuse in the household
- household mental illness
- incarcerated household member
- parental death
- interparental conflict

Multiple studies internationally (including in the UK) have confirmed a strong and graded association between the number of ACEs and the risk of poor health and other outcomes such as criminal behaviour and violent behaviour.

[10] J. Pitts, T. Hope, M. Hurley and I. Mcgibbon (2017) Preventing Organised Crime

[11] Firefish UK (2015) Understanding the pathways into Serious and Organised Crime for Women in Bedfordshire

Children and young people's ability to rebound from ACEs is related to several characteristics and protective factors such as their age, family environment, social networks and the wider community.

There is strong evidence that four or more ACE categories during childhood is highly predictive of substance misuse, intimate partner violence, chronic and life-threatening diseases (e.g. cancer and diabetes) and a substantially increased risk of self-harm and suicide.

In parts of England and Wales, this is shaping practitioners' work. For example, in Ceredigion in Wales, an ACEs questionnaire is being used to collect data across all referrals to the Ceredigion Youth Service.

While awareness of ACEs is important, they should only form part of a framework for identification of need and intervention, given the complexities around protective factors and individual circumstances. For example, we do not yet know if ACEs occurring in early childhood have a greater impact than those occurring at later points. Evidence shows that ACEs occur in clusters, but we do not know whether different combinations are predictive of different outcomes or the relative impact of specific ACEs.

Complex safeguarding

Complex safeguarding is used to describe criminal activity (often organised) or behaviour associated to criminality, involving often vulnerable children where there is exploitation and/or a clear or implied safeguarding concern. Greater Manchester use a complex safeguarding model.

Any child who is the victim of being groomed into serious crime or offending behaviour will have a complex team social worker allocated alongside the locality social worker.

Any family where it is believed adults or parents have links to, or are part of, SOC and there are safeguarding concerns for children as a result will have a complex safeguarding team social worker allocated as the key social worker who will fulfil the statutory safeguarding role.

While the complex safeguarding approach may not be applied in your area, it is useful to consider if parents or family members have links to SOC. For example, it may be that the conviction of an older sibling or family member for SOC-related offences would indicate that a young person is at risk of involvement in SOC too.

Osman warnings and reverse Osman warnings

A young person may have received an Osman or reverse Osman warning from the police. An Osman warning is a threat to life notice issued to a person by the police. A reverse Osman warning is when the police notify someone that they are aware of their intentions against another. It may be that these warnings have been issued to an individual or family member which could indicate someone is at risk or involved in SOC.

Contextual safeguarding

Contextual safeguarding is an approach to understanding, and responding to, young people's experiences of significant harm beyond their families. It recognises that different relationships that young people form in their neighbourhoods, schools and online can feature violence and abuse.[12] The contextual safeguarding network provides further information on this topic.

The theory behind contextual safeguarding is useful as it can help you understand the influence that peer networks can have on the behaviour and decision making of a young person. Having an awareness of a vulnerable young person's wider environment may also help you assess the risk of them progressing to involvement in SOC offending and so help you tailor the support you provide to them.

[12] **https://www.contextualsafeguarding.org.uk/about/what-is-contextual-safeguarding**

Case study

A mentor working with T approached the topics of how his social life affected his decision-making process. T explained that he has two friendship groups. One group consists of school friends, the other consists of peers from another part of the city that he spends time in. T said that he is a completely different person depending on what group he is with and admitted he doesn't know who the real him is. He disclosed that a lot of the people in his non-school friendship group are involved in illegal activity which funds their lifestyle, and this is appealing to him. The mentor is considering how to work with T to stay away from that group and engage him in some more positive activity.

Note: Our work continues in respect of identification criteria and we are starting to develop more understanding about the gateway offences, personality traits, skills and competencies that SOC offenders possess and display. As a practitioner, you have the knowledge and so we encourage you to share what you know with us in a bid to help shape our approach.

How to identify the people you are trying to help: multi-agency mapping and information sharing

A holistic understanding of risk and vulnerability is key to identifying people for an intervention. So, multi-agency information sharing is vital. This comes with its challenges given the number of operating models, data information concerns and lack of resources.

A mutually agreed information sharing agreement could provide the framework and security needed to ensure timely and effective information exchange between agencies. Some agencies may be reluctant to share information, especially since the introduction of the GDPR. But we encourage you to consider how to overcome these concerns in a bid to improve information sharing.

Examples of multi-agency information sharing approaches being utilised to improve capabilities include:

- the Shield team in Knowsley: a multi-agency co-location hub to identify and support victims of child sexual exploitation
- the Together team in Sedgemoor: a local authority led co-ordinating hub that comes together to share information in relation to several issues including SOC
- the Get Connected Programme in Northumbria, bringing agencies and organisations together to tackle local issues

Conducting a mapping exercise

The Home Office-funded Project Engage trialled and recommended a mapping approach which involved pooling information from different agencies on a cohort of young people who had been referred into the pilot. They conducted a 'deep dive' to build up a detailed chronology of the individuals' previous life events (such as trauma), engagement with the criminal justice system and statutory agency intervention.

This prompted practitioners to consider in the round how these milestones may have shaped their life trajectory and, more specifically their vulnerability to involvement in SOC. Home Office-funded projects in 2017-18 also used elements of this approach to select participants for their respective interventions.

Mapping in this way can be a time-consuming method and we recognise that busy agencies may not always be able to commit resource to a concerted deep dive process. But it is worth taking time to cross-reference information with partner agencies (where information-sharing protocol allows) as this will prove beneficial when selecting people and developing bespoke interventions.

Most forces now have SOC partnership boards and while they may be at different phases of maturity, they should include representatives from different statutory and law enforcement agencies who discuss risk factors around specific individuals. This is a good place to start when thinking about forums where a deep dive mapping activity meeting may take place.

Even if this isn't the appropriate meeting to identify potential cohorts (perhaps they are more strategic in nature), they will give you an idea of who you should have in the room when going through this process.

We have listed them below:

- representatives from the local authority
- children's services
- social services
- families teams
- community safety teams
- housing teams
- representatives from existing multi-agency teams, for example CSE/CCE exploitation teams
- education services
- health services
- police and law enforcement agencies
- probation and youth offending services
- voluntary and charity groups

It may be that someone you identify is already the focus of a board or hub such as a MASH or Channel panel. If so, it is likely that this would be established through this mapping process. However, if you don't use this method, we would encourage you to identify if a young person is being supported through a MASH or Channel panel, and engage with the relevant agencies to ensure that everyone is aware of the SOC concerns and intervention work you intend to do with that young person.

The case study below illustrates how the information held the by separate partner agencies, when pooled together, can provide a true picture of the risks and vulnerabilities associated with a young person and can suggest a risk of or involvement in SOC offending. As such, it can help identify the right people to offer an intervention to.

Case study

J is 17. He was raised by his mother and his four older siblings, with his older sister taking a lot of responsibility for him. J's father is a Class A substance user and offender who has had no input in his upbringing. There has been a long history of children's service involvement to J and his siblings since they were infants, due to concerns of parental neglect, lack of boundaries and supervision, and sexualised behaviours and abuse. Information recorded on children's services files suggests the children were often left alone and the home conditions were poor.

J was removed from primary school and placed in a Pupil Referral Unit due to his violent behaviour, physical abuse to staff, defiance and vandalism. J returned to mainstream school but was permanently excluded for dangerous behaviour a month later. Following this, J's education was virtually non-existent, moving from several Pupil Referral Units then dropping out in 2016.

J began engaging in low-level anti-social behaviour resulting in him being the subject of acceptable behaviour contracts in 2011 and 2013. His behaviour became increasingly concerning from early 2012 when he was just 10 years old. During this time, his mother was suffering with depression and struggled to assert any control over him. He first became known to the Youth Offending Service when he was 10 years old for several offences with varying degrees of severity. There was information to suggest that he was found drinking with older males and on other occasions he had been engaging in activity of cruelty towards animals.

J received a conviction in June 2016 for assaulting a constable. In 2016, significant serious concerns arose regarding J's drug affiliations and gang-related activity. He was frequently not returning home and was not reported missing by his family.

Initially J was linked to the supplying of legal highs in the town centre on behalf of an older male. This increased during summer 2016 when he disclosed that he was supplying Class A drugs for the Birmingham gangs. During this time, J received death threats due to his involvement and it was noted that he was the intended victim of a nasty attack.

J was escalated to a Child Protection Plan as at risk of Physical Harm in June 2016. Despite this, he remained in the community and residing with his family near where the attack took place. There were continued concerns regarding J's involvement in drug activity.

In April 2019, J was arrested for drug offences. J had been drug running for a Manchester-based OCG. He remained within the family home as he did not meet the threshold for secure accommodation. Social care made the decision that J could return home with a safety plan in place. This safety plan is being frequently breached and there are concerns that J was involved in a stabbing that occurred recently. There are further concerns regarding his involvement in drug dealing with OCGs in Liverpool.

Through conducting this mapping exercise, he has been identified as someone who is involved in SOC and would benefit from an intervention.he next step is to consider how to engage with him and his family and what local intervention providers there are that can offer the support he needs.

Data analytics

Some partners are trialling tools to help identify people for various interventions and so it is worth exploring if something similar is happening across agency or law enforcement partners in your area.

In Ceredigion, the CYSTEM screening tool is being used by partners to assess risk of offending and vulnerability. Initially used to screen out very low-risk individuals, it has since been used as a pre-screen process (before ASSET+) across the Dyfed-Powys force area. It looks at risks in respect of vulnerability as well as criminality. Following the identification of medium-high risk on CYSTEM, practitioners then review the risk factors identified through Project Engage, leading them to identify a cohort of people for interventions.

Durham Constabulary is working with Cambridge University and have developed an innovative forecasting model as part of their Checkpoint programme. Checkpoint is an intervention currently being tested in the Constabulary and is an 'out of court disposal' aimed at reducing future offending. This tool forecasts a person's risk of reoffending over the next two years and has been developed to aid decision-making by custody officers when assessing the risk of future offending. It enables those forecast as moderate risk to be eligible for the programme.

3. Development and delivery of engagement strategies

Development and delivery of engagement strategies

Experience has taught us that those at risk of SOC criminal careers can be some of the most challenging young people to engage with. As such, robust engagement strategies are required from first contact and throughout an intervention, to maximise the likelihood of engagement.

It may take time for someone to see the personal benefits of a programme, especially if they have an emotional connection to people in an OCG, are earning a lot of money from their activity or fear for their safety if they break away. As noted, women are often associated with OCGs through family or intimate relationships, and so breaking these links will have many emotional as well as practical challenges too.

Key to achieving this is **persistence** on the part of practitioners (particularly in the lead-up to an intervention starting) to create a trusted relationship with participants. Practitioners tell us that this is crucial for ensuring positive and lasting behavioural change once regular support comes to an end.

It's very likely that the people who you will have identified will have chaotic lives with limited (if any) regular structure. As such, basic tasks like getting up on time and keeping appointments will be a significant challenge for them.

It is useful to consider engagement in two strands:

1. Initial engagement when recruiting participants

2. Ongoing engagement during the intervention

1. Initial engagement when recruiting participants

Who is best placed to do this?

We know this differs depending on the situation, but someone that a young person trusts, for example a youth worker they already know, could be well placed to speak to them about what is on offer.

Someone with lived experience is extremely effective because they can relate to the person they are talking to. Everton in the Community, St Giles Trust and Action For Children are examples of intervention providers whose mentors include ex-offenders, and feedback is that this makes a significant difference to engagement.

Practitioners, including those from law enforcement, tell us that local police officers are not always the most effective means through which to initiate engagement, often due to the mistrust that may exist on the part of the individual (and/or their peer group, family or wider community). That said, police services have an important role to play in SOC Prevent and are often integral to successful interventions. Programmes like Checkpoint in Durham and Operation Turning Point in Barnet (London) are examples where police officers are using teachable moments to introduce intervention programmes as out of court disposals at police stations.

It can take significant effort and persistence to convince someone to participate in an intervention, such as numerous calls to a young person over several weeks or months before they answer the phone. This is particularly relevant in respect of young people who regularly go missing and are at risk of exploitation – criminal or sexual. Phone numbers often change too, making it hard to maintain contact. We saw evidence of this in some of our Home Office-funded projects.

Sometimes the only option may be to visit the area where someone spends their time, find them and chat face-to-face. Before doing this, you should consider any staff safety concerns there may be in taking this approach.

From a delivery perspective it is important to factor in the length of time that initial engagement can take, as Home Office-funded projects from 2017 were impacted by this.

Case study

A was referred to a intervention provider by mum. Initial contact took place in the family home with A present. But A would not communicate with staff. The initial meeting was short to avoid overwhelming A. Staff were aware of previous engagement difficulties with service providers. After the meeting, staff contacted mum to discuss further contact. Mum explained she had spoken with A who did not want to engage further. Staff explained that despite this, he managed a short initial contact. Therefore, the caseworker suggested a 15-minute follow-up visit before A made his final decision to disengage. A agreed to this. At the next visit, staff said to A that he is showing he can manage a short visit. So asked if he was comfortable with fortnightly 15-minute visits. They told him that he could disengage if he didn't feel comfortable. This is quite different from the average of two to three hours per contact that the provider usually offers, but it was clear that a gentler approach was needed with A, who agreed to this arrangement.

Our work has identified that there will be people who won't engage despite significant effort. It's very difficult to decide when to discontinue attempts to engage with an individual if attempts have proved unsuccessful. Ultimately this is a matter of professional judgement and will be subject to the amount of time and resource the practitioner or their organisation is able to invest in it.

A teachable/reachable moment or unplanned opportunity can contribute to a willingness to change. Intervention providers such as Redthread and St Giles Trust base themselves in some hospitals as they have identified that there is a real opportunity to engage successfully with a young person when they have been the victim of a violent attack.

"When young people are out of their comfort zone, alienated from their peers, and often coming to terms with the effects of injury, is a time of change. In this moment many are more able than ever to question what behaviour and choices have led them to this hospital bed and, with specialist youth worker support, pursue change they haven't felt able to before."[13]

Consent from parents

There may be challenges in obtaining consent from parents. One of the local projects the Home Office funded this year worked with younger siblings of SOC offenders. As the families were already known to the police, officers took opportunities to engage with parents where there was a reachable moment.

[13] **https://www.redthread.org.uk/**

2. Ongoing engagement during the intervention

Once someone has agreed to participate, engagement challenges will likely persist throughout the project. Youth workers from a Home Office-funded project[14] summed up such challenges.

"We can send as many appointments as we like… they'll come when they're ready but when they're ready, we need to be there to seize that opportunity."

"You might get them for a couple of weeks and then they drop off for a month, then they come back again… It seems to be dependent on their health, mental health, social issues, the housing, there are so many things that contribute to their failing to attend and their priorities."

To maximise engagement, the following should be considered:

- the design and delivery of interventions should account for the challenges of working with people who have chaotic lives
- delivery staff should be open to making last-minute changes to accommodate missed appointments and engagement challenges
- interventions should be tailored to the needs and circumstances of participants, meaning content may be altered once delivery staff has got to know the people they will be working with
- consider a more thorough initial consultation with young people to find out what makes them feel comfortable, what their motivations and aspirations are
- identify any practical or logistical obstacles to their participation e.g. travel to intervention setting

Barriers to engagement can include:

- being uncomfortable in a group setting
- not interested in meeting other attendees
- attendance under the influence of drugs or alcohol
- hospitalisation due to attack from rival gang members
- criminal proceedings regarding pre-intervention offences or being remanded in custody for offences during the intervention/resigned to custodial sentence
- moving out of the area
- too far to travel, unable to make provision or unwilling to travel into rival gang territory
- sleeping at different locations with family so unable to attend due to lack of transport
- no clear life goals and no interest in working
- happy to claim benefits or have alternative means of earning
- physical or mental health factors
- lifestyle factors such as sleep-related issues including getting up late, oversleeping and bad sleeping patterns
- housing issues such as lack of fixed abode or in temporary accommodation
- family turmoil or staying with family in other location
- seeing family member on day release from prison
- spending time with a delinquent peer group, including OCG or gang nominals
- living in an area with significant social deprivation, high crime rate, low living standards
- living in an area where residents' engagement with the police or local authorities is actively (even violently) discouraged
- poor experiences with specific agencies or specific staff such as their teacher
- suspension from activities due to aggressive behaviour/ fighting with staff/being at risk of violent attack

[14] UCLAN (2017) Women At Risk of Serious and Organised Crime: a multi-faceted intervention

Despite this, there are things that can drive engagement which are discussed below.

Drivers for engagement[15]

Reward: Incentives can support engagement, but it is important that reward is proportionate to the level of participant engagement. This will allow participants to develop an understanding that there are other ways to receive fulfilment which go beyond the immediate and material. Feedback suggests that this is most effective when it complements the personal interests of those involved.

One of the local projects we funded for 2018/19 specifically avoided a material reward and instead focused on the benefits of taking part in the intervention. They found that **providing food prior to the session** was enough to promote attendance. Others have provided **days out** ranging from white water rafting, spending time at a beauty salon and go karting.

Ultimately, it is for you to gauge what type of incentive is right for the people taking part in the project, which will most likely differ from person to person.

Personal goals are a motivator for engagement. These will be unique to each person, but a desire to **develop practical skills to support a vocational career and employability is a common theme**. Due to funding, some interventions will be relatively short and so it helps to be clear with each person what they can hope to achieve in the timeframe. Being realistic about how an intervention can help with these aspirations is important. You may want to manage expectations around how much a person can expect to earn, particularly in the early stages of employment, in comparison to SOC activity.

Case study

N expressed a desire to become a mechanic. However, his youth worker explained that by not engaging in education for the last 3 years, it will likely be a barrier for him. N responded to this honesty and agreed to consider other options. N's youth worker looked for ways to support him to make positive use of his spare time rather than spending it with negative peers. The youth worker also identified another course that would interest N and was accessible to him. Youth workers attended a successful meeting with a training provider and N was offered a place on the course. N commenced the course in January and has been attending as required ever since. A combination of straight talking and tangible outcomes has made a difference to N's desire to make a change.

[15] UCLAN (2017) Criminal Justice Partnership Project engage evaluation

Counts towards youth offending team hours: In cases where a young person is subject to a Youth Referral Order or other forms of behavioural order following previous youth offending, it may be that involvement in an intervention can count towards their mandated engagement hours with a Youth Offending Team worker.

Out of Court Disposals: Operation Turning Point in Cambridge and the Checkpoint programme in Durham are examples of interventions being used as an alternative to court proceedings. Given that these provide an alternative to going through the criminal justice system, out of court disposals may be tools for encouraging engagement.

It is important to note that the government's female offender strategy highlights the negative impact that a custodial sentence can have on women and so there is a move towards community sentences for certain offences involving women. Therefore, it may be that the opportunity to intervene with women who are at risk of involvement in SOC may come about off the back of sentencing for a lesser offence.

4. Design and delivery of interventions

Design and delivery of interventions

There are some things to consider when designing and planning your intervention.

Children who are victims of exploitation

Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE) occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, control, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18. The victim may have been criminally exploited even if the activity appears consensual. CCE does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology. Children who have experienced the trauma associated with exploitation and abuse may have a deep mistrust of adults and authorities.

It is important to note that a significant number of young people involved in SOC, especially county lines activity, may be victims of exploitation and we encourage you to consider what additional support may be available to them.

It may be appropriate to combine elements of a diversionary intervention, to deter them from aspiring to be SOC offenders, with bespoke victim support.

It is also important to consider the relevance of the **National Referral Mechanism** when working with people you consider victims of modern slavery (which includes slavery, servitude and forced labour, criminal exploitation and human trafficking).

The Home Office has published some guidance[16] for practitioners to support identification of potential **county lines victims**.

More information on working with those at risk of being victims of CCE and CSE can be found here:

https://www.csepoliceandprevention.org.uk/sites/default/files/Exploitation%20Toolkit.pdf

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/child-exploitation-disruption-toolkit

https://paceuk.info/for-professionals/

Trauma

Many of the young people involved in SOC will have experienced some form of trauma in their lives, either from ACEs or through another event in their life. Understanding the impact of trauma on that person will help you better understand their needs and help you better develop an intervention that will have positive outcomes for them.

Greater Manchester practitioners are working towards developing a trauma-informed workforce across their complex safeguarding teams. All their practitioners are having bespoke targeted training from Research in Practice on trauma, so practitioners can identify the signs and respond more effectively to young people.

They are using Trusted Relationships funding to bring clinical psychologists into the complex safeguarding teams to provide clinical supervision and case formulations with practitioners who are working with young people at risk of exploitation.

[16] **https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/741194/HOCountyLinesGuidanceSept2018.pdf**

One of the police officers leading this approach tells us:

"I have never worked with a young person involved in USGs, OCGs, CSE or CCE who has not experienced a significant trauma in their life.

This is often an underlying cause for young people becoming involved in one of the above but as practitioners we often focus on the behaviour rather than the cause which prevents us from understanding what is really happening for the young person."

Taking a holistic view of someone's circumstances

Participants across most of the interventions we have funded have experienced mental health and substance misuse issues in some form. Therefore, being aware of the services which have the remit and expertise (if not already held within your organisation) to deal with such issues and make onward referrals as appropriate is a critical part of diverting someone off a criminal pathway. An intervention may be brilliant but if there are other factors (which there usually are) affecting a person's ability to achieve or sustain positive outcomes, these must be identified, assessed and a wider support system put in place.

It is therefore crucial to have a contextual understanding of the factors influencing an individual's vulnerability and consider onward referral for them or family members to statutory or other local services where appropriate.

There is also a wide range of partnerships that individuals at risk of SOC involvement may already be working with (perhaps as part of a bigger focus on their family) or it may be that they provide routes to additional support beyond the specific intervention you are delivering.

Such partnerships include:

- children and adult safeguarding panels
- troubled families programme
- community safety partnerships
- gangs partnerships
- HMPPS/YJS – if person is subject to court order or licence
- multi-agency safeguarding hubs
- channel panels
- youth offending services
- targeted youth support teams within local authorities

As already noted, engaging with these partnerships is important so that they are aware of any SOC concerns and intervention work you intend to do with that young person and vice versa.

Delivery methods

To ensure participants have the best possible opportunity to attend and take part, adequate consideration should be given to the appropriateness of venue and methods used during delivery.

This will mean being adaptable and making practical choices such as selecting locations that are accessible and easy for people to get to. It could also mean being alert to the needs or concerns of the participant cohort and acting accordingly, such as holding smaller or individual sessions because participants respond better to such arrangements.

It may be that placing intended combinations of individuals (such as gang-affiliated) within the same activity group could create a safeguarding risk so needs to be revisited. This extends to ensuring safeguarding provisions are in place for delivery staff. It could also be that grouping people with friends could be just as problematic.

Case study

When B was referred to an intervention, he was one of five referred from the same area. All five referrals were either friends or had mutual friends, For the first few weeks this was not a problem. B was making a conscious effort to arrive on time even though he had a long distance to travel and was happy to engage in sessions. However, over time this became challenging and there was a change in his behaviour. It became apparent that some of his best work was when he attended the program on his own, without friends or associates from home. When B attended alone he was polite and well-mannered and gave 100% effort. However, when he attended with friends, his attitude and behaviour towards other group members and staff led to several troubling incidents. Providers changed plans and arranged for him to go on a residential trip without his friends. It allowed him to get back on track and focus on making positive steps forward.

From an operational perspective it may be challenging to make unexpected changes once delivery has started, so it is important to build these considerations into planning as early as possible to ensure the necessary degree of flexibility.

Tailoring the intervention to the needs and interests of the people involved

It is important to include young people as much as possible in shaping their intervention. Generally, it is easier to deliver more bespoke interventions if you are working with a smaller group of people or individuals. This can be a challenge when doing interventions at scale, or where local provision is fairly limited in its range and flexibility.

On a practical note, it may be that once the competencies and skills of the people involved are established, what is offered to them is changed to meet their needs. For example, during another Home Office-funded project, a community action project planned for in the original programme was considered too ambitious for the group involved and so a different type of event was arranged.[17]

Case study – returning to young person A

Staff subtly extended each session, gauging A's presentation and participation each time. This progressed to weekly contact in the family home. However, A made it clear he did not want to go out with staff or engage in activities. A appeared to have trust issues with services, so staff felt it was important to show consistency and take things at his pace rather than imposing their own. This control was important to him. Contact continued to progress, and A now proactively seeks visits from staff and initiates communication with them. A has a passion for cooking, enjoys football and is now open to exploring education and training options.

[17] Get on Track project 2017

Role models

Several intervention providers use role models to engage with and work with young people. Often, they are ex-offenders with lived experience, but sportspeople and business leaders from the area can also have a powerful draw for young people. Ultimately, this will depend on the people involved and what they respond best to. It is important to note that young people may feel that their circumstances are different to those role models and so won't necessarily relate to them in the way that you expect.

Special educational needs

A theme across several of our funded interventions is that participants often had special educational needs. From an intervention perspective, it is important for delivery staff to appreciate the behavioural, numeracy and literacy skill challenges that individuals may face and to be prepared to amend their delivery plan accordingly. For example, a Home Office-funded intervention in Merseyside was expanded from 10 to 14 weeks to accommodate the challenges participants faced in respect of their literacy skills, something that only became apparent on the first day of delivery.

Case study

L has learning difficulties and has previously been excluded from school, leaving him without qualifications. L is heavily involved with anti-social behaviour in his local area. The lack of facilities and boredom as well as peer pressure led to him committing anti-social behaviour. He has been dealing drugs but wants to get a job and earn money legally. Initial introduction to an intervention provider was made via his youth offending services worker and information from the worker helped in engaging L. Engagement is weekly and they 'walk and talk'. Due to L's learning difficulties he prefers appointments this way. L has engaged in several activities with his caseworker, including fishing for the day. This has showed L that if he is bored, he can spend a few hours doing something positive at low cost. L is a young person of few words, but the intervention has given him something positive to focus on.

Female specific considerations

Although fewer women are known to be SOC offenders, you may have identified young women to work with.

We know that younger women involved in county lines are often groomed and forced into relationships with gang members and are made to perform sexual acts.[18] So it may be that there is sexual abuse or sexual health concerns present that aren't as common among the boys in the cohort.

When we look at the roles played by females, they don't tend to be perpetrators of violence to the same degree as young men and so an intervention that focuses on violent behaviour may not meet needs of the females in the cohort. But it will largely depend on the individual.

One of the challenges that may be specific to females is what employment opportunities are available to them once they have a criminal record. Those involved in our Bedfordshire research felt that the men could carry out manual labour without background checks while they would be looking for roles in sectors like retail which would require background checks. One of the young women involved in a Home Office-funded pilot in Sandwell was refused access onto a childcare course because of her criminal record and so had to adapt her plan.

We funded a female-focused intervention with women aged 29 to 54, supporting women into employment. Unfortunately, given the challenges they faced, this wasn't possible. All but one of them had a form of drug addiction and all had mental health problems. While the age of this cohort isn't the focus of this toolkit, the work further highlighted the need for wrap-around support beyond the intervention.

Presenting issues across the group included:

- physical and mental health
- housing
- debt
- employment
- trauma

[18] **https://www.fearless.org/en/campaigns/county-lines**

Intervention activities – what works?

Interventions can come in many forms and there is evidence through the work we have funded, as well as the many programmes across the UK and beyond, that various outcomes can be achieved through a range of interventions. While the long-term impact of many of those are yet to be fully understood, we believe that they can put people at risk of or involved in SOC offending onto a pro-social path.

Given funding constraints that providers may face, the support they can provide will invariably be time limited. This places an emphasis on measuring the progress participants have made or the 'distance travelled' when identifying the outcomes that have been achieved.

J is an ex-SOC offender who received support from Action For Children. He is now a mentor with their Sidestep scheme. He is regularly asked what it takes to change the lives of young people involved in SOC. His response is:

"It's a stupid question. The people in this work should know by now there's no recipe.

We are dealing with people and we are all unique, so the support has to be unique. What I offer is different to my colleagues and they have things they do better than me. It must be creative and catch the attention of the young person. And that's just one thing because then you've got to keep it. His world will be pulling at him 24/7 so you can't think you've got a chance doing 9-5. It's no good to have workers changing all the time. Do what you say you will. Kids like me don't forget and we're fresh out of patience for bullsh*t by the time you normally pitch up.

Be connected too. Know the area and have a network to open doors. You can have the best willed guy in the world but if he's a one-man band it's no good, the system's stacked against us enough as it is.

It took me 3+ years of sporadic engagement for things to click. It took a lot of luck as well. The biggest danger to me, where all the pressure came from, was shot dead so that gave me an out right at the time when I was mature enough to recognise it."

Working with primary school children

There is much research which supports the case for early intervention to tackle vulnerabilities and risk factors which can lead to ill health, poor educational attainment and criminality. The Early Intervention Foundation, Educational Endowment Foundation and several third sector organisations support engaging with children and their families at primary school age.

This is the first year that we have funded interventions with this cohort. SOC Community Co-ordinator activities such as those in Merseyside included working with children in primary school lacking motivation. We also funded an intervention through Northumbria Police who ran a school voice day through the Get Connected programme.

The Mini Police can also support a broader type of intervention. It is a voluntary programme for children aged 9 to 11 and aims to build trust with communities, promote responsible citizenship and help young people establish an interest and understanding in policing and community safety. To find out if it is running in your area, contact your local police force.

Working with 11 to 18 year olds

In 2016 we published an educational toolkit directed at young people at risk of or involved in SOC offending which can be accessed **here**. We are also working with PSHE on lesson plans for 11 to 14 year olds which will be available in late 2019.

As referenced throughout this toolkit, we have also funded bespoke interventions directed towards this age group, on the cusp of or involved in SOC offending. It is evident **that there isn't a one size fits all approach to developing and delivering interventions**.

The content, while not too prescriptive, should be **tailored** according to the needs of participants and intended outcomes should be clearly defined from the outset. **Sport, mentoring, cognitive and behavioural therapy, training, apprenticeships, education and employment programmes** are some of the common methods used to engage and divert young people away from SOC.

Experience tells us that a **combination of techniques and activities can be the most impactful, especially those that involve a degree of mentoring, education and reward**. We are also seeing more programmes aimed at addressing additional problems that people are facing such as drug and alcohol misuse.

Below is an overview of the types of interventions that we have either funded or know of, as well as the types of outcomes that were achieved. Long-term impact is still unknown, and those that were funded by us were small cohorts, but they can be used to help you consider the type of intervention you may want to put together.

Mentoring-based interventions

The College of Policing[19] describes mentoring as:

"…interactions between two individuals over an extended period of time, and an inequality of experience or knowledge between the mentor and mentee, with the mentor possessing the greater share. The idea is that the mentee is able to imitate and benefit from the knowledge, skill, ability, or experience of the mentor. The mentor may provide practical assistance, such as with job applications, teaching or training, as well as emotional support for the mentee to help increase self-esteem and confidence. Mentoring may be between a youth and an adult, or between peers."

The impact that a mentor can have on a person can be life-changing and is underpinned by developing trusted relationships with participants. A trusted relationship with an adult can be a protective factor for vulnerable young people, alongside self-esteem, sense of purpose, critical thinking skills and positive peer networks and so the role a mentor can play in encouraging someone onto a pro-social path and desistence from involvement in SOC is hugely significant.

Action for Children's sidestep scheme mentors invest a significant amount of time building trusted relationships. Feedback from young people supported by the scheme shows the value they place on the relationships that have been built:

"Sidestep are the only people who've ever done anything for me. They never let me down once."

"They're sound. I believe what they say to me."

[19] **http://whatworks.college.police.uk/toolkit/Pages/Intervention.aspx?InterventionID=44**

Mentoring may help to reduce crime by diverting individuals from criminal activities and attitudes, as well as by fostering healthy or positive development. A review by the College of Policing What Works Centre[20] identifies four processes central to mentoring to encourage this healthy development:

- the mentee identifies with the mentor which can help with motivation and behaviour
- providing information or teaching to help the mentee manage social, educational, legal, family, and peer challenges
- advocacy for the mentee in various systems and settings
- emotional support and friendship to promote self-efficacy, confidence, and sense of self-worth

Young people who have worked with a mentor through Action for Children's sidestep project have told us that:

"It's easy to work with them cos they know what they're talking about, they've come from the same place and lived the same life as boys like us."

Similar feedback through frontline practitioners is that mentors who have lived experience are essential for engagement, credibility and understanding of issues these young people face. There are several mentoring schemes through third sector organisations that have ex-offenders at the heart of their work such as St Giles Trust and Everton in the Community.

Research carried out by the Big Lottery Fund who consulted a group of young people[21] identified that an effective mentor (even if not an ex-offender) has the following traits:

- has time to listen, cares and is honest and non-judgemental
- works flexibly but professionally, giving young people power to shape how they work with their mentor
- provides intensive long-term support
- has confidence to deal with challenges
- gives the feeling that young people are understood and respected as individuals
- doesn't allow external pressures or targets to affect the mentoring relationship
- has scope to refer to or use resources flexibly to address practical barriers
- supports and challenges the young person to explore their own ideas and strength and set their own realistic goals
- motivates young people to achieve the goals they have set

[20] **http://whatworks.college.police.uk/toolkit/Pages/Intervention.aspx?InterventionID=44**

[21] Big Lottery Fund (2018) Preventing serious violence - what works?

The research also suggests that these types of approaches can be effective in:

- empowering young people to make the right choices rather than use scare tactics
- helping the young people to understand the causes and consequences of conflict
- changing the way young people think about their involvement in SOC

Many of the young people involved will mistrust statutory agencies or any organisation they perceive as 'authority' and so it's important to consider who is best placed to provide this type of support. Often it will be third sector groups who have the time and skills to create a meaningful bond with young people. If you decide to include an element of mentoring in an intervention, an exit strategy is particularly important to ensure that the young people don't feel abandoned once an intense programme of support comes to an end.

Some interventions we have funded have had an element of mentoring. One methodology, The Popular Opinion Leader programme, used in Sandwell, was centred on mentoring some of the most influential members of a gang who it was hoped would not only change their ways but influence their peers in positive, pro-social way. Mentors were from similar communities to the cohort. Five people completed the programme.

Learning objectives were developed to help shape discussions but ultimately, it was for the young person to set the agenda "eliciting their concerns and ambitions as the frame for mentoring conversations".[22]

It is evident from this intervention and other research that mentors often take on a loco parentis role, providing support such as attending interviews, transport to various places and acting as advocates at statutory agency meetings. In addition, where possible, mentors also work to engage with family members and facilitate the building of bridges.

The types of outcomes that mentoring can contribute to include:

- increasing self-esteem and confidence
- developing positive ambitions and goals
- improved motivation and engagement with education, employment, training
- improved engagement with and community-based activities
- reduction in offences and arrests
- improved attendance at school
- improved engagement with youth offending teams

In the Sandwell pilot, one person moved into employment, one had football trials lined up, another was focused on post-16 education and there was a general improvement in school attendance and behaviour.

[22] Community Skills and Knowledge Network (2017) Sandwell PoI Final Evaluation Report

Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) based interventions

What is CBT?

CBT as defined by the NHS:[23]

"…is based on the concept that your thoughts, feelings, physical sensations and actions are interconnected, and that negative thoughts and feelings can trap you in a vicious cycle. CBT aims to help you deal with overwhelming problems in a more positive way by breaking them down into smaller parts. You're shown how to change these negative patterns to improve the way you feel. Unlike some other talking treatments, CBT deals with your current problems, rather than focusing on issues from your past. It looks for practical ways to improve your state of mind on a daily basis."

The types of activities that CBT-based interventions focused on SOC can include are things like:

- discussions around use of substances
- discussions around keeping safe
- activity taking people out of their comfort zone, linked to risk-taking and consequences
- developing awareness of CSE and CCE
- developing skills in confidence and resilience

22 people took part in a group-based CBT intervention in Ceredigion, funded by the Home Office. It also included an element of mentoring and the aim was to increase the resilience of vulnerable young people to stop them being drawn into SOC.

The types of outcomes that CBT-based interventions can contribute to include improvements in:

- efficacy
- self-esteem
- self-confidence
- wellbeing

In Ceredigion,[24] improvements in self-efficacy and wellbeing were achieved.

Sports-based interventions

There are numerous sports-based interventions that are being run across the country aimed at young people involved in crime. One study in 2013[25] evaluated 11 sports-based programmes. It highlighted that all programmes recorded some positive impact on youth violence and crime. But it is worth noting that one of the common themes related to outbreaks of violence due to behavioural problems of specific individuals or tensions between rival gangs. This isn't necessarily something unique to sports-based programmes, as participants in other types of interventions we have funded have voiced concern over being in the same room as rival gang members. Therefore, it is important to consider this at the planning stage.

[23] **https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/cognitive-behavioural-therapy-cbt/**

[24] Dr G Norris, Aberystwyth University (2018) SOC evaluation, Ceredigion Youth Justice Prevention Service

[25] Dr Simon McMahon (Project Oracle) Dr Jyoti Belur (UCL) (2013) Project Oracle: sports-based programmes and reducing youth violence and crime

Sport can be used in different ways to engage young people involved in criminality:[26]

- **as diversion or distraction:** when young people are playing sport under supervision, they are distracted from negative environments and under surveillance so do not commit crime at the same time.
- **as cognitive behavioural therapy:** instilling values such as moral values, discipline, respect for others, teamwork, self-esteem to address factors that may cause deviant behaviour.
- **as a hook for engagement:** using the salience of sports engage young persons in what can be called 'relationship strategy', to attract them and encourage them to adhere to programmes delivering wider interventions.

The Big Lottery[27] has identified several key success factors for sports-based interventions:

- long-term projects to build trust and change attitudes
- training and support for coaches and trainers is vital to equip them with the right skills
- projects need to be well-targeted in terms of location and engagement

We funded two interventions containing an element of sport in 2017. Onside in Merseyside was designed to engage disengaged young people on the cusp of or involved in SOC, in positive physical and academic activity. 88 people completed it. Get On Track in Warwickshire was a sports-based mentoring programme designed to inspire people at risk of or involved in SOC into employment. Six people completed it.

The types of activities that sports-based interventions can include are:

- teamwork activities
- physical activities
- leadership activities such as leading sports sessions for their peers
- careers guidance visits from the army
- development of soft skills such as leadership, communication, self-esteem and self-confidence
- visits from reformed offenders
- inspirational stories from athletes
- opportunity to complete a sports leadership award
- informal education sessions designed to challenge attitudes towards education, attendance and criminal behaviour
- bespoke engagement workshops giving young people the opportunity to express opinions on issues that affect them
- drugs debates
- discursive sessions focusing on attitudes towards gang activity, personal safety, the police, education and their future

Outcomes can include:

- improved self esteem
- taking on more responsibility
- learning how to resolve conflicts constructively
- working harder in school

[26] Cryer J. (2005) Ruff Guide to Sport and Youth Crime, Sports Development

[27] Big Lottery Fund (2018) Preventing serious violence – what works?

Of note, in Merseyside over half of the participants completed a sports leadership award and moved onto the next phase of the programme focusing on employability and training. In Warwickshire[28], missing incidents for two participants dropped significantly when compared with pre-intervention data.

If you are working with 16 to 18 year olds, there are additional opportunities to provide support in respect of training, employment and apprenticeships.

Training and employment-based interventions with 16 to 18 year olds

Given that one of the key motivators for involvement in SOC is the desire to make money, an intervention that can provide opportunities for legitimate earnings can change the direction of people's lives. Often the young people involved in these interventions will be NEET (not in education, employment or training) and may have previous convictions, so finding opportunities for them to engage with employment and training is essential for them to get onto a pro-social path.

Some third sector organisations have links to industry, such as Catch 22 that works with the Barclays Connect programme. Others may be linked in with local businesses on a more informal basis. Action for Children have developed a strong network of employers that they work with in Glasgow as part of their efforts to place people at risk of or involved in SOC into employment. Street to Boardroom is another example of a third sector organisation supporting people into employment in and around Bristol.

The complex backgrounds of the people involved in these interventions means they will have successes and setbacks along the way. But persistence and strong relationships between staff and participants are essential for achieving positive outcomes.

Key features[29] of such interventions are:

- Offering opportunities that are relevant to the workplace such as:
  - providing skills for the workplace
  - promoting positive workplace behaviour
- Providing holistic support like:
  - building confidence
  - a supportive environment
  - personal and social development qualifications
  - employer engagement with participants:
    - engaging young people – providing clear information on what the project entails, what's expected and benefits to them
    - work experience that will improve future employability
    - employment opportunities
- Ensuring that accredited qualifications:
  - facilitate progression onto colleges or training providers
  - are recognised by employers
- Remuneration may help to:
  - maintain engagement
  - remove barriers to participation
  - obtain feedback for evaluation purposes
- Staff skills should include:
  - experience and knowledge of approaches for engaging people
  - sector-specific skills and knowledge

[28] Dr C Mason, Dr J Kenyon and Dr C Walpole (2018) Warwickshire Multiagency SOCJAG Home Office-funded Get on Track Evaluation Report

[29] Ekosgen (2012) Evaluation for Action for Children Supported Training Programme

The types of activities that training and employment-based interventions can include are things like:

- small group and individual sessions with business leaders
- completion of job applications
- looking for jobs
- completing various types of qualifications
- participation in work experience
- taster days and introductions with employers
- skills development sessions such as communication, problem-solving and team work

The types of outcomes that training and employment-based interventions can contribute to include:

- moving into an apprenticeship
- moving into employment
- improvement in self confidence
- increased self esteem
- increased motivation

The Home Office has funded two interventions that sought to divert vulnerable individuals toward employment. They were based in Merton, South London and Norwich. In Merton, six people completed the intervention and in Norwich, four people completed it. In Norwich, the focus was on supporting young people to develop enterprise skills in collaboration with local business partners. In Merton, the focus was on work experience and apprenticeship opportunities combined with intensive mentoring.

Of note, in Merton, one person moved into employment after a successful apprenticeship with a mechanic. He was highly motivated to change, and the delivery staff were able to cover the costs of the tools he needed for the job. In Norwich the group demonstrated increased self-esteem, confidence, motivation and wellbeing.

Case study

P had been displaying some behavioral issues, low attainment and lacked aspiration. He had been removed from the school's timetable and was working with a specially targeted group on a lower academic timetable. There were concerns that he was intending to sell drugs with peers outside school.

His first interaction was a 1:1 mentoring session where he self-evaluated and identified a need to work his communication style, teamwork skills and motivation to achieve objectives. P was also involved in a social action programme in the school grounds. P didn't consider himself to have strong enough skills to take on any additional responsibility and decided he wanted the role of labourer. However, during the days on the project, P became the most reliable and hardworking member of the group and without instruction he naturally took more of a leadership role.

P disclosed that he received a sense of pride at the end of each day and he wanted to explore a career in construction. His youth worker made a referral to a colleague who enrolled him on to a five-day introduction to construction programme. During this he took part in activities and site visits. He was given industry-specific career advice and guidance on how to access apprenticeships. Taking part in the additional programmes and realising his potential, had a positive effect on his behavior and engagement levels in school. The school made the decision to introduce P back into the school timetable.

In January 2019, P's youth worker attended a meeting at school. Teachers were still concerned about the influence of drug-dealing peers outside the school grounds. The youth worker made the decision to act as a mentor to P until he has completed his exams, providing a holistic continuous care package. She created a revision timetable with him and made a poster of useful revision tips. P didn't have access to the internet at home, so she created revision packs with past papers and guidance to help him revise.

P told his youth worker that he once played for a football team but gradually his social life took over. He was interested in playing again. The intervention provider had a Premier League Kicks department, so P was able to join it and committed to two sessions per week. P was nervous about attending the first session, so his youth worker met him there and introduced him to the coaches. He now attends twice a week and has enrolled in a local gym which he now attends on a Monday and Wednesday. P says "It's four less days hanging round on the streets with my mates."

P recently sat his GCSE exams which he had no intention of doing a year ago. He plans on engaging with the intervention provider after officially leaving Year 11. The next step is to enrol P on a construction programme where he will gain work experience, training and a Construction Skills Certification Scheme card.

5. Exit strategies

Exit strategies

When we talk about exit strategies, there are two things to consider:

1. Moving on from an intervention when it ends

While our experience is limited in this space, we encourage you to give this some thought. If you've got several agencies working with people providing wrap-around support, it may be that they can continue to deliver those elements once the main part of the intervention comes to an end. For things like mental health and substance abuse services, this is crucial.

We would encourage you to have those discussions up front with the relevant agencies.

For a lot of the young people getting the support of a short-term programme, it can be hard for them when the support stops. Many of the young people will have been let down by other adults in their personal life and we know the positive impact a trusted relationship can have. Unfortunately, funding often dictates the length of time someone can receive support. If you are using Home Office funding, we would encourage you to consider whether match funding may be available or, for example, whether businesses may be willing to provide funding support. This can often be achieved by highlighting benefits to them in drawing young people in your area away from offending.

Ultimately though, being open and honest about how long the support will last and providing realistic support options post intervention, is important when engaging with potential participants.

2. Breaking away from criminal networks and associations

In terms of breaking ties with an OCG, this is rife with challenges that we know little about at this stage.

You, as frontline practitioners, will have more of a grasp of what those challenges are and so if there are practical considerations that you can affect, we would encourage you to think about those. For example, if someone living in a local authority housing or care home has demonstrated a desire to break away but this also means moving to a new area where the OCG isn't present, it may be that you can start a conversation with the responsible local authority about options.

Similarly, if they are keen to develop skills and take an apprenticeship, are they able to continue once the intervention is over or will they not be able to afford travel or tools, meaning they may stop and go back into their old way of life? Is there something you can do to help them overcome those barriers?

6. Evaluating your intervention

Evaluating your intervention

Types of evaluation

Process evaluation

The focus of this evaluation type is on the actual practice and experience of those implementing an intervention. The measures here are both quantitative (i.e. numerical measures) and qualitative (i.e. contextual, non-numerical data). The evaluation will attempt to capture contextual information (e.g. was the project run by a charismatic and proactive team member, were volunteers involved) as well as what was delivered, along with the coverage and dosage of the intervention (how many people did it potentially or actively act upon).

This relates to the Context, Input, and Output phases of a logic model.

In addition, it is important to capture the mechanism or theory of change of the intervention. (i.e. what negative behaviour was it attempting to change).

Impact evaluation

This relates to the Outcomes and Impact phases of a logic model.

This covers observations on what happened following implementation (rather than what was expected or intended). Impact evaluation measures tend to be quantitative (i.e. numerical), although qualitative ones such as improvement in behaviour and change in attitudes can be a proxy outcome.

While you generally want measures to indicate whether the outcome was successful or not, it is almost always useful to be able to calculate a cost benefit value for this. This means you can demonstrate to others if the intervention or policy was good value for money in relation to other methods.

Defining and collecting success measures early on (baselining and benchmarking)

As mentioned, to capture the impact in terms of what happens after implementation, you also need to have already established a benchmark (i.e. the base level for the key success measure prior to implementing an intervention).

Here is an example of a logic model that may help you when planning an evaluation.

Context	What does SOC look like in the area or community and why is it an important issue to tackle?
Input	Who will the intervention target, and what organisations, resources and activities do you need to be able to deliver your intervention?
Output	What measures and indicators will be collated during the intervention delivery?
Outcomes	What are the short-term results expected from the intervention and how do they relate to the original area aims and objectives?
Impact	What is the long-term impact from the intervention delivery and how does it relate to the original aims and objectives?

Links to published guidance

If you would like to further develop your knowledge on evaluation, these publications should help:

HM Treasury – The Magenta Book – Guidance for Evaluation
https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-magenta-book

Passport to Evaluation (second edition)
https://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20100408170649/http://www.crimereduction.homeoffice.gov.uk//learningzone/passport_to_evaluation.htm

Utilisation-focused evaluation
https://www.betterevaluation.org/en/plan/approach/utilization_focused_evaluation

UK Evaluation Society Guidelines for Good Practice in Evaluation:
https://www.evaluation.org.uk/app/uploads/2019/04/SDK-Evaluation-Society-Guidelines-for-Good-Practice-in-Evaluation.pdf

For more information on any of the activities referenced in this toolkit, or to tell us about what has worked well for you, please email us at **SOCPolicingUnit@homeoffice.gov.uk**