January 2021

Supporting Families Against Youth Crime fund evaluation

Final report

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Acknowledgements

We'd like to thank the Troubled Families team at MHCLG for the opportunity to carry out such interesting and important work, as well as their collaboration throughout the process. It has been a pleasure to work with such an engaged and supportive team.

Without the case study local authorities who volunteered to take part in the evaluation, we would not have been able to collect such a wealth of data. There were some outstanding individuals (who won't be named for confidentiality) who facilitated stakeholder and family interviews – and we cannot thank them enough.

Many stakeholders who were involved in the delivery of SFAYC funded interventions took part in the online survey. We would like to thank all participants, with a special thanks to the key contacts in each local authority who facilitated participation in their area.

1. Executive summary

This report brings together findings and insights from the mixed-method evaluation of the Supporting Families Against Youth Crime (SFAYC) fund. The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) made £9.5m available in early 2019 to support local projects to reduce youth crime, in line with the cross government Serious Violence Strategy. A key feature of the fund was the prerequisite for interventions to sit alongside the local Troubled Families Programme, with a focus on multi-agency and whole family working. It encouraged applications from projects which involved working closely with schools, the voluntary and community sector and with children about to transition from primary to secondary school.

The funded interventions

A range of interventions were funded in 21 local areas. Approaches included whole family therapies, school-based initiatives, diversionary activities, mentoring and role-model based interventions. The interventions often targeted those thought to be most at risk, although some school-based interventions were universal. A range of delivery partners were drawn on, including schools, voluntary and community sector organisations, community groups, police and child and adolescence mental health services (CAMHS). The aims of the 21 local authorities' SFAYC programmes encompassed three themes:

1. Making children aware of risks relating to youth crime and how issues they might face can escalate;
2. Working with children to improve confidence, emotional regulation, resilience/ coping skills and encourage positive behaviours and relationships; and
3. Encouraging positive life choices and making children aware of future opportunities.

The evaluation approach

The evaluation was designed to understand how the funding was used and identify early indicators of its effectiveness. A case study approach using qualitative research methods was taken in six local areas, where strategic and frontline staff were interviewed, as well as children and parents / carers who took part in interventions. In addition, the research team conducted a stakeholder quantitative survey in all 21 funded areas. At the end of programme delivery, the research team reviewed local authorities' own evaluation reports. Data from all research elements evidence this report.

What works in service transformation

The SFAYC fund increased provision of services to address youth crime in local areas.

Multi-agency working was a crucial and embedded part of the delivery of SFAYC initiatives. A range of delivery partners came together from local authorities, the third sector, community organisations, the private sector and specialist services. New organisations adopted service transformation – multi-agency working, early intervention and whole family working. Some local authorities expanded their network of delivery partners by making links with wider partners in the community.

A further success was the integration of SFAYC initiatives with Troubled Families funded services. This encouraged multi-agency working and enabled SFAYC teams to draw on whole family approaches which were seen as effective in preventing youth crime. Work with schools and the voluntary sector was seen as most effective to reach those who were not accessing services. Working closer with community groups helped SFAYC teams break down barriers between delivery partners, themselves and the families.

Factors essential for successful multi-agency working were clear and open communication, data sharing between organisations, co-location and flexible working. Delivery partners felt joint working would be sustainable if partner organisations continued to regularly share feedback, signpost and refer families to one another, as well as adapt job roles to emerging needs.

In addition, there were factors important for interventions reaching further into the community. Factors included focusing interventions more within the community, building on existing community networks, and having community organisations lead part of the interventions. This helped interventions reach young people and families who may not otherwise use services.

Outcomes for children and families

The evaluation found key thematic drivers of youth crime, including: young people's culture and environment (including glorification of crime on social media, negative role models and normalisation of violence), the role of schools (particularly in excluding pupils) and a reduction in services (particularly youth services). Many interventions were designed with a view to counter-act these drivers.

Data from different strands of research shows that interventions focussing on building relationships between support services and families, and the use of diversionary activities, positively influenced young people and their families. For young people, positive outcomes ranged from reported increased confidence and awareness of risk factors, to improved emotion regulation, outlook and school behaviour. Families felt that positive role-model based interventions improved young people's confidence to say no to negative peer pressure and helped them feel more motivated. Schools were an important facilitator for positive change. Targeted interventions, implemented by staff at schools, worked towards improving the resilience of children as well as their families. The positive outcomes from these interventions tended to foster children's willingness to engage with schools.

Trusted and committed practitioners were seen as the key to success and helped strengthen relationships within families. The targeted families reported positive changes in parenting skills as well as benefitting from counselling, signposting and help in engaging with other services. Mentoring for parents and young people, parenting programmes, Troubled Families keyworkers and additional family support resulted in improvements in behaviour, bullying, arguing with parents, and young people expressing feelings.

Overall, delivery partners and families thought SFAYC funding had a sustainable, positive impact on children and families at risk of youth crime. Although some parts of the interventions are likely to continue being effective once funding subsides, some families and stakeholders were concerned about what would happen once intervention support ends.

2. Introduction

The Supporting Families Against Youth Crime (SFAYC) fund was established by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) in 2019 to invest in early intervention programmes to help prevent children and young people becoming drawn into gang crime, serious violence and the youth justice system. The fund came about to help "local authorities to put more of a focus on tackling gang and youth crime as part of their local Troubled Families Programme."[1] The £9.5 million fund was used to deliver interventions in 21 local authorities across England. SFAYC funded programmes sit within the local Troubled Families Programme, with whole family working and multi-agency working being a key requirement of their delivery. Underpinning the Troubled Families Programme is a service transformation model, which, from a multi-agency working perspective includes[2]:

- The family experience of transformed services
- Leadership
- Workforce development
- Engagement with communities

With a strong focus on early intervention, in line with the Serious Violence Strategy[3], the fund sought to support projects with the aim to[4]:

- *Develop children's personal resilience to withstand peer pressure and make positive choices, particularly but not limited to the transition ages between primary and secondary school.*
- *Reduce gang and youth crime by intervening early to raise awareness of the dangers of gangs, youth violence and knife crime and changing the culture around the acceptability of carrying knives. An example of this could be targeting families with support where siblings or parents have been victims or perpetrators of gang and youth crime.*
- *Work with parents/carers and local workforce to understand the dangers and risks surrounding gang crime. Parents need to have the skills and information to ask the right questions, identify risks and discuss their concerns with their child. They also need to know what support is available. Professionals who had not previously had to consider issues such as gang and youth crime are now being asked to do so and need to be equipped to provide the right advice, guidance and support to parents and carers.*
- *Increase the collaboration between the local authority and the voluntary and community sector, to continue to grow the wider community response to gang and youth crime.*
- *Provide data of robust quality that could be used in future programme development.*

Evaluation questions and method

This process evaluation was designed to understand how the funding was used and identify early indicators of outcomes. Because of the timeline and scale of the evaluation, an impact evaluation using comparison or control groups was not possible. Three research strands were developed to answer specific research questions as outlined in Table 1. Each strand will be described in detail below.

Table 1: Evaluation framework

	Evaluation questions	Data analysis	Online survey	Case studies

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[1]https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/749843/Supporting_Families_Against_Youth _Crime_Prospectus.pdf

[2]https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/troubled-families-early-help-system-guide

[3] https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/698009/serious-violence-strategy.pdf

[4]https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/749843/Supporting_Families_Against_Youth _Crime_Prospectus.pdf

How has the local offer to families changed as a result of the project?		x	x
What are the lessons learned on how to reach the families least likely to access public services?		x	x
Has there been greater joint working between the VCS other local services?		x	x
Are there any indications from these projects of the drivers of youth violence?		x	x
Is there any evidence on the type of intervention that most successful diverted young people away from risk routes?	x	x	x
How suitable would the projects be for longer-term in-depth evaluation?	x		x

Case studies

Six areas were selected for qualitative case studies. Selection criteria used were a combination of geographic areas, types of interventions, and level of funding received. Initial invitation emails were sent jointly from MHCLG and Ipsos MORI, outlining the approach and required commitment from areas. All invited areas agreed to take part.

In total, we conducted interviews with 48 stakeholders, 21 young people receiving the local intervention and 19 parents / carers (see Table 2 for breakdown by area). Data collection took place over two to three-day visits to the case study area, where face to face interviews lasting between 30 minutes to one hour with all audiences, and where suitable, observations of the interventions were carried out.

Table 2: Case study research sample

Local authority	Stakeholder interviews	Young people interviews	Parent/carer interviews
1	10	5	4
2	7	3	3
3	7	2	2
4	7	4	3
5	9	4	4
6	8	3	3
Total	**48**	**21**	**19**

We developed separate topic guides for each audience, agreed with MHCLG. Stakeholder interviews focused on the role, the background to receiving SFAYC funding, collaboration with partners including VCS organisations, the local authority and police, observed change for families, young people and community, evidencing impact, how SFAYC interventions have been used alongside existing services, innovative approaches, and programme sustainability.

Interviews with young people elicited their views of the intervention(s) and those delivering them within the context of their lives broadly as well as in relation to crime, and any difference they felt the intervention had made in their lives. Similarly, interviews with parents revolved around their experience of crime in the local area, the risk to their child/children and their perceived impact of the intervention within their family and locally.

Online survey

We invited 20 funded local authorities to take part in an online survey[5]. The main SFAYC fund lead of each local authority was invited by email and asked to send on an open survey link to all local authority or voluntary and community sector organisation colleagues involved in the delivery of the fund.

The survey covered the topic areas of the respondent's professional background, implementation of the SFAYC fund and multi-agency working, sustainability of change, impact on families and impact on the community. The survey was in field between 13 January and 23 February 2020, took an average of 18 minutes to complete, and 101 respondents took part. Demographics of survey respondents can be found in Appendix I.

Review of local authority evaluations

After we carried out primary research during early 2020, local authorities conducted their own programme evaluations. We then collected and reviewed these reports to assess their monitoring methods and summarise the findings. Originally, we had intended to conduct a meta-analysis, however, due to the impact of COVID-19 on resourcing, many local authorities were unable to complete their evaluations to the standard required for a meta-analysis. We present the results from this review as a final chapter – "Review of local authority evaluations".

Further evidence sources

There are other commissioned studies that provide insight on the issues covered in this report. Please see the following literature for more evidence on the following:

- The Troubled Families Programme – https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-evaluation-of-the-troubled-families-programme-2015-to-2020-findings
- Youth Crime – https://youthendowmentfund.org.uk/latest/reports/
- Violence Reduction Unit - https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/violence-reduction-unit-evaluation-2019-to-2020

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[5] Due to delays to local delivery, one local authority was removed from taking part.

Report structure

The remainder of this report will cover:

- Drivers of youth violence as identified through the research – to contextualise our findings and the local authorities' interventions
- A description of SFAYC funded interventions and their aims – to show the range of interventions delivered across local authorities
- Joint-working to deliver interventions successfully – to evaluate a theme central to the SFAYC funded interventions
- Outcomes for children and families – to evaluate the effects of interventions on children and families
- Sustainability of SFAYC funded interventions and their outcomes for local authorities, children and families – to evaluate the extent to which local authorities and families thought support and outcomes would endure
- Concluding remarks about the fund, its implementation, effectiveness and sustainability
- Review of local authority evaluations – to summarise outcomes from local authorities' own evaluations and evaluate the monitoring methods used

3. Drivers of youth violence

Stakeholders, young people and parents identified drivers of youth violence mainly as a result of their circumstances relating to:

- Young people's culture and environment
- The role of schools, expulsions and suspensions
- Pressure on services and hardship

In response, SFAYC fund interventions were most commonly seen to address peer groups / social circles, gang affiliation, school attendance / expulsions and suspensions , and child criminal exploitation. Many interventions had a two-pronged approach, including a targeted approach for specific groups of children and families, in conjunction with a general approach to reach a broad range of children and young people, as will be outlined in chapter 6.

The Serious Violence Strategy[6], published by the Home Office in April 2018 highlighted that the majority of crimes was carried out by a small proportion of individuals. However, it also stated that "while situational factors like alcohol and the degree of provocation are no doubt important, factors to do with personal circumstances whilst growing up can give some individuals a higher propensity for violence." Similarly, the Serious Youth Violence House of Commons report[7] pointed to evidence of school expulsions and suspensions being a driver of youth crime. The Securing a brighter future: The role of youth services in tackling knife crime report by the All-Party Parliamentary Group on knife crime and violence reduction[8] called for an audit of youth services across local authorities and funding local authorities to invest in sustainable long-term youth work.

Findings from qualitative case studies supported the premise that school expulsions and suspensions, young people's circumstances and lack of leisure opportunities play a key role in getting into crime and violent behaviours. There was a keen awareness in young people supported by SFAYC programmes, parents / carers and stakeholders of what drove youth violence; summarised by one stakeholder:

> *"Poverty, exclusions, unauthorised absences, history of violence, family history and connections."*
> *(Stakeholder interview)*

Although these issues were seen to be equally experienced by young men and young women, the behaviours young men demonstrated in relation to these, made schools and authorities more aware of young men. In this chapter we will give a brief overview of the key drivers as experienced by case study participants.

Young people's culture and environments

Identity construction, social media, role models and normalisation of violence

Young people and stakeholders alike recognised the lack of positive role models, and existence of negative role models as problematic for the identity construction of young people. Stakeholders especially lamented parents being absent or negative role models, with some parents not knowing where their children were spending their time, or in extreme cases not knowing where they went to college. This lack of supervision, coupled with exposure to social media or music related to crime and killing, was seen to be putting young people at risk.

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[6] https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/698009/serious-violence-strategy.pdf; page 25

[7] https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201719/cmselect/cmhaff/1016/1016.pdf

[8] http://www.preventknifecrime.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Securing-a-brighter-future-the-role-of-youth-services-in-tackling-knife-crime-v.2.pdf

> *"Parents' behaviour relating to violence and drugs becomes normalised in the family and children do not have the best role models. There are a lot of single parent families where the dad, or less frequently the mum, is a poor role model and there can be a lack of supervision at home and a lot of our children will be either at home and occupied on social media, which is a nightmare, or they are outside and they are unsupervised. In either case they have the potential to meet people who they shouldn't be meeting."* (Stakeholder interview)

For young people, especially males, there was pressure to be seen as cool, tough, or impressing girls. Listening to and distributing drill music and rapping about stabbing and gang violence was seen as one way of maintaining respect in a gang setting. Similarly, other social media channels were seen to be spreading encouragement for violence, again especially among males, in a way that wasn't experienced by young people before.

> *"It used to be that violence was usually between two people; 'If I shoot you, you shoot me' but now it's like fantasy football, trying to score points by stabbing or being violent towards gang members and non-gang members. This type of tit for tat violence circulates on Twitter and Snapchat."* (Young person interview)

Environments with high tension

Finally, stakeholders and young people identified several examples of seemingly ordinary situations that would escalate to the point of somebody using a knife because of underlying tensions, without other means of defusing the situation. This was the case for young men and women alike. For example, young people attending a party in a part of their city in a turf war with their own suburb resulting in a stabbing, or a conflict between two young people over a seat on a bus. Young people were described as being willing to carry and draw a knife out of fear that the other person might do so first.

> *"Young people say that they carry knife for their own protection. They do not realise that they are putting themselves more at risk of knife crime."* (Stakeholder interview)

The role of schools, expulsions and suspensions

Stakeholders felt strongly about the way in which the school system and schools locally sometimes played a part in exposing young people to risk routes (notwithstanding schools often being a protective factor). This included specifically fixed-term suspensions, off-rolling, difficulties experienced by police in working with academies and alternative provision / pupil referral units as well as support for children with special educational needs and disability.

> *"The academisation of schools makes it very difficult for the Council. I feel for the Council because now it has so little influence about what happens in schools. From a police perspective, if I want to do something in schools, I have to negotiate with each academy separately – you can't just deal with the education authority."* (Police interview)

> *"Fixed-term exclusions and young people in school-commissioned alternative provision account for the majority of known knife crime suspects."* (Stakeholder interview)

Stakeholders also expressed concern about young adults with poor levels of literacy and numeracy due to having been off-rolled, their lack of opportunity and subsequent risk of exploitation.

A key risk point identified by stakeholders was the transition between primary and secondary school. Many interventions were designed to work with young people (and families) at this stage, especially during the summer holidays.

> *"Any vulnerabilities the children have in primary school will increase when they go to secondary school. A lot of our work is therefore about resilience and how we can make our children stronger in themselves to be able to resist those vulnerabilities when they leave primary."* (Stakeholder interview)

Pressure on services and hardship

Reductions in public services and poverty were reported as potentially leading to youth crime. This impacted children and families in the following ways:

- Firstly, a lack of activities on offer for young people, especially through the closure of youth centres as well as support for families with children on the edge of care
- Secondly, increasing financial hardship for families. Young people as well as stakeholders saw the need to improve these circumstances as intertwined

Case study interviews with stakeholders, parents and young people alike conveyed a sense of resignation in terms of positive leisure activities available to young people. The decline in youth centres were seen as part of a broader picture that also included housing and mental health services as well as mistrust of the police and authority in general. In addition, youth leaders who would have been associated to youth centres and seen as positive role model in the community were also said to have disappeared, hence exacerbating the decline of the previous positive impact of youth centres. Older young people felt that their generation had been neglected and that new and holistic solutions were necessary to get them engaged in youth services.

> *"All the youth centres have been shut down. My generation are too far gone, no one cares about youth clubs. You need to look at the deep root problems; parents, housing, mental health."* (Young person interview)

> *"With austerity taking hold, all the youth centres closing, and the cost of living going up, the issue of economic survival has become very real."* (Stakeholder interview)

Stakeholders described deprived inner-city populations, especially families, to be under stress. This stress was manifest in lack of financial resilience, food poverty and housing issues among other difficulties. Despite the best intentions of interventions, there was also acknowledgement of the realities which hindered young people staying out of crime routes:

> *"We know that young people feel they have to provide for their families which is what draws some of them into criminal activities because they [share responsibility] for putting dinner on the table."* (Stakeholder interview)

The following chapter outlines how SFAYC funded interventions were designed to address these issues.

4. Funded interventions

This chapter provides an overall description of the different ways in which SFAYC funding was used. Overall, a quarter of survey respondents reported that the number of services available to young people and families as a result of the SFAYC fund had increased a lot, and over half felt services had increased a little.

In line with the Troubled Families principle of multi-agency working, interventions worked in partnership with other organisations. These included schools, VCS organisations, community groups and child and adolescent mental health services. Interventions were further underpinned by early intervention and whole-family working approaches.

With regard to project set-up, diligent planning was reported across case study areas as a crucial step in getting interventions off the ground. Three quarters of survey respondents reported the interventions under the SFAYC fund were very or fairly successfully integrated with pre-existing interventions. Important factors in project set-up were involving VCs organisations from the outset, testing innovations, hiring new staff as well as getting buy-in from schools.

Interventions varied from one-to-one work with young people and whole-family sessions, including outing and activities to staff training, including on trauma-informed approaches (see chapter 6 for more detail).

The ways in which children and families were identified and referred to interventions differed by type of intervention and local authority. However, schools played a key role in many settings, while VCS organisations were often able to reach families who were reluctant to engage with statutory services.

Background to SFAYC bids

Local authorities gave a wide range of reasons to bid for the SFAYC fund – both in their bid for the funding and in proceeding interviews. Reasons included deaths because of youth crime, gang-related offences, organised crime in the area, high numbers of young entrants into the criminal justice system, school expulsions and suspensions , deprivation in the area and declining mental health[9].

Local authorities felt that having strong existing structures or lack thereof were both good reasons to bid for the fund. On the one hand, certain local authorities said the structure of their existing youth crime offer made them strong candidates to receive the funding. Members from one local authority explained that they already had the internal structures in place to deliver on these interventions. They had a strong Troubled Families team who were keen to change the cultural narrative around youth crime by providing children with more opportunities. On the other hand, one local authority felt they needed extra resource to make their response to youth crime more consistent and meet the growing demand in the area.

Overall, a quarter (26 of 101) of survey respondents[10] reported that the number of services available to young people and families as a result of the SFAYC fund had increased a lot, and over half (58 of 101) felt services had increased a little. In terms of addressing the needs of children and families receiving interventions, of surveyed stakeholders[11][12] almost three quarters (58 out of 79) worked to address *difficulties regarding parenting / parenting issues* at least once a week; half (37 out of 74) worked to address *mental health difficulties in adults* at least once a week, and over half (46 out of 81) work to address *mental health in children* at least once a week.

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[9] See Appendix II for an outline of interventions

[10] QM2: To what extent do you feel the number of services available to young people and families has changed as a result of the SFAYC Fund?

[11] Of whom this is relevant to their role

[12] QS5: How regularly, if at all, do you provide the following types of support in your current family intervention work for the SFAYC Fund?

The range of delivery partners

There was a diverse range of delivery partners across local authorities that received SFAYC funding, including schools, football clubs, VCS organisations, community groups and specialist services such as CAMHS.

Schools

Local authorities identified schools as a place where young people vulnerable to youth crime could be targeted and then worked with. Delivery partners across the board felt that schools were well placed to identify children vulnerable to youth crime because teachers and pastoral workers had been trained to do so already. Schools were also where interventions tended to happen: workshops and assemblies were held in schools, and mentors worked with young people on school grounds. It was also felt that interventions could be included within the existing curriculum.

Voluntary and community sector (VCS) organisations

Another key set of delivery partners were VCS organisations. They included charities led by people with lived experiences of youth crime, start-up community interest companies, mentoring organisations, large established charities, youth organisations and custody programmes developed as a police service. They delivered a wide variety of interventions in the case study areas. VCS organisations ran school assemblies, workshops, and provided mentors for children vulnerable to youth crime. They also organised activities for families in the community, such as cooking days and sessions in an adventure playground. Further, they provided outreach and support on the ground. In one local authority, trained youth workers from a VCS organisation connected young people to education and employment when they were about to leave custody.

Community groups

As well as VCS organisations, community groups were key in delivering SFAYC funded interventions. Parents used established networks that were given further support by the SFAYC fund. In one area, a group of parents met up once a month to discuss issues that concerned them and their family. Here, parents spoke about drugs, youth crime, housing issues and good parenting practice. This was facilitated by the chair and trustee of the network. In another area, a network of 80 community organisations was set up to make more of a joined-up contribution to the reduction in youth crime.

Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS)

CAMHS was also an important delivery partner in several case study local authorities. They helped identify young people who needed support and in one area, delivered trauma informed Youth Violence Prevention Training for VCS organisations.

Building on the Troubled Families Programme model

Local authorities used their Troubled Families Programme structures to design and deliver interventions. In most cases, Troubled Families Co-ordinators were central to writing the bid. Local Troubled Families teams were then at the centre of organising the interventions. One local authority used existing Troubled Families data to inform the approach for their interventions. Another local authority extended their Troubled Families model into schools, where they based interventions on a whole-family assessment. Delivery partners also used the Troubled Families assessment model to agree a plan with families and wider stakeholders.

Adopting the whole family approach

Delivery partners across local authorities adopted a whole family approach. In some areas, the use of Troubled Families keyworkers was central. Keyworkers worked with families using techniques and interventions practiced through their Troubled Families team. While the families were referred to the service through schools, support was aimed at the whole family. For example, Troubled Families keyworkers offered family support on employment by helping parents with CVs, suggested days out for the family and in one reported case helped a family settle into a new home.

Early intervention

Local authorities embedded the Troubled Families tenet of early intervention in the way they worked. In some cases, Early Help teams led the steering groups responsible for overseeing interventions. Another area described itself as an 'Early Intervention City' and said its ethos was to prevent or 'interrupt' involvement in crime.

Further analysis on how the Troubled Families approach has informed the SFAYC funded interventions can be found in the following chapter.

Setting up SFAYC funded projects

Diligent project set up was cited across case study areas as a crucial step in getting interventions off the ground. Three quarters (76 of 101) of survey respondents reported the interventions under the SFAYC fund were very or fairly successfully integrated with pre-existing interventions[13]. A small proportion (9 of 101) respectively said it was 'neither successful nor unsuccessful' and 'too early to say'.

Involving VCS organisations from the outset

One local authority stressed the importance of involving delivery partners from the outset – specifically referring to VCS organisations. The director of this local authority's SFAYC team felt that if VCS organisations were central to delivering the project, they should also be involved in writing the bid. Joining up VCS organisations to the project team was also crucial. In some cases, they were written into the project team from the start. In other cases, they were sourced after receiving funding due to VCS organisations being unable to offer what they had initially proposed.

Testing interventions

Testing interventions was seen as important in the early stages of delivery. In one case study area, a video about knife crime was planned to be shared with primary school children. It was soon realised by the wider project team that the existing video was too graphic for this audience. It was then edited to be more appropriate.

Hiring new staff

Delivery teams felt that hiring new staff before the project's inception was crucial. One local authority in particular felt that the turnaround from receiving the funding to hiring a project manager was too short and that more time would have been needed to get a wider team in place.

Buy-in

Another important part of project set up was securing buy-in from schools to participate in interventions. In one area, flyers were sent out to schools - and parents - to outline the offer. In this case, schools were attracted by the offer but were concerned that it might not reach the right children. The SFAYC team who sent out the flyers did not want schools to think that they were "taking over" schools' roles.

> *"Our offer was to let schools choose from a menu. Otherwise schools would think they are being done to: it would not be a pilot, it would just be an offer. So some schools would say they have had emotional coaching and they do not need any more. Others would want something else."* (Programme Manager)

Types of interventions

There were a whole range of interventions adopted by the SFAYC project teams across local authorities. As detailed below, interventions included one to one work, whole family interventions, outings and activities, and training. These were not always used exclusively, and often local authorities adopted a mixture of interventions to use in their area. Further, these interventions were often part of a wider strategy based on the Troubled Families principles

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[13] QS2: Overall how successful or unsuccessful would you say your local authority has been at integrating the SFAYC interventions with pre-existing interventions?

of whole family working. The SFAYC fund therefore enabled local authorities to innovate an extend their offer. Below are three examples of interventions that three local authorities offered.

One to one work

Direct work with children included workshops and assemblies in schools. One to one work with children was also adopted by several case study areas, of which mentoring was a key component. In two local authorities, mentoring was provided in schools in addition to other interventions, such as Troubled Families keyworker home visits.

Other one to one work was more immediate. In one local authority, trained youth workers instantly connected with young people in custody, signposting them to education and employment opportunities post-arrest. This whole approach was felt to provide a rapid response and target young people most in need of support.

Whole family interventions

Interventions involving the whole family included Troubled Families keyworkers attending homes. They spoke to families about their situation, assessed it, listened to their concerns, and signposted them to services. Another intervention that directly involved the whole family was family group conferencing. This was adopted by one local authority as a holistic intervention to address the needs of all family members. Another local authority recruited two family therapists to deliver intensive therapeutic interventions for the whole family at home.

Outings and activities

Outings and activities during the school holidays was a key intervention adopted by local authorities. This included sports activities and a stadium tour organised by a local football club, as well as outings to the cinema and laser-tag. These interventions were designed to aid children's transitions form one school year to the next, especially so for those going from primary to secondary school.

Training

Finally, a key intervention was training delivered in schools. One local authority used training as the basis of their bid. First, they sought to upskill practitioners. They then delivered training in schools to strengthen the capacity of education providers to tackle knife crime. Other areas included training for teachers as part of their offer, including emotion coaching and trauma informed approaches. VCS organisations and wider community partners were also upskilled. For example, in one area CAMHS partners delivered a trauma informed youth violence prevention training programme for VCS organisations and local partners. This built on the existing trauma informed training in the area and included ongoing support from CAMHS for staff and schools from the participating VCS organisation.

A quarter (26 of 101) of surveyed stakeholders reported being involved in the one intervention funded by the SFAYC fund, while two out of five (40 of 101) reported being involved in more than four such interventions[14]. Interventions on which stakeholders (for who this was relevant) spent most time on were those aimed at *improving school attendance, educational support, mentoring, and diverting young people from risk routes* (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Time spent on different types of intervention

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[14] QM1: How many interventions are you currently involved in as part of the SFAYC Fund?

How regularly, if at all, do you support young people to stop getting involved in crime and anti-social behaviour through the following?

Legend:
- More than once a week
- Once a week
- Once every two weeks
- Once a month or less
- No fixed pattern
- I do not offer this
- This is not relevant to my role

	More than once a week	Once a week	Once every two weeks	Once a month or less	No fixed pattern	I do not offer this	This is not relevant to my role
Improving school attendance	41	19	4		13	4	19
Diverting young people from risk routes	41	12	4	5	14	4	21
Educational support	40	19	7		8	5	22
Mentoring	40	17	5		8	7	23
Diversionary activies, such as sport	33	16	5		16	7	22
Fostering aspirations	30	9	3		13	16	28

Base: All (101) Fieldwork dates 13 January to 23 February 2020. (QS5b Statements A-F))

Innovative approaches

Local authorities cited a range of interventions that they felt were innovative, including the adoption of the bystander approach[15], the use of film, the development of referral applications and new joined up ways of working with the community. Local authorities also felt that the principles behind the SFAYC interventions in general were innovative, with specific reference to whole family working, early intervention and prevention. It was felt that targeting the whole family showed gaps in provision that SFAYC teams could then act on.

Implementing existing models from other parts of the world

In one case study area, workshops were based on the Jackson Katz MVP-model[16], also known as the bystander approach. This was originally from the US but was also successfully applied in Scotland to reduce high crime rates. A delivery partner from a VCS organisation explained that a selected group of children were trained to mentor their peers to influence them positively. The chief executive of the VCS organisation travelled to Scotland to learn about this model with the view to adapting it for the case study area.

> *"Our chief exec is really keen to roll it out in the London area to challenge the knife-crime epidemic happening here at the moment."* (VCS organisation)

Using film

Another intervention felt to be innovative was the use of film to deliver messages on youth crime. In one local authority, a community interest company created a film about a lived experience of knife crime. This was based on a true story about a local boy who had been a victim of knife crime. The film was shown in school assemblies and was then encouraged to be shared by the children. Workshops with a selection of young people followed. These were delivered by the main character in the film.

Building community networks

Delivery partners across case study areas felt that they were engaging with the community in more effective ways due to SFAYC funding. In one local authority, it was felt that the intentional working partnership between the local

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[15] The bystander approach involves working with young people to breakdown and challenge perceived norms and misconceptions which often negatively influence behaviour.

[16] Please find more information here - http://mvpscotland.org.uk/

authority and third sector organisations meant better community involvement. This built up a bigger network that was able to identify grooming and exploitation - which would not necessarily be identified by the police. The project manager described community engagement as being at an "unprecedented level".

> *"You can bring in the community itself...you begin to build a bigger pool and network of people...the grooming and exploitation won't be solved by the police...or one partner...it will be solved by everybody."* (Youth Organisation, Chief Executive)

Referrals – identifying young people vulnerable to youth crime

There was a wide range of ways in which young people were referred to services across case study areas. Young people were targeted to take part in the interventions by schools, police, VCS organisations and families themselves.

Referral pathways

In one local authority an app was developed to aid with referrals for 14-25 year olds. The delivery partner developing the app said it would open up an interactive encrypted website whereby practitioners, including police, would be able to refer young people to a VCS organisation. Practitioners would enter the contact details of the young people they are referring with the young person's consent. The delivery partner would then receive an email and get in touch with that young person.

Schools

Across areas, schools identified children at risk to take part in the interventions. In one area, schools identified children particularly at risk of youth crime as "on the edge of expulsions and suspensions " or those who were being severely bullied. Practitioners would then meet families at school through a "link person" – typically someone who worked at the school. At this meeting, the practitioner would explain why the family has been referred (e.g. anger management issues).

VCS organisations

It was less often that VCS organisations themselves would refer families to take part in the interventions. This was because VCS interventions were normally the service referred to. However, in one local authority this approach was beginning to be adopted. A youth organisation conducting outreach in one local area had started referring families to SFAYC funded interventions. The project manager thought the youth organisation could go even further, by referring families who they met at parent group meetings to the SFAYC funded interventions.

Self-referrals

There were examples of families referring other parents to the SFAYC interventions, and in some cases families referring themselves. However, direct referrals to delivery partners working in the local authority were not possible in some areas as families needed to be assessed, which was done in schools.

Local authorities

Local authority case study areas were seldom expected to directly refer families. However, there are other local authorities among the wider 21 successful applicants that have a more active role in referrals. One local authority area from our case study research felt their role in the referral process was limited. Although one local authority tried to provide support for those on PRU waiting lists, they felt that schools were better placed to identify those who might benefit and have conversations with the family.

Police

Police were also involved in making referrals in one case study area. Young people in custody would be referred by the Custody Sergeant to a VCS organisation. They would then try to see the young person within 48 hours through a home visit.

Onward referrals

Young people were also referred on from one delivery partner to another. Typically, this was when Troubled Families keyworkers and schools referred young people onto VCS organisations. Keyworkers aimed for young people to have a smooth transition if being referred onto a certain programme, for example attending workshops in school. For the wider family, keyworkers identified the help they needed, such as mental health provision, and signposted and supported them to take the initiative to access these services themselves. In some cases, keyworkers would help families book appointments with certain services.

Schools and Troubled Families keyworkers tended to conduct assessments prior to onward referrals. In one case study area, keyworkers could refer a child to a VCS organisation specialising in mental health support if they identified mental health needs when working with the family. The VCS organisation then discussed the assessment and decided whether it would be appropriate to engage with the case. If so, they would provide individual therapy.

Families could also be referred to VCS organisations from social services via Early Help. In one area, a parent contacted social services because they could not cope with their child's behaviour. Social services referred them to Early Help, who then referred them onto a youth organisation on the SFAYC project team.

Reaching children, parents and carers least likely to engage with interventions

Local authorities were confident that SFAYC interventions went further than previous youth crime interventions they had run in reaching families least likely to engage with services. There were several examples of that worked well across the case study areas.

Schools and VCS organisations engagement methods

VCS organisations and schools played to their strengths in knowing how to target hard to reach children. VCS organisations knew that some families did not trust statutory services - social services in particular. One SFAYC programme coordinator felt that partners combatted social stigmas around social care. A project manager in another case study area explained that families did not self-refer as they were concerned they might "look stupid". A young person speaking about whether the interventions would be appropriate for friends at school said that the concern about social services would put them off. Approaching families in schools was successful in overcoming this stigma because the intervention was perceived as universal.

To a similar effect, VCS organisations were able to use sport as a facilitator to reach children. In one area, a local sports facility brought young people together at a sports event from different areas of a local authority. Previously, young people from these areas had a history of being at conflict with one another. As well as football activities, the VCS organisation hosted breakfast clubs, resilience building workshops and a counselling hub. Teachers from local schools were also there to run sessions, which provided a familiar face for young people.

Building on existing relationships

Delivery partners also used existing relationships that professionals had in the community to target hard to reach families. This meant that families did not need to open up to someone new. One SFAYC project team felt that although not all community organisations would be successful in engaging young people, most of them would. Over time, Troubled Families keyworkers could build a trusting relationship with families. This was especially helpful for children transitioning from primary to secondary school.

> *"Once the workers go in, they end up discovering all other things. The families are always at the periphery of the gangs, worklessness, school attendance, violence … everything comes out. [The children's problems] are always linked to other things in the family."* (Head of Youth and Community Team)

Multi-agency intelligence

SFAYC project teams used the intelligence gathered through multi-agency working to reach young people and know more about their situation. Different delivery partners were able to collect information about a young

person's situation and share that with other practitioners working with the family. The coordinator of one project team explained that if VCS organisations identified a child who was already in trouble, they could then understand the wider issues connected with the family.

> *"Is there somebody unemployed, an older sibling for example? We can sign-post them."* (Stakeholder interview)

Troubled Families keyworkers mapped the knowledge they received through the wider project team and through families themselves. For example, young people had conversations with them about local territories that gangs 'owned'. This helped the keyworker better understand the local environment and community. It also helped the wider project team assess risk in the area and become experts in their field – for example, knowing which estates are susceptible to youth crime.

Training

Training delivered in schools helped teachers identify early indicators of behaviours children may have if they are susceptible to youth crime. The purpose of this was to reach out to children before they became involved in gangs or other forms of youth crime. In one area, an educational psychologist gave attachment and trauma training to staff in schools. After this, there was appetite to train Emotional Language Support Assistants, who could then provide a means of expression for children who could not use language to express their own troubles.

Persistence

Being persistent was another important way that families were reached. Practitioners accepted that there would be set-backs and not every family would be forthcoming. In some cases, families would agree to an assessment or an initial meeting, but not turn up to the appointment. A VCS lead explained that this was to be expected and part of their role.

> *"Sometimes it can feel like babysitting/chasing clients but it's all part of the role."* (Children and Families Lead, VCS Organisation)

This persistence also rubbed off on families themselves who then spread this mindset. One young person had friends who were involved with drugs. As well as recommending the youth organisation that helped him, he remonstrates with his friends.

> *"I say to them 'is this the life you want to lead?' … It's a hard thing to watch."* (Young person interview, male, 14)

Summer holiday interventions

Finally, running interventions during summer holidays was cited as an important way in which young people could be reached. In one area, a sporting intervention over the summer brought together boys from different primary schools in the area. The organiser of this event said that the SFAYC team would not have engaged boys from certain areas of the local authority without this intervention. Practitioners felt that summer holidays were an opportune time for engaging with young people because they had time that might otherwise be spent doing nothing – or being in situations that had the potential of leading to youth crime or exploitation.

> *"Those kids had an amazing time. What would they be doing in the summer otherwise? That [summer programme] will always stay with those children. They will always remember it."* (Youth and Community Team)

5. What works in service transformation

Since the introduction of the Troubled Families Programme, multi-agency working has become embedded into the support families receive and the way delivery partners work together. The same principles have been adopted by SFAYC teams.

Participants in case study areas and survey respondents from the 21 local authorities explained how service transformation had been the key feature of their new youth crime offer. In this chapter, we outline the key features of service transformation that helped overcome the challenges that SFAYC teams faced in delivering their interventions.

Multi-agency working was a crucial and embedded part of the delivery of SFAYC initiatives. A range of delivery partners came together from local authorities, the third sector, community organisations, the private sector and specialist services. New organisations adopted service transformation – multi-agency working, early intervention and whole family working. Some local authorities expanded their network of delivery partners by making links with wider partners in the community.

Clear and accurate communication was crucial for delivery partners to work together and for families to be clear on how the interventions could help them. Good communication addressed several challenges:
- Getting projects off the ground
- Partners knowing who the lead professional was
- Bridging conflicting work cultures
- Aiding decision making

Good communication was facilitated by steering groups, regular follow up meetings, schools seeing interventions in action, being up front and honest, building relationships, and targeting families.

Data sharing was important for delivery partners to work together more efficiently. Data sharing helped SFAYC teams with the following:
- Identification and targeting of families and acting quickly
- Supporting effective practice
- Monitoring outcomes
- Counter siloed working

Good data sharing entailed deciding what data to share at the project's inception, setting up data sharing agreements, having access to police data and sharing data alongside other youth crime initiatives.

Colocation and flexible working helped delivery partners overcome logistical challenges and work together in a more joined up way. Specifically, logistical challenges included VCS organisations and local authority teams having different working hours; and finding a time and a space for delivery partners to hold meetings. Colocation and flexible working were helpful in counteracting these challenges. SFAYC teams highlighted the benefits of civic centres facilitating partnership meetings, allowing them to establish themselves as a team. Other local authorities highlighted the importance of flexible working hours to fit around families' schedules.

Working closer with the community helped SFAYC teams break down barriers between delivery partners, themselves and the families.

Specifically, these barriers included:
- Scepticism from schools and parents about interventions
- Lack of trust in police
- Culturally sensitive ways of working

Community based approaches helped SFAYC teams develop a wider network of community practitioners that stretched out into geographical areas that had previously not been reached. SFAYC teams also broke down barriers between VCS organisations who had historically been in competition. Having partners set up in the community also meant more direct referral routes and a provision of support for local talent who wanted to deliver their own initiatives based on lived experience of youth crime.

Finally, service transformation ensured that SFAYC interventions were **sustainable** beyond the provision of funding. Most local authority areas and delivery partners felt the interventions could be provided in the long term. This was provided they continued to be facilitated by joint working and that their workforce maintained the knowledge and confidence to deliver. Delivery partners felt joint working was sustainable if partner organisations continued to regularly share feedback, signpost and refer to one another, as well as adapt job roles to emerging needs. Multi-agency working was felt to transcend existing boundaries between services.

Multi-agency working

Like the Troubled Families model, SFAYC teams operated on the basis of multi-agency working. Intervention delivery relied on a range of agencies, such as VCS organisations, police, schools, social enterprises, CAMHS, Troubled Families teams to name but a few. Compared with the Troubled Families Programme for SFAYC funded projects, there was a greater sense of community outreach and activities outside the home from a range of local organisations, including parent support networks, mosques and sports clubs.

The diagram below maps out some of these organisations.
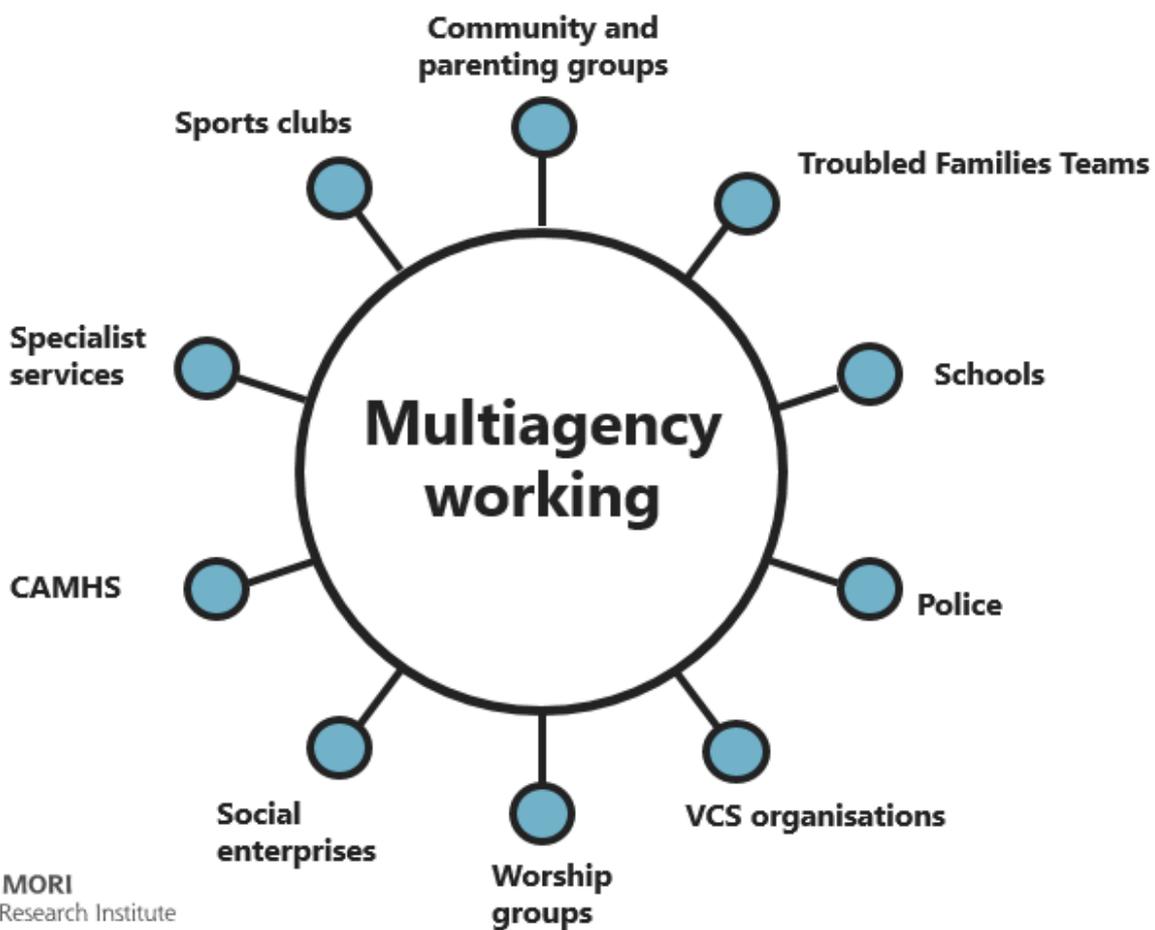
Importance of Troubled Families Programme set-up

Funding bids were based on the Troubled Families Programme – as was required by the application guidelines. Therefore, the joint working approach was written into bids. In the survey, over four in five (83 out of 101) respondents said the implementation of the SFAYC intervention was reliant on the existing set-up of the Troubled Families Programme to a great extent or to some extent. Over 9 in 10 (93 out of 101) said so in relation to the existing set-up of whole family working, and multi-agency working (92 out of 101, with 67 saying 'to a great extent'; see Appendix III).

There were many benefits to using the Troubled Families model for SFAYC interventions. Multi-agency working benefited delivery partners across sectors, who tended to use the Troubled Families language of being "joined up". Interventions were also based around early intervention – in many areas targeting families of children in primary school. Further, the whole family approach was adopted by SFAYC teams, demonstrated by interviews with highly engaged parents. Delivery partners coordinated initiatives with each other so as not to duplicate efforts and ensure that all relevant families were supported. For example, children received mentoring at schools alongside parents attending support groups. A Troubled Families keyworker would also work with the individual family member and the other members of the family.

Clear and accurate communication

Delivery partners from across local authorities felt that clear and accurate communication was an essential part of service transformation and overcoming the challenges of joint working. This was important in ensuring the interventions ran smoothly. Perhaps most important was that delivery partners were clear on families' situations so they could take the appropriate action. Contact with partners and VCS organisations was mainly over email or phone unless they were co-located.

Challenges that clear and accurate communication helped address

- Communication was an essential part of getting projects off the ground. For all case study areas, there were initial challenges to this. It was important to be clear about delivery partners' roles and responsibilities. A mental health worker working in one area said that it was important to be clear about the pathways.

  "If such and such happened, I needed to know … what each of us are doing. That took me a time to understand. I am not sure that it was clear to all the agencies involved …." – Stakeholder interview

- Knowing who the lead professional was: There was some confusion in local authorities about who the "lead professional" was on a given case. This was not always clear from the perspective of delivery partners, even when it seemed to be from that of the local authority. The chief executive of a VCS delivery partner in one local authority wanted clarification about whether social workers or their staff were the lead professional. Ultimately, they felt this could influence their ability to act and deliver.

  "This whole thing about lead professional needs quite a lot more clarity…" – Stakeholder interview

- Conflicting work cultures: Good communication also addressed another key challenge of multi-agency working - conflicting work cultures of delivery partners. Mainly, this applied to the differing cultures between local authorities and VCS organisations. Conflicts centred around differing views on professionalism, a lack of trust and the challenges of delivering new interventions together in ways that had not been done previously.

  "[VCS colleagues] can get in quick and their relationships with families can open endless doors. But I have found it difficult to understand their professional values." – Stakeholder interview

- Decision making: Communication was also important for decision making as a group and knowing who would take interventions forward. Leaders recognised that governance could be challenging. They highlighted the importance of deciding who takes charge at project set up. Then importantly, they would need to commit to continue leadership throughout the lifetime of the project.

  "Governance is a real challenge for the life of this project – who grips it and keeps it going from the end of March is going to be a real challenge." – Stakeholder interview

Important factors for good communication:

- Steering groups were important monthly meetings where delivery partners provided each other with updates on their interventions and how they were using the funding. Steering groups acted as a central hub for delivery partners, they were solution focused and ensured that partners were delivering complementary messages to the families. Steering groups were also felt to be a symbolic representation of the team because they brought together partners from all different lines of work.

  "There must have been about 14 services round the table doing the thinking." – Stakeholder interview

- Regular follow ups with delivery partners and families kept interventions moving – particularly in engaging schools. In one local authority, the project manager briefed schools on why they should be involved in the programme in July – just before the summer holidays. They followed this up with a leaflet and two briefings with headteachers and social care managers. This raised the awareness of the SFAYC interventions within local schools.

- Seeing the interventions in action: One of the best ways for SFAYC teams to communicate their offer to schools was to see first-hand the changes it could make. In one area, a VCS organisation delivering therapeutic interventions across 11 schools secured schools' buy-in by running training sessions.

  "Enabling schools to see the changes for themselves has been really important. They have bought into the training that they have received and hopefully that will sustain the changes in their schools in the future." – Stakeholder interview

- Delivery partners being up-front and honest was felt to be important in communicating clearly and accurately. This is something that a VCS partner felt their SFAYC team had.

  "It's a good meeting. There's no bullshit – we have created a creative environment which is honest because we want to learn from this and identify jointly what is or what is not working and why. And people care – that's what's different." – Stakeholder interview

- Building relationships: The importance of building relationships was noted as important. A DWP school's adviser said that joint working relied on good relationship building. It was also important for delivery partners to trust and respect each other's work and opinions. They also emphasised that they did not apply the same approach to all families – instead ensuring they were person-centred.

  "I think that this works really well in [local authority area] – we have good connections and respect for each other as practitioners and are more person-centred." – Stakeholder interview

- Targeted approach: It was emphasised that communication and interventions needed to be targeted. The founder of a counselling service explained that it was better to focus on a specific child and a specific community to identify nuances and the school's position within that.

  "You cannot scatter gun in primary schools because if you get it wrong you will cause damage – potentially to the child, the family and the school." – Stakeholder interview

  Their approach was felt to be more targeted because they had created an environment where partners were honest about what was and was not working.

Data sharing

Delivery partners across local authorities have been sharing data to overcome challenges and work together more efficiently. They recognised the importance of data sharing – the principles of which have been continued from their respective Troubled Families funded services[17].

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[17] https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-evaluation-of-the-troubled-families-programme-2015-to-2020-emerging-findings

Challenges that data sharing addressed

Data sharing for SFAYC teams met the same challenges is at had done for the Troubled Families Programme:

- **Identification and targeting** - identifying eligible families and targeting families for earlier intervention;
- **Supporting effective practice** - providing frontline workers with access to the latest information to support their practice; and
- **Monitoring outcomes** - recording family outcomes

There were a few additional challenges to the SFAYC interventions that data sharing addressed:

- Acting quickly: Data sharing helped delivery partners act quickly on urgent incidents. For example, in one local authority, a child disclosed a threat to their life. Delivery partners acted fast. A VCS organisation linked the Troubled Families team to a housing reciprocal, a temporary social housing allocation scheme, who moved the family out the area quickly. Data sharing had an impact on how different organisations worked with the family. For example, if a child discloses something, the organisations can share their learning and approach a problem from different angles. For example, a VCS organisation speaks with a child while the Troubled Families team approaches the parents about the topic.

  "Knowledge sharing could be better, it is not perfection or anything. But [...] it is quite unique and very effective because you are building that working relationship with [partners] and get to know them. You bounce ideas off each other and make suggestions." – VCS mentoring provider

- Siloed working: VCS organisations across several local authorities struggled with what was perceived as siloed working and excessive bureaucracy within statutory agencies. SFAYC teams shared data with VCS organisations at the start to be clear how they could engage with the project and wider teams. But this had been made difficult by some continued siloed working in certain local authorities. A VCS organisation explained that this made the process overly bureaucratic – if one delivery partner did not pass a message on, the work would stop.

  "When you join up people, it's important not to fall down the cracks, but that's what's happening at the moment. Someone doesn't make that telephone call or somebody doesn't connect...and they don't act quick enough." – Stakeholder interview

Important factors for good data sharing:

- Deciding what data to share at project inception: SFAYC teams tended to decide what data they wanted to share at inception and identify what was and was not appropriate to share between partners. In one local authority this was achieved through one-to-one sessions. The Early help lead in this local authority explained that data sharing within the core team had been straightforward, after they had their data sharing agreement scrutinised.

- Set up data sharing agreements: Local authorities tended to set up data sharing agreements with delivery partners at the outset of the project. One Troubled Families Co-ordinator explained that they had a data sharing agreement with the Metropolitan Police – this was essential for gathering data on police call-outs. In another area, a VCS organisation delivering sports initiatives said they had an information sharing agreement in place with the local authority. They used data to manage risk and get overnight reports of crime to inform their risk assessments for sessions.

- **Access to police data:** Having access to police data was felt to be especially useful for SFAYC project teams. One Superintendent said that even the police, where often such sensitive data can be protected, were keen to share data. He advised that it was agreed that knife crime data could be included in the predictive model used by the local authority, in addition to the broader youth crime data which had previously been made available.

- **Sharing data alongside other youth crime initiatives:** In one area, the project manager worked alongside the Violence Reduction Unit, who in turn worked alongside community safety. If any family was known for youth offending, they would work alongside their service.

  "We make sure all services are sharing intel about families, so we get it right." – Stakeholder interview

Co-location and flexible working

Co-location and flexible working also helped delivery partners work together in a joined-up way.

Logistical challenges that co-location and flexible working helped address

- **Working hours:** Delivery partners gaining a better understanding of each other's working hours was key to joint working. Differing working hours could be challenging. One local authority explained that VCS organisations they worked with often did not work a typical 9-to-5 day. The operational lead said that this meant they are not there for emails, making appointments, and the most basic of communication during standard working hours. On the other hand, VCS organisations explained that they had to work around families' and schools' schedules – which were often after 5pm.

  "Time delays are quite an issue for us." – Stakeholder interview

- **Timing:** Timing was also an issue for partnership working. In particular, trying to get delivery partners together at the same time. One VCS partner said trying to coordinate people's diaries for referrals was problematic. This led to participants receiving several uncoordinated mentoring sessions. Schools also found timing problematic, particularly for training, as they had to organise it around their INSET days.

How colocation and flexible working addressed these challenges:

- **Being in one civic centre:** In one local authority area, three VCS organisations were co-located under one civic centre. The Troubled Families Co-ordinator explained that this was a substantial change and had several benefits to the SFAYC team. Co-location had enabled them to become established as a team.

  "One of the reasons we are co-located is to establish ourselves as a team, understand the things we are responsible for, but work in partnership, know each other, and be flexible about what we can achieve." – Stakeholder interview, Local Authority

- **Being flexible around families' schedules:** Another way delivery partners could work together was by being flexible around family's schedules. In one local authority a VCS organisation fit around a school's timings to deliver the interventions before and after school. The project manager explained that there were issues at the start of the programme.

  "Every month we were having issues and schools were complaining. But then [VCS organisation] increased their flexibility to make this work by having their sessions before and after school." – Stakeholder interview

- **Facilitate partnership meetings:** Ad-hoc partnership meetings were possible through co-location. It was especially helpful when VCS organisations could drop into a delivery partner's offices for meetings. For example, in one area, a VCS organisation mainly worked with the local authority over email and phone, but they also had access to their office space.

- Troubleshooting: Co-location also enabled the SFAYC teams to troubleshoot issues on a day to day basis, which was felt to be especially important for families with urgent needs.

Working closer with the community

SFAYC teams worked closer with the community to help break down barriers between delivery partners, between themselves and the families. This helped them reach more families on their own terms. This required an innovative approach from local authorities, as well as involving community groups as key delivery partners.

Barriers within the community to be broken down

- Scepticism from school staff and parents: School staff and parents questioned the long-term commitments of VCS organisations. For example, in one local authority the programme coordinator reported that when a support worker from a VCS organisation first came to a school, they needed time to build up trust with staff and parents.

   "(Support worker from VCS organisation) worked incredibly hard to gain that trust. She was out in the playground with parents every day she was here, reassuring them she was not just here for the day but for the long term." – Stakeholder interview

- Lack of trust in police: There was also a lack of trust in the police among the children at some schools. Schools' experience with the police has been mixed. One school used to have a Police Community Support Officer who came to the school regularly. He did road safety and 'Stranger Danger'. Some of the children went out onto the main road with him with a speed gun. With the older children he did assemblies on anti-social behaviour and knife crime. However, the programme lead questioned its impact.

   "For a lot of our children, they do not necessarily respect the police (just as some do not respect social services). So the police coming in and telling them what to do will not necessarily make any difference – particularly to the children who it really matters to." – Stakeholder interview

- Culturally sensitive ways of working: One local authority branched out to work with mosques. This was felt to require a more culturally sensitive way of working. This was felt to be a worthwhile endeavour was described as a "huge learning moment".

How new ways of working broke down barriers:

- A wider network of community practitioners: In addition to the whole family working and community ties established in the Troubled Families programme, SFAYC teams stretched further again into the community. One programme manager said that having community groups as part of the approach meant a wider network of young people and practitioners could be developed. They could then use this network to stretch further into the community.

   "In the middle of the programme you can bring in the community itself...you begin to build a bigger pool and network of people...the grooming and exploitation won't be solved by the Police...or one partner...it will be solved by everybody..." – Stakeholder interview

Trauma-informed approaches in schools

One case study area explained that their SFAYC intervention involved building up the capacity of schools and voluntary organisations to embed trauma-informed approaches in their work. This helps them to better support young people and their families who may be at risk of perpetrating or being a victim of youth crime. Trauma-informed approaches recognise both the challenges of engaging with families who had experienced trauma as well as the impact that working with these families has on Troubled Families keyworkers.

The framework of the training focused on the needs of the local community including schools and community organisations and was aimed at all school staff and keyworkers. It consisted of a two-day training programme with the overarching aim to improve participants' self-regulation and increase their ability to respond to children and families with empathy. The training aimed not only at helping develop the keyworkers' resilience to face complex trauma but also at identifying the risk factors for children getting involved in youth violence. The training was followed by a consultation to think about how the ideas from the training related to and could be implemented in the participant's work.

"Trauma-informed approaches can be tailored in a way to tackle youth crime [...] It is a useful way of thinking about the impact and the relation between trauma and violence." (Stakeholder interview)

Even though the trauma-informed approach is a relatively new field, trauma-informed practices emerged more widely as a way of thinking in schools in this case study area. Even though the training in this case study area was still in its early stages, the stakeholder underlined the importance of developing a network of learning alongside other local authorities and schools to develop a shared knowledge base that spans beyond the local context. The stakeholder explained that the biggest challenge for the training was long-term budgetary uncertainties.

- Geographical spread: Another local authority had a coordinated way of stretching out geographically into certain parts of the local authority. The area was divided into four localities. A team was introduced into each locality. The community could then approach people in these teams. Over time, young people and community members became more forthcoming in engaging with these teams.

- Redressing power balance between services: SFAYC funded projects were felt to bring VCS organisations together who had historically worked in competition with one another. Interventions were also felt to happen more within the community rather than on the council's terms. This was felt to shift power dynamics more towards the community, which was seen as positive.

  "There is a big power balance. They think we [at the local authority] run everything. This initiative shifts the power dynamic and makes it more collaborative. Now we can ask them, what do you think would work with this community?" – Stakeholder interview

- Meeting young people out of custody: The way young people were initially contacted was more direct in some local authorities than others. They could be met directly out of custody rather than through a series of delivery partners. In one local authority area, young people were met as they were leaving custody. And anyone under the age of 18 would have to have a family member present. They would then discuss the young person's goals and aspirations and work on the next step of the intervention.

- Supporting local emerging talent: In other areas, delivery partners themselves were from the community. The founder of a new VCS organisation was from the local authority area he was working in. He had lived experience of youth crime and was able to act as a role model for young people looking to escape it. He felt that other delivery partners supported him to grow. They listened to his story and local authority staff linked him to other partners who could help him achieve his goals. The director of the programme in this area emphasised the importance of bringing in local emerging talent from the third sector.

Working closely with the community was something that worked well in service transformation for SFAYC teams. It was also important that these and other developments in communication, data sharing, colocation and flexible working were sustainable.

Sustainability for the local authority

A further function of service transformation was local authorities' abilities to sustain the SFAYC interventions. A large proportion of survey respondents (67 of 101, Figure 2) agreed that their local authority would be able to continue SFAYC interventions in the longer term to some or a great extent. Interviews suggested that sustainability was facilitated particularly by joint-working arrangements, increased workforce knowledge and confidence, and the importance of local context in rolling out interventions.

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Figure 2: Continuation of SFAYC funded interventions

To what extent, overall, do you think your local authority will be able to continue SFAYC interventions in the longer term?

Base: All (101) Fieldwork dates 13 January to 23 February 2020. (QI7))

Sustainability of joint working

Stakeholders in case study areas discussed how strategies established under the SFAYC fund may be effective in maintaining multi-agency working and communication once funding ends. These included:

- Partner organisations regularly sharing feedback with each other, allowing them to share their learning and approach a problem from different angles.

- Improving joint working – through signposting and referrals on behalf of other organisations; establishing steering groups / action groups with a range of stakeholders in the local authority; increasing the flexibility of meetings and appointments between partner organisations, for example organising meetings before or after work.

"In the future, knowledge and communication structures will remain firmly in place." (Stakeholder interview)

There was strong agreement from stakeholders on the benefits of multi-agency working, which was said to transcend existing boundaries and have a transformative effect on intervention delivery and families. This was reflected in the survey, with most respondents (92 of 101) seeing relationships formed with key partners under the SFAYC to continue to at least some extent[18].

One case study area example of joint working was collaboration between the local authority and VCS organisation to deliver Early Help workshops together. This involved working directly with primary school pupils to deliver information on what services are available to them and the first point of contact at their school for any issues/problems they may have. Developing these workshops in such a way was said to strengthen the relationship between the different organisations which will continue once funding ends.

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[18] QI6: To what extent do you think that the relationship formed with key partners as part of the SFAYC Fund will continue in the future?

"Partnership working between the local authority and VCS has been really interesting and built strong relationships which will extend well beyond the programme." (Stakeholder interview)

Joint working created under the funded interventions had also been effective in developing a collaborative referral process, whereby local authorities and VCS organisations can refer vulnerable families and young people to each other, or sign post them to the best organisation for them.

Elaborating and changing job roles was another way that joint working through the interventions seemed set to be sustainable. For example, in one case study area a senior delivery staff member became responsible for community safety and youth offending services within the children and families' service branch. This role ensured a range of teams are joined up and cross-communication between different teams.

Some delivery staff felt that sustainability could be more achievable if they had been consulted at bid-writing stage. This would have helped delivery staff plan for sustainability at the outset, thinking about what could realistically be achieved from a service-delivery perspective.

Barriers to sustainability

The main barrier and concern over intervention sustainability from stakeholders was funding. This included concerns over the end of funding and ambiguity over future funding opportunities for work around youth crime reduction. Other key challenges for sustainability included staffing and lack of senior stakeholder support.

Challenges and concerns around funding

Survey respondents reported the main barrier to continuing the SFAYC interventions in the longer term to be *'funding'* (99 of 101)[19]. The second most common reason to discontinue the intervention(s) was *'staffing'* (28 of 101), followed by *'willingness to support by senior stakeholders'* (19 of 101) and *'lack of data showing impact'* (16 of 101). Specifically, some stakeholders agreed that it was too early to have gathered any data showing insight. For example, one case study area with a focus on Early Help noted that the impact of their project needs to be recorded longitudinally by tracking young people over a longer time frame and monitoring their transition between primary and secondary school.

"Usually when they [young people] go to secondary school they run with the wrong peers, so in a couple of years we will be able to clearly see whether this work helps them make the right choices" **(Stakeholder interview)**

In the case study areas, stakeholders discussed their concerns over core funding cuts and a lack of funding for the SFAYC interventions going forward. The main concern was that current levels of service provision would not be sustainable. Overall, a wide range of stakeholders agreed that this created uncertainty around the future of interventions, as once the funding ended it was unclear where funding would come for this type of work. Interventions ending was also a concern for families:

"Everybody is stretched to their limits and there is not a lot of funding. This is not fair, and I am just lucky I've got other support when this [intervention] ends." (Parent interview)

Parents and stakeholders expressed concern that families receiving support under the SFAYC fund were going to suffer once the intervention stops. Planning strategies to overcome this were seen as essential for sustainability.

Another funding-related concern from one case study area was competition between VCS organisations trying to secure funding from the same sources. This resulted in a range of different interventions looking to work with the same group of people. Going forward stakeholders noted that this could increase the ineffectiveness of interventions, as well as risking the stability of VCS organisations.

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[19] QI8: What do you think are the main barriers to continuing the SFAYC interventions in the longer term?

> *"Switching funding between different VCS organisations could lead to confusion in the community and create instability in this sector in the long term." (Stakeholder interview)*

Having said this, under the fund one case study area built on strong partnership working between the local authority and VCS services by ensuring the VCS staff were highly trained in the Troubled Families whole family working approach. Going forward this will enable the VCS organisations and local authority to work closely together under the same model to successfully support vulnerable children and families.

Suitability of roll-out and developing a legacy

Stakeholders felt that success going forward was influenced by forming the right relationships at senior levels in local authorities and interventions being adapted to local needs. It was important to ensure the interventions had a positive reputation among potential beneficiaries and commissioners. For example, in one case study area a stakeholder noted that having links with senior stakeholders in charge of other successful interventions targeting crime reduction in adults will be important in maintaining momentum and legacy of the SFAYC intervention among the police and local community.

> *"I hope that there will be a positive reputation in the borough and neighbouring areas to encourage schools to sign up and present possibilities for working together in the future." (Stakeholder interview)*

There was some concern from stakeholders however over possible plans to roll out the intervention nationally, or in neighbouring areas. The concerns here lay with whether rolling out the intervention would have the same outcomes as in the original case study area. Some stakeholders felt that the interventions' success was based on the fact that it was developed specifically for the case study area, and therefore may not work as well if rolled out elsewhere.

Remaining gaps in service provision

Stakeholders identified three main challenges to service provision going forward: community relationships with authority, specialist training for multi-agency staff and the ongoing need for early intervention. This was underpinned by a broader concern about the lack of investment in services:

> *"Can [the intervention] plug the hole for London for [the past] 25 years? That's the real question." (Stakeholder interview)*

One key concern voiced by stakeholders was the ongoing lack of trust in authorities within communities. This included aversion and avoidance of statutory representatives such as police and social workers. Going forward tackling these stigmas could enable better rapport to be built between the local authority, families and young people identified as at risk and needing support.

> *"I would like to work more closely with the community to support a changing culture. There is still an influential culture around not communicating with the authorities, for example 'don't grass on your friends or family'." (Stakeholder interview)*

Stakeholders expressed the need for more training for staff, with a focus on specialised training. In the long term this would give staff strong skills to help young people and families, with added potential for cost savings.

> *"In the future I would like to offer training under funds such as this on Nightmare Deconstruction and Reprocessing (NDR meditation), adverse childhood experiences (ACE) and trauma to give staff further insights into reasons for children's lives and not just looking at impact." (Stakeholder interview)*

Early intervention targeting younger children was discussed in depth among stakeholders as being an important way of reducing youth crime, particularly in relation to building resilience and avoiding risky situations among children aged 0-12. At the same time, a focus on early intervention was said to be needing further attention at national level. For example, one area mentioned that they needed to be more selective in targeting groups, including increasing compulsory transition programmes from primary to secondary schools to reduce anxiety among this age group.

"It will be interesting to see if government have more of a focus on Early Intervention going forward as it is very evident that many families would not be in the situation they are in if they had had some early intervention." (Stakeholder interview)

6. Outcomes for children and families

Interventions focussing on building relationships between support services and participants and interventions including diversionary activities were reported as having positively influenced a range of aspects of young people's and their family's lives. For young people, these aspects ranged from reported increased confidence and awareness of risk factors, to improved emotion regulation, outlook and school behaviour. The targeted families, more broadly, reported positive changes in parenting skills as well as benefitting from counselling and signposting.

Schools in particular seemed to have been an important catalyst for positive change. With targeted interventions, staff at schools worked towards improving the resilience of children as well as their families. The mostly positive outcomes from these interventions, in turn, seemed to foster children's willingness to engage with schools.

The funding, furthermore, was said to have had a sustainable, positive impact on children and families. Although some parts of the interventions are likely to continue being effective once funding subsides, some families and stakeholders held concerns over what would happen once intervention support ends. In all this, the scale of qualitative research with children and parents needs to be noted: fieldwork covered six case study areas, out of which five worked directly with young people.

Most stakeholders felt it was too early to report on the long-term impact of SFAYC interventions on young people and parents. Indeed, nine out of ten SFAYC interventions at the time of fieldwork had supported families and young people for less than a year[20]. Nevertheless, the interventions rated most successful at helping divert young people from risk routes were *whole family interventions* (selected as one of two by 65 survey respondents), *one-to-one interventions with young people* (56) and *diversionary activities such as sport and residential trips* (45)[21]. Intervention seen as less successful were *group work with young people* (13), *one-to-one interventions with parents* (11) and *parenting classes* (9). Although *parenting classes* were reportedly seen as less successful, this is not the case for parenting support as part of the whole-family approach, which will be discussed in the *Improvements to the whole family* section of this chapter on page 39.

To the extent possible to say at the time, stakeholders felt that the programme had been very or fairly effective in *improving young people's resilience (69 agree), increasing their exposure to positive life choices (69 agree)* and *achieved more consistent engagement in school (66 agree;* Figure 3). They also felt that young people showed increased levels of *confidence (71 agree)* as well as an *increased sense of hope for the future (69 agree).* The outcome rated as least successful by stakeholders was *young people having a more positive attitude towards authority (53 agree).*

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[20] QM3: How long has your SFAYC Fund intervention been supporting families and young people?

[21] QS5C: What are the top two types of interventions you think are the most successful in helping to divert young people from risk routes?

Figure 3: Effectiveness of SFAYC on various outcomes

Among young people that have been involved in the SFAYC interventions, how effective, if at all, has the programme in your local authority area been in fostering:
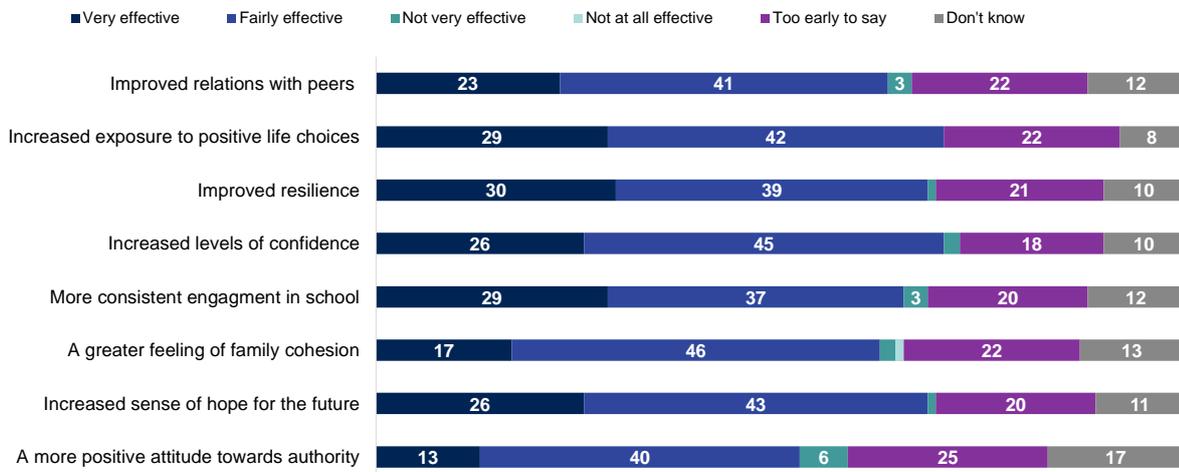
Base: All (101) Fieldwork dates 13 January to 23 February 2020. (QS7))

As outlined in chapter 2 on the drivers of youth violence "factors to do with personal circumstances whilst growing up can give some individuals a higher propensity for violence", underlining the interwovenness of problems and their need to be dealt with together to improve family functioning as a whole. This chapter, therefore, explores the outcomes that SFAYC interventions reportedly had on the lives of young people and their families.

Troubled Families keyworkers' and VCS based mentors' roles in improving outcomes for families

Troubled Families keyworkers and VCS based mentors played a central part in the SFAYC interventions for children and families. They built up relationships quickly and often served as point of contact for the individuals to connect them to the wider programme. Coming from voluntary rather than statutory services further helped VCS mentors to build trust with families. This allowed mentors not only to unearth and help with a range of problems ranging from access to benefits and housing to mental health issues, but also to signpost families to other organisations for help. The voluntary nature of parents' interactions with Troubled Families keyworkers and mentors also placed the choice of engagement, and its ending, with them.

"As we go in, other things come out just through engaging and discussing with the parent." (Keyworker interview)

"Because we're voluntary, we tell our parents, 'if at any point you feel [that] you don't need it anymore, then let's have those conversations', they feel that they're involved in that decision making." (Keyworker interview)

Changes for young people

In the online survey stakeholders selected *school attendance and exclusion, peer groups, child criminal exploitation* and *gang affiliation* as the key drivers of youth violence that SFAYC interventions were addressing mostly (Figure 4). Two additional key drivers of youth crime, less likely to be addressed by SFAYC interventions, were *exposure to violence, crime within the family* and *poverty*.

Figure 4: Key drivers of youth crime and degree to which SFAYC interventions address these

Key drivers of youth crime and the extent to which SFAYC funded interventions address these
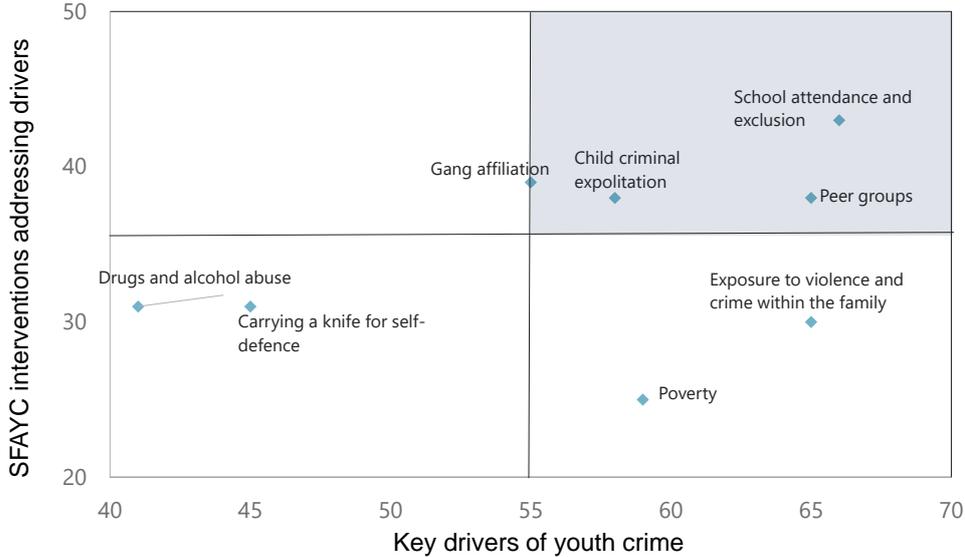
Base: All (101) Fieldwork dates 13 January to 23 February 2020. (QI4, QI5)

To address youth violence, SFAYC funded interventions were designed to impact on a range of aspects concerning young people's current and future wellbeing. These ranged from increased confidence, improved emotional wellbeing, an increased awareness of risk factors as well as a more positive outlook, which will be outlined here in more detail.

Increased confidence

As outlined in previous chapters, the transition from primary to secondary school plays a central part in exposing young people to risk routes. Several SFAYC interventions, therefore, focussed on building young people's confidence to support them around this transition.

Stakeholders and young people alike reported how positive relationships with Troubled Families keyworkers helped children to build their confidence as they allowed children to confide into keyworkers and share their emotions and concerns with them. The keyworkers, in turn, were able to reassure children and serve as positive role models. Parents reported how keyworkers were able to build a positive relationship with their children, including children with SEND. A young person reported that he was often unable to speak to his parents, however, he saw his keyworker as an extended family member and a person he could speak to about everything: *"We're proper close."*

A mother from a different family reported how her daughter's relationship with her keyworker helped her settle into secondary school and make friends during her first week. Due to her keyworker:

> *"[My daughter's] confidence is growing, she is finding her feet and it has been really nice to watch her."* *(Parent interview)*

Other Troubled Families keyworkers and individuals connected VCS organisations to families, such as mentors, were able to positively influence young people, specifically those with SEND, as they served as role-models and provided relatable experiences:

> *"[The mentors] were very similar [to my child] and had a good relationship. He was like a mini him. He knows how he felt in particular moments."* *(Parent interview)*

> *"Boys with ADHD need a voice to express themselves. [...] he holds a lot of his emotions in and that can cause anger [...]. I found over the years that only talking heals. Any support that I can get in terms of being there for [him] helps".*" *(Parent interview)*

Other participants reported how diversionary activities, be it summer programmes or joining sport clubs, boosted young people's confidence and self-esteem. It exposed them to many new people outside of their previous environments. One Troubled Families keyworker, for example, reported how the summer programme helped young people to meet new people in a safe environment:

> *"They could also see other children who were struggling to meet challenges, sometimes greater than their own – that they were not alone."* *(Keyworker interview)*

This experience was reflected in young people's experiences:

> *"Away from the bullies at school, [the diversionary activities] helped build my confidence so much."* *(Young person interview)*

Relationships with Troubled Families keyworkers, however, did not work as effectively everywhere. One young person reported how their keyworker offered additional help but did not fulfil that promise:

> *"He wanted to do work with me. He told me, if you need something speak to me. But he never came around."* *(Young person interview)*

Emotion regulation

Troubled Families keyworkers and individuals connecting them to VCS organisations, such as mentors, also helped young people improve their emotion regulation by thinking about their mental health and develop techniques of self-care. This was important as the young people who took part in the interventions often struggled with emotions such as anger and were unable to manage it successfully.

> *"He holds a lot of his emotions in and that can cause anger."* *(Parent interview)*

Interventions helped young people in various ways to speak about their feelings and to look after their mental health more actively. Examples included learning about calming techniques, such as meditation, referring the young person to a mental health community or a boxing club to channel the child's energy. Young people appreciated these outlets.

> *"It helps you control yourself [...] they take you places to calm down [...] it's made me control my anger, it's the boxing part, you can let it out on the boxing stuff."* *(Young person interview)*

This was reflected by stakeholders as well, who reported that the programme increased the resilience of participating children as they learnt, for example, how to withstand peer pressure.

Awareness of risk factors

The interventions helped young people in different ways to become more aware of the risk factors associated with youth violence. Several local authorities, for example, organised assemblies to this end. These assemblies seemed to leave a lasting impression on young people, helping them to question their 'friends' and environments:

> *"It made me realise, you don't have to be a bad person to be caught up in things. You can just be at the wrong place or do a silly mistake and pay the consequences."* *(Young person interview)*

> *"He told us about drainers and chargers: Some people want to see you fail. Bullies or fake friends, they are drainers. [...] Then, there are your good friends that stay by you, that want to see you happy."* *(Young person interview)*

Young people's awareness also rose in terms of safe and unsafe behaviour online. After taking part in assemblies, children reported being more aware of how to stay safe online and increased knowledge about the dangers of sexting. Young people also learnt about the impact of their decisions on their lives and those of others, which was reflected by participants in several family interviews.

> *"It's disgusting but I am glad I saw [examples of sexting] because now I know what can happen."*
> *(Young person interview)*

Outlook

In the survey a large majority of stakeholders (93 of 101) agreed that SFAYC funded *work prevents crime amongst young people*[22]. This was reflected in case studies where young people's outlook had changed and interventions provided new perspectives for them. Young people felt that Troubled Families keyworkers, and individuals connecting families to VCS organisations, helped them to remain positive, to better themselves, and to make better choices in life. As the case study below illustrates, young people came up with new life aspirations, attempted to improve their outcomes at school or decided to move away from criminal activities.

Individual support from a VCS organisation: Encouraging future opportunities for young people

The premise of the SFAYC intervention in one case study area was on working directly with the police to identify young people in custody who would benefit from further support. The mentor in this instance provided signposting and open discussions about the multitude of options available for young people's futures. Young people were supported on a case by case basis, so educational routes and career opportunities were discussed based on individual need.

In this case study area, the mentor had a positive impact on the lives of the young people we spoke with. For example, one young person, having failed school and getting caught up in gang crime, spoke of how their mentor was good at opening doors for the future, such as helping with CV writing and making them aware of different opportunities.

"[They] taught me how to better myself, make better choices in life and develop problem solving. Lots of young people go on the road to make money, and even though it might take longer to make legitimate money [the mentor] showed it's worth aiming for a career." (young person interview)

This same individual mentioned how they are now trying to get an education and would like to go to university to pursue a career related to sports.

In the same case study area, a different young person discussed how their mentor helped him alongside a psychotherapist to get off the streets and into boxing. They spoke about the importance of boxing as it gave them good discipline and a focus. The young person mentioned that the mentor was important in facilitating these discussions. He also accompanied the young person throughout the process and supported him financially when he was at risk of taking up criminal activities again.

"[They] really, really helped me. If [my mentor] weren't there, I'd be in a really difficult spot right now. Education is important but [the mentor] made me see how it isn't for everyone and now I feel like I have a future in boxing – I work like Mayweather." (young person interview)

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[22] QS3: To what extent, if at all, do you think the SFAYC interventions in your local authority:

Improved engagement with school

As the Serious Violence Strategy outlines, truancy and school expulsions and suspensions are markers for increased risk of getting involved in youth violence. Improving engagement at school, therefore, was a key part of the SFAYC interventions.

Stakeholders and young people alike reported how the interventions changed young people's behaviour at school. In different cases, Troubled Families keyworkers and mentors form VCS organisations were able to raise young people's awareness about the dangerous trajectories often associated with problematic behaviour at school.

Several stakeholders reported how young people reconsidered their options after taking part in the interventions. The increased awareness about their future choices seemed to have positively influenced their willingness to engage with schools. One stakeholder recalls how they saw a strong reduction in expulsions and an increase in school attendance for participating young people:

> *"This is a pilot, we had hopes rather than expectations. And for all these young people, we had no single permanent exclusions from all the 25 that we've worked with. That is a huge success."* *(Stakeholder interview)*

In another local authority, a stakeholder reported how a young person reached out for help as he faced difficulties at school, including the risk of a permanent expulsion. He was referred to a mentoring organisation that supported young people as part of the SFAYC fund. His mentor advised him to spend several days at a pupil referral unit (PRU) to see what it was like. The mentor supported him during this time and helped him reflect on the experience. Because of the good relationship between the young person and the mentor, the young person became aware of the negative impact the PRU would have on his future and decided to change his behaviour at school. The mentor recalls:

> *"It was a good thing because he saw the other life...it really made him think [as] he was seeing what he didn't want to see, what was there for his future. And there was someone else to tell him, 'I'm here, let's do this together'."* *(Mentor interview)*

Schools as a platform for change

Stakeholders involved in the SFAYC intervention set up a school-based parenting offer for 400 young people and where appropriate their families to improve their resilience. The intervention aims to enable young people to withstand peer pressure and make positive choices, improve parenting capacity and family function and subsequently avoid costs for statutory or specialist services. The stakeholders also planned to introduce a youth crime toolkit to increase parents' awareness and help develop skills to recognise the risks of knife and gang-related crime. The toolkit was designed to enable the sector to understand the most effective ways to engage with young people to prevent youth violence for specific cohorts.

Improvements to the whole family

Survey findings showed that three out of four stakeholders (77 of 101) thought that SFAYC interventions had been successful in *preventing family problems from escalating[23]*. A similar proportion of stakeholders felt that the interventions were successful in *improving outcomes for the family as a whole* (76 of 101) as well as *improving the overall wellbeing of families involved* (72 of 101).

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[23] QS6: Thinking about improvements in family functioning as a result of SFAYC interventions, how successful or unsuccessful has the programme been in: Preventing family problems from escalating

Three out of four stakeholders (72 of 101) also thought *that families feel a greater sense of safety* since starting the programme at least to a fair amount, with one in five stakeholders (20 of 101) thinking this to a great deal[24]. A large majority of stakeholders also felt that the interventions in their local authority were focused on early intervention with families and were centred around the whole family (94 and 91 of 101 stakeholders respectively)[25].

Parenting skills

Case study stakeholders reported that SFAYC funded interventions had positive outcomes on the parenting capacity of families involved. The interventions seemed to have made parents more aware of their own mental health, which, in turn, increased their awareness of their children's mental health. Parents and children reported how their relationship improved as a consequence. This was reflected in the survey, where 83 out of 101 stakeholders surveyed thought that the intervention successfully helped families avoid statutory intervention a great deal or a fair amount[26].

Several parents recalled how Troubled Families keyworkers empowered them to speak to their children and enabled them to express things they did not feel able to communicate to their children without the keyworker.

> *"[The keyworker] becomes a spokesperson [...] they would get involved and speak up, like things I couldn't say, things that I couldn't express because I couldn't stop crying, like, how do I speak to my son [...] having [the keyworker,] it was like having an interpreter, an advocate."* (Parent interview)

Parents reported, for example, how their children's situation had improved since the family started taking part in the intervention. In one case, a mother reported how the relationship between her and her daughter had improved, which had a positive impact on the whole family. She reported that they had fewer arguments and experienced less tension. As a consequence, she felt less stressed and felt she transmitted less stress to her daughter as well:

> "*Things are a lot calmer at home, [my daughter] listens now, before she would ignore me. [She is] more mature now,[...] I'm less stressed."* (Parent interview)

In several cases, parents talked about the distance travelled due to the close collaboration with Troubled Families keyworkers. Parents reported how their involvement in the project enabled them to have a better understanding of the underlying health conditions of their children.

> "*We were really, really struggling before we met [the keyworker]. We have come to learn a lot more about [our son]. We thought he was just being naughty and we did not understand his behaviour, but now we understand that it could be a mixture of autism and ADHD."* (Parent interview)

The Troubled Families keyworkers coming in and 'translating' behaviours helped parents to better understand their child's behaviour. Early help assessments helped to improve family relationships as parents gained a greater understanding for the overall situation. As a consequence, parents felt much better equipped to cope with their children.

In another case, the parent of a child with difficulties at school reported how they were relieved by the fact that their child would receive mentoring support.

> *"From day one [of keyworker support], I felt really supported and a weight was lifted from my shoulder [...] sometimes I feel like I'm left on the side bench and my head is all over the place, I don't get what's happening [...] so having [the keyworkers] involved in school and outside of school is, trust me, amazing."* (Parent interview)

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[24] QS4: To what extent do you think that families involved in the intervention(s) feel a greater sense of safety since the start of the programme?

[25] QS3: To what extent, if at all, do you think that the SFAYC interventions in your local authority do each of the following? Are focused on early intervention with families; Are centred around the whole family

[26] QS3: To what extent, if at all, do you think that the SFAYC interventions in your local authority do each of the following? Successfully help families to avoid statutory intervention

All in all, many interventions made parents more aware of their children's mental health needs, as well as helping parents re-thinking their values, beliefs and parenting practices.

Signposting and positive family experiences

Another positive outcome was that Troubled Families keyworkers were either able to help parents directly or able to signpost them to specialised organisations that could help. This included helping parents accessing services such as benefits or explaining official documents. If keyworkers were not able to assist, they signposted parents to specialised institutions such as Citizen's Advice or the Job Centre Plus.

> *"As a family, [the keyworker] helped us with the housing issues, to sort out my finances, [and] she put me in touch with DWP after I left work. She has been helpful across a spectrum of things."* (Parent interview)

Some interventions included summer programmes that offered families experiences they would not have been able to afford themselves. A mother, who took part in the summer programme with her children, reported how grateful the family was for this:

> *"I had never had that before. I cried when it finished. The boys really enjoyed it. The workers said they had never known two boys more thankful. We did things which we never dreamt of being able to afford to do."* (Parent interview)

Despite the limited time of programmes operating, this chapter illustrated how some interventions were reported to increase school attendance and raise young people's awareness about the risks of criminal activities and school expulsions and suspensions. The interventions were also able to increase children's confidence and raised their awareness around youth violence and crimes. For parents, interventions meant that they had greater understanding of their children, ways of coping with difficult behaviours and positive experience as a family.

Youth Crime Toolkit

Stakeholders from one local authority planned to introduce a youth crime toolkit to increase parents' awareness and help develop skills to recognise the risks of knife and gang-related crime.

The toolkit was designed to assess the extent to which a young person and their family was at risk and enable stakeholders to understand the most effective ways to engage with young people to prevent youth violence. More specifically, it was designed to provide schools with a means to deliver an early intervention offer to cohorts between year 6 and year 11 and a diversionary offer to targeted cohorts within their school population. The toolkit also aimed to provide specific means to support work with girls and to improve communication and joint working between schools and parents.

Stakeholders reported several potential positive outcomes of the toolkit, including
- increased awareness of and skills to recognise the risks of knife and gang-related crime for parents
- a better understanding of the workforce and voluntary sector on the most effective ways to engage with young people
- an increased level of empowerment for schools to directly deliver interventions; as well as
- evidence of the most effective ways to engage with parents in a trauma informed way while improving parenting capacity and family function.

Sustainability for children and families

When considering the sustainability of interventions, the funding was said to have had a positive impact on the life outlook of children and young people going forward. Additionally, stakeholders and parents agreed that the sustainability of parent groups and collaboration between VCS organisations and local authorities was crucial to ensure early identification and referral of vulnerable young people and families.

Impact for children and young people

Case study interviews with young people demonstrated the central role that interventions played in providing them with resources to disengage from crime routes and embark on a positive future trajectory. This was reflected in the survey responses, in which stakeholders emphasised the importance of the fund in creating a *sense of hope for the future* (69 of 101 agreed) among young people[27]. Such responses gave way to stakeholders considering the interventions somewhat sustainable in maintaining positive future perspectives among young people.

> *"[VCS role model] has shown me lots of opportunities and taught me how to better myself and make better life choices for the future."* *(Young person interview)*

Some parents however held concerns over what would happen to their child's wellbeing and behaviour once intervention support ends.

> *"[My child] will be sad to see the keyworker's support coming to an end in June as [keyworker] has done a lot for us and is great with [child]. I worry what will happen when [keyworker] leaves."* *(Parent interview)*

Continued collaboration between parents, VCS and local authority

Stakeholders recognised that parent groups established under the SFAYC fund in some areas would continue being effective in referring vulnerable young people and families beyond the funding period, due to the commitment of parents which meant that groups could sustain themselves.

> *"The set-up of parental groups under the fund is 'self-seeding': they will continue attending the meetings which will make the intervention sustainable in the future."* *(Stakeholder interview)*

Other parent group meetings were led by front-line workers and were an effective way of identifying families and young people in the community needing further support who may not be in touch with public services. At a meeting of delivery partners, a parent group meeting was cited as a means of reaching further into the community. Direct observations of that parent group showed that new parents who joined the group discussion were signposted to services. These parents were pleased to have found this support in their community.

Multi-agency meetings comprised of VCS and the local authority were likewise considered sustainable due to their use in identifying vulnerable individuals. Stakeholders agreed that the group meetings between VCS and statutory organisations established under the fund were important to the referral process and for maintaining strong communication pathways going forward.

> *"Creating a wide, deep rooted network across organisations, will eliminate taboos around statutory support and issues around engagement. This will allow for a community set up which prevails."* *(Stakeholder interview)*

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[27] QS7: Among young people that have been involved in the SFAYC interventions, how effective, if at all, has the programme in your local authority area been in fostering:

7. Conclusions

The SFAYC funding has helped local authorities reach and work with children and young people who are at risk or already involved in youth crime. The interventions have increased the services available in local areas and have been well received by children, young people and parents alike.

Reaching families least likely to access public services was most successfully achieved through schools. In particular, primary schools were a key facilitator for interventions and reaching young people. This was especially important in reaching young people just before they transitioned to secondary school, a precarious time for them to be drawn into risk routes. Voluntary sector organisations were also seen as successful in reaching families least likely to access public services and were used extensively under the fund. However, it should be stressed that participation in SFAYC funded interventions were voluntary. Therefore, families who did not volunteer to take part in the SFAYC interventions were seldom reached.

Interventions rated most successful by stakeholders were whole family interventions, one-to-one interventions with young people and diversionary activities such as sport and residential trips. Interventions seen as less successful were group work with young people, one-to-one interventions with parents and parenting classes.

Troubled Families teams and the voluntary sector achieved more and better joint working under the SFAYC funded programmes. A key driver of this was basing programmes on the existing Troubled Families Programmes in local authorities, and encouraging further partnerships with the voluntary sectors. Previously existing relationships between organisations were said to have become more embedded than before. In addition to greater joint working with VCS organisations, there was also evidence of local authority services working more closely together, such as early help, schools and police services. These closer working relationships provide the potential for sustainability of SFAYC programmes.

For parents, the change in the local offer meant they had access to parent groups for social support and recreational family activities. Some families would not have been able to afford this otherwise. In addition, Troubled Families keyworkers who, in line with the Troubled Families Programme, helped parents deal with housing and financial problems.

For young people, activities outside and inside school hours run by relatable positive role models helped them make new friends, build confidence and resilience. In addition, young people who had the support of mentors and Troubled Families keyworkers were able to open up to a trusted adult, who helped their mental health, and talked to them about problems with school or in the family.

A longer-term evaluation would be valuable to measure sustained outcomes for children and families. This could be achieved robustly with individual child-level school, social care, and police data for children who took part in the interventions as well as for children not taking part with similar characteristics. In the meantime, it is considered highly valuable to understand how local authority teams and VCS organisations are addressing the needs of children who are at risk of youth crime, yet are not able to attend school or leisure activities in person facilitated by local authorities, schools or third sector organisations, given the current coronavirus lockdown restrictions.

8. Review of local authority evaluations

Local areas were asked to conduct local evaluations of their projects. In this final chapter we firstly outline the evaluation methods employed by local authorities as presented in the local evaluation reports shared with us and provide evaluation specific recommendations. Secondly, we present practice-level recommendations and outcomes for young people, parents and practitioners reported in local authority evaluations.

Assessment of monitoring methods

All 21 local authorities used qualitative or quantitative data to evaluate their SFAYC interventions. However, they rarely used both methods together as part of a mixed method evaluation. The quality of data collected, and analysis undertaken varied. Ipsos MORI evaluated local authorities' use of these methods. This part of the chapter firstly explains the quantitative approaches taken, secondly discusses the different approaches to qualitative research and finally outlines key points for good evaluation practice.

Quantitative

Ipsos MORI identified three approaches that local authorities used to collect and analyse quantitative data: (1) pre and post quantitative surveys, (2) use of existing data sources, and (3) the establishment and analysis of new intervention engagement data. These approaches were not always used exclusively, and local authorities benefited most if used in conjunction.

Pre and post

Six local authorities reported collecting quantitative data before and after interventions. This helped them understand the specific effects of an intervention rather than wider contextual factors – giving a clearer indication of participants' 'distance travelled' between the two time points. Two examples of using pre and post intervention data collection are outlined below.

Star Assessment tool (also known as Outcomes Star)

The Star Assessment tool was already used to measure family outcomes as part of the Troubled Families programme, primarily aimed at children aged 7-14. Now used as part of SFAYC evaluations, the tool rates eight outcomes across a child's life, from 1 to 5 where 1 is least and 5 is most. For example, a beneficial progression in the outcome of "physical health" from a rating of 2 to a rating of 5 would represent a positive change of +3.

Five local authorities reported using this measure as part of their evaluation. In one local authority where mentoring, intensive case management and the provision of parenting support groups were targeted at families in high risk areas, all families participating in the SFAYC interventions achieved at least a +1 score in one outcome and on average, users made progress in 6 out of 10 outcome areas.

It should be noted that data from Star Assessment tools should be treated with caution. They are not a standardised measure across families as they really on a subjective quantitative assessment carried out by the practitioner or the families themselves.[28]

By collecting data over time, some analysts created a longitudinal dataset. This meant families' progress and the variables affecting their lives could be tracked, identifying which families benefited from the interventions and in what ways.

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[28] For more on Star Assessment tool (Outcomes Star), see page 36. https://www.eif.org.uk/resource/evaluating-early-help-a-guide-to-evaluation-of-complex-local-early-help-systems

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Vulnerability tracker

One local authority used a 'vulnerability tracker' – a method of data collection and analysis that measured young people's outcomes over time. To evaluate their local authority's SFAYC interventions, one analyst tracked cohorts of 50 young people in each school year group. The variables tracked included: ratings of self-harm, county lines arrests, attendance, and number of times fallen victim to crime. Some of this data were already collected by institutions (e.g. attendance at school) regardless of the SFAYC interventions. Other data in the vulnerability tracker were self-reported by families, such as ratings on wellbeing and resilience.

This data was aggregated to give young people an overall vulnerability score. This allowed the local authority to observe criminal behaviour, mental health and child protection histories over time. The analysts can then identify trends within the local authority, highlighting times when certain interventions (including SFAYC funded) have an impact.

This information was gathered via a telephone interview, and no data was shared as part of the evaluation.

Pre and post quantitative evaluations provided some indicative positive results that could be linked to the intervention. One example is outlined in the case study below.

Post intervention data

Many local authorities did not collect pre- intervention data. Therefore, data gathered after the intervention could not be compared to a baseline. More generally, post intervention quantitative data collection included surveying young people who had taken part in mentoring programmes, children who had taken part in workshops and administering short paper surveys for young service users of a boxing intervention.

For example, one local authority conducted a post intervention survey with attendees of their programme. They found that 93% of all 263 attendees scored the overall quality of the event between 8 or above (out of 10). It was useful for the local authority to obtain data from participants giving a retrospective score of the interventions. However, this could have been better supported, and the dataset made more robust, if attendees were surveyed before the intervention took place.

Using existing data sources

Some local authorities used existing data sources, such as Troubled Families data, police held and social services datasets to evaluate their SFAYC interventions. It is unclear whether the majority of local authorities were drawing on these resources because it was not stipulated in their evaluation reports, nor were these wider contextual data points discussed. However, three evaluation reports did cite their use.

Case study – a measured increase in learning

In one local authority, 4,000 pupils across primary and secondary schools took part in an educational programme to warn young people of the dangers of gang lifestyle. At the beginning of the programme, children were asked to complete a 5-question questionnaire. This task was repeated following the completion of the programme in order to evaluate the effectiveness and learning. 92% evidenced an increase in learning in all five learning areas (Session 1 - What is a Gang? Why, Where, Who; Session 2 - Gang Identity, Weapons; Session 3 - Joint Enterprise, the law, safeguarding strategies; Session 4 - Consequences, grooming, exploitation, grassing; Session 5 - Victims, learning review, futures). All participants reported being able to recognise and practice strategies which can increase their safety in the community.

These local authorities synthesised data collected about the SFAYC cohort alongside Troubled Families data, assigning ID numbers to young people and families in the SFAYC cohort. This meant analysts could compare the SFAYC cohort with other TF cohorts, identifying trends specific to the SFAYC cohort and geographic regions within the local authority. However, the local authorities taking this approach had not yet run the analysis needed to provide indicative findings.

Analysis of intervention engagement data

Local authorities also analysed engagement data to judge parent/carer, young people's and whole families' buy-in to the interventions. This showed local authorities where improvements could be made in the take-up of services. Four local authorities highlighted the importance of using monitoring data as part of their evaluation.

Examples of monitoring data analysed included the attrition rate of a programme, programme attendance, data about general engagement with VCS organisations and the analysis of case notes. Local authorities used quantitative data in case notes to better understand which parts of their interventions were better received than others.

Qualitative

We identified three approaches to qualitative data collection and analysis used across local authorities' evaluations: (1) single time-point primary data collection - including focus groups and interviews, (2) pre and post intervention qualitative data collection, and (3) collecting and analysing qualitative data from existing interactions that local authorities, Troubled Families keyworkers and VCS organisations collect regardless of evaluation.

These three qualitative approaches were not always used exclusively. Local authorities often aimed to engage the different audiences involved in the interventions: delivery partners, young people, families, including parents. However, seldom were all of these audiences spoken to as part of the evaluation.

Single time-point primary data collection

Over half of the local authorities for which we have evidence used qualitative methods, namely focus groups and interviewing. Benefits of this included: evidencing the voice of the child, understanding interventions in more detail, understanding the mechanisms behind the effectiveness of interventions, identifying unexpected benefits and challenges of the interventions and providing an opportunity to better understand complementary or contradictory quantitative data.

Focus group and in-depth interviews provided rich data. Indicative findings included:

- Young people within SFAYC cohorts reflected on friendships they had made with one another, described as "fun" and "supportive", which enabled them to share experiences and develop long-lasting bonds.
- Parents valued accurate information about interventions, as well as more informal introductions to delivery staff, such as youth workers.
- Young people and parents emphasised the importance of having a strong bond with youth workers, which engendered trust between families and the programme delivery staff.

Feedback on specific interventions (pre and post)

Like quantitative data collection, local authorities also collected qualitative data that fed back on specific interventions, sometimes before and after interventions had taken place. Pre and post qualitative data were used to identify the positive and negative aspects of interventions.

The specific positive impacts on young people were elicited, including hearing about facilitators' lived experiences of crime, being able to find coping mechanisms for criminal situations and learning specific anger management techniques. Some feedback was also constructive, pointing out that some interventions may not be relevant to the geographic area. An example of this is outlined below.

Case study – feedback about training: post intervention

In one local authority, delivery partners received training about girls in gangs. Trainees fed back positives, that the session was thought provoking, helped them better understand trauma-informed approaches and praised the facilities and impressive facilitators. Trainees also fed back concerns, such as the training being delivered by a London-based provider who might not understand the challenges faced in their non-London local authority.

By creating case studies, one local authority was able to informally collect observational data pre and post intervention. This meant they could describe a young person's behaviour before and after interventions had taken place, describing their mood and level of engagement with school. They then collected the same type of rich observations after the intervention, comparing the two. The local authority's evaluation did not explicitly state whether it intended to collect observational data pre and post intervention. However, by collecting data on the young person's behaviour, it did report on pre and post observational evidence.

Collecting data from existing interactions.

Another way that local authorities collected data, albeit sometimes due to other data capture mechanisms, was to record interactions between families and delivery partners that would happen regardless of an evaluation taking place. For example, team around the family meetings were logged and used as data to inform the evaluation. This was also true of caseworker logs and monthly board meetings between delivery partners.

Fewer than half of the local authorities identified existing logs and case studies as a source of data for their evaluation. But those that did explained that these were snapshots in time they already had to hand. It is likely that many other local authorities had this data to hand but did not incorporate it into their evaluations.

Several local authorities highlighted the importance of using family case studies. This enabled them to look at families' situations in depth, from the start of an intervention to its end, and demonstrating its impact. Case studies also helped local authorities "deep dive" into families taking part in interventions under specific circumstances, such as a family where two siblings are vulnerable to youth crime.

Conclusion

Overall, evaluations provide some helpful evidence of how the projects have been implemented and the experience of staff and service users. Many local evaluations also show how outcomes have changed over time, but they do not use comparison groups, so these are not impact evaluations.

We recognise that local authorities face significant practical and resource challenges to completing evaluation. If resources would allow it, we would recommend local authorities to:

- Use pre-post assessment rather than single time point and work towards using a comparison group.
- Use mixed methods i.e. some elements of qualitative and quantitative research to give a full picture of what's happening.
- Use standardised scales for measuring change when collecting new data and mitigate risk of reporting bias.
- Use existing data sources where possible to minimise additional burdens.

Summary of findings from local evaluation reports

Practice-level recommendations from local evaluations

- **Assessing eligibility closely.** Practitioners questioned the referral criteria for some of the families who were involved in the project and the (low) level of information practitioners received about potential families. Increasing the quality of information to assess the suitability of families and involving the 'right types of families and young people' would enable them to offer the right kind of support and to be able to measure impact more accurately.
- **Importance of committed practitioners (for parents and children).** Parents identified the personal qualities (not being judgemental, availability and true interest in the family's wellbeing) and commitment of the youth workers as key strengths of the project. Parents' appreciation of their youth worker and everything they had done for them and their families was striking. Children also commented on the importance of the youth worker to them and how they imagined this relationship would benefit other children in future cohorts.
- **Work on strengthening relationships between parents and between children.** Parents reflected on the significance of the relationships with one another that the children had developed through the Transitions project. Children also reflected on the positive relationships that developed between them, that were both fun and supportive, enabling them to share experiences and develop long-lasting bonds.

Following several months of project delivery, local authorities were asked to provide an evaluation report to MHCLG. This second part of the chapter provides an overview of reports received from 13 local authorities and follow-up telephone interviews with an additional 4 local area programme delivery leads. Many reports focused on describing the activities undertaken, which were interrupted due to the Covid-19 pandemic. This substantially reduced the timeframes in which outcomes might be observed. Some interventions had very small sample sizes and many reports focused on qualitative evidence. Many local authorities provided more than one type of intervention, therefore, ability to attribute change to a single type of intervention is limited. Here, we mapped outcomes, where provided in local evaluation reports, along the populations of interest: young people, families / parents, and practitioners, including teachers.

As outlined in the previous chapters, interventions ranged from whole-school or year-group assemblies over one-to-one mentoring support for young people or holiday activities to parent-focused or whole-family working by dedicated voluntary sector organisations or specialist local authority staff. Where possible, we provide detail on which type of intervention elicited which outcome per audience. We provide figures as presented in local authority reports.

For young people

As outlined in the main report, **role-model based interventions** were received well by young people and parents. This is also reflected in local authority report findings. One area with a role-model based intervention, collecting pre- and post data, found that.

- Before the workshop 9 out of 19 children felt "confident to say no to negative peer-pressure". This increased to 12 out of 19 after the first workshop.
- Before the workshop 7 out of 17 (a ratio of 4 in 10) children felt "motivated after failing many tasks". This changed to 10 out of 14 (a ratio of 7 in 10) after workshop 4.

Another local area collected pre- and post data of an intervention to support young people in Years 6 and 7, and their families, to make positive choices and **facilitate the transition to secondary school**. Activities included **mentoring parents, mentoring young people, a parenting programme, and additional family support where needed**. The Needs Assessment data from 38 young people showed positive changes in negative behaviour points

(net 29% improvement); detention (net 27% improvement); being pushed/shoved and being bullied (both net 24% improvement); arguing with parents (net 21% improvement); ability to express feelings (18% net improvement). Only being truant from school had a negative net change of 3%.

A staff member's observation of a young person's confidence and behaviour notes that:

> *"...B has formed a friendship group that means he's more comfortable at school and is less anxious about attending. He's gained lots of confidence from exhibiting his work and has activities to take part in outside of school time to keep him on the right track."* – *(Local evaluation report)*

Similarly, pre- and post- MyStar data from 44 young people showed positive changes in all statements, most notably 'feelings and behaviours' (37% net improvement); 'confidence and self esteem' and 'friends' (both 25% net improvement) and 'education and learning' (18% net improvement).

In another intervention with a focus on **whole-family working**, before the young person came in touch with the Youth Justice System, the intervention case workers noted occurrences on a variety of measures, including positive development on (count in brackets):

- Positive engagement with case worker (4)
- Education - minimising risk of exclusion or maximising possibility of positive moves (4)
- Improved employment potential through mentoring (4)
- Improved communicating in family (3)
- Reduced Drug use (3)
- Support for mental health needs in home and community (2)
- Mediation in family and peer group (2)
- Visits with groups to positive pathways (2)
- Family relationships including agreed boundaries (1)
- Sports engagement (1)

Three negative occurrences included refusal to engage (1), non-compliance with statutory orders (1), and targeting with threats of violence (1).

Another area **combining early-help support co-located in a secondary PRU, trauma informed therapeutic support and expert practitioners working alongside frontline staff** collated outcomes data from multi-agency partners (schools, police, social services, Troubled Families team) for families involved in the interventions. They found:

- a reduction in fixed-term school exclusions and reduction in referrals to PRUs
- a reduction in violent offences (knife crime, gang related violence, possession of offensive weapon)
- increased school attendance
- reduction in A & E visits for injuries and/or other health interventions for injuries related to violence
- reduced missing episodes

One local authority offered a **ten-week intensive programme delivered in five local primary schools** by a charity. In one school, all 14 participants showed an improved Warwick Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing score at the end of the intervention, compared with the start.

In another intervention run by two charities with a cohort of 61 young people, despite a 16% increase in convictions for antisocial behaviour, already during the second quarter of the programme, compared with quarterly figures from the previous year, there was:

- An over 70% reduction in cautions for antisocial behaviour
- A 50% reduction in violent crimes
- An over 30% reduction in police callouts

By the fourth quarter of the programme the cohort of young people as a whole had no further instances of knife crime or possession of an offensive weapon and, compared with quarterly figures from the previous year:

- A 90% reduction in cautions for antisocial behaviour
- An over 50% reduction in convictions for antisocial behaviour
- Nearly 90% reduction in violent crimes
- An over 40% reduction in police callouts

Comparing annual victim of crime data, there was a reduction of 1.5 percentage points in victims both aged 10-14 and 14-17 respectively between 2018/19 and 2019/20. In addition, the percentage of known offenders aged 14-17 reduced by 4.8 percentage points (from 18.2% to 13.4%) between 2018/19 and 2019/20. However, there was a slight increase in the number of known offenders in the 10-14 age group. More broadly data showed the volume of knife crime decreased to 33.1 monthly offences compared to an average of 40.6 offences in the previous 18 months.

For families

As we have found in the Troubled Families Programme, practitioners **acknowledged an initial parental reluctance to engage** in the intervention. Once this initial reluctance was overcome, many reports cited high levels of engagement from parents and support for the project(s).

The two main activities for families were whole-family interventions as well as parenting groups. There is some evidence of improved family wellbeing and relationships between parents and children; two local authorities also reported a decline in domestic violence cases, while one area reported an increase.

A **whole-family intervention** outlined in the section above also counted changes in family behaviours. Case workers counted improvements in parenting (8), family relationships (6), accessing specialist support (6) and housing support (2). Two negative observations included the father not being engaged (1) and both parents not being engaged (2).

Another **whole-family intervention with diversionary activities for young people during the summer holidays** collected Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) data from 10 young people and parents at the start and end of the intervention. Their scores generally improved in all domains. In addition, young people and parents reported that their "problems since engaging in the project" were much improved.

As with the Troubled Families programme, the role of a trusted practitioner (the keyworker in the case of the Troubled Families programme, a 'coach' here) in **helping families with a variety of problems** as well as providing them with new experiences, was found to be important ingredients to achieve change:

> *"Key ingredients of the intervention that led to the positive outcomes seemed to be the presence and activities of the Coaches and the various roles they played, such as role models, mentors, services liaisons, advocates, reliable 'fixers' etc., and the summer programme of practical and physical confidence and team building activities. These two elements also came together, as it appeared that taking the young people out of their 'usual' environments created a context where the Coaches could have greater influence, such as coaching about decision-making, managing risk, and managing emotions."* (Local evaluation report)

In a 5-week **parents' course** pre- and post measures showed increases in:

- their ability to listen to their child (from 5.3/10 to 8/10)
- improvement in their understanding of youth mental health (from 7.2/10 to 8.75/10)
- confidence in supporting their child's emotional well-being (from 6.4/10 to 8/10)
- family's resilience (from 6.4/10 to 7.5/10)

An observation from a course facilitator of a parenting programme notes that:

"The programme helped [the father] to understand why his elder children may be reluctant to have anything to do with him. He now does development work with another organisation as he sees the value of it. He wants to grow, both for himself and also in the hope of becoming an active father." *(Local evaluation report)*

In another area using pre- and post measures, family therapists noted improvements in family substance abuse and child/adult offending behaviour at the end of the intervention.

For practitioners

As outlined in chapter 4, some interventions including training for staff in addition to direct work with young people and families. In an intervention where **early help practitioners received support from family therapists**, early help practitioners reported improvements in confidence in:

- using systemic tools to support family with issues (from 16 to 31 points)
- supporting families with mental health issues (from 17 to 21 points)

A participant notes that:

"[I have more] confidence in myself and exploring sensitive and traumatic events with the parent and sourcing appropriate support." *(Local evaluation report)*

Similarly, school staff receiving training in another area reported increased awareness of attachment from 41% before the training to 83% afterwards. Feedback included:
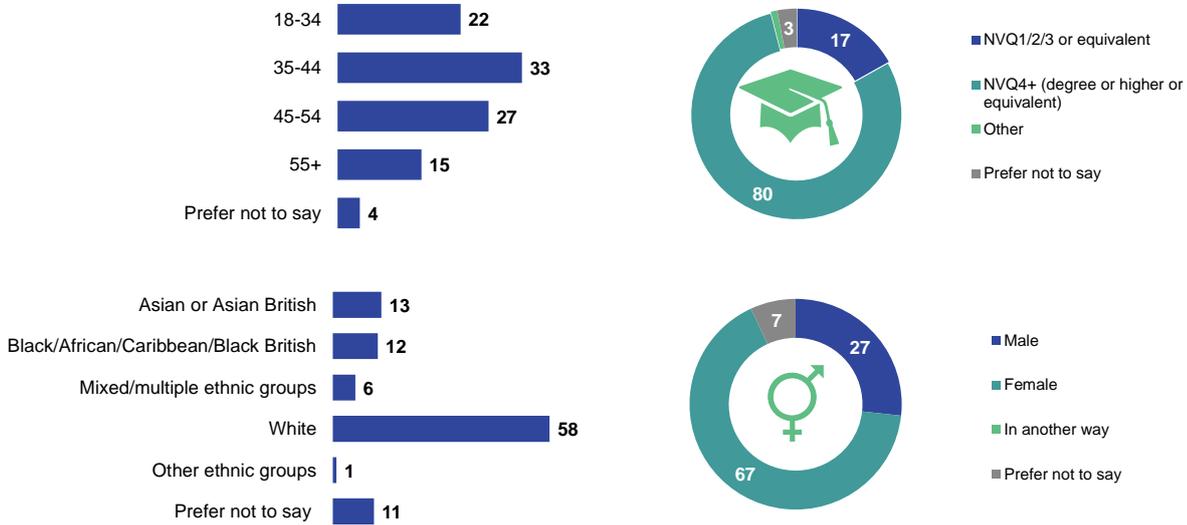
"[The training helped me] Reframing what I think or feel about a particular child after a really tough day." Teaching Assistant *(Local evaluation report)*

"This training has changed our whole school ethos." Deputy Head/ SENCo *(Local evaluation report)*

9. Appendix

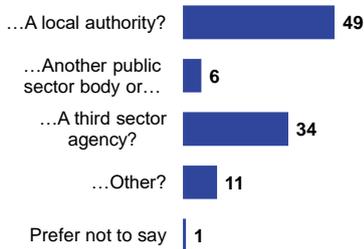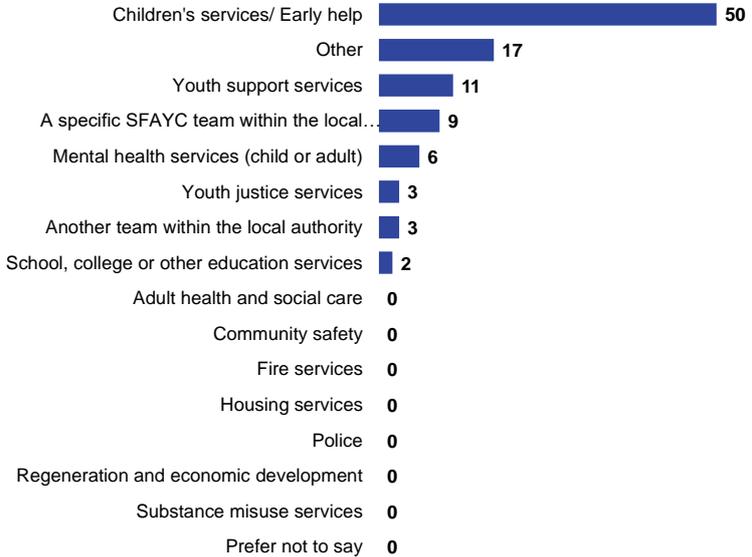## I: Survey response demographics

Demographics

Age	
18-34	22
35-44	33
45-54	27
55+	15
Prefer not to say	4

Ethnicity	
Asian or Asian British	13
Black/African/Caribbean/Black British	12
Mixed/multiple ethnic groups	6
White	58
Other ethnic groups	1
Prefer not to say	11

Qualifications (donut chart):
- NVQ1/2/3 or equivalent: 17
- NVQ4+ (degree or higher or equivalent): 80
- Other: 3
- Prefer not to say

Gender (donut chart):
- Male: 27
- Female: 67
- In another way
- Prefer not to say: 7

Base: All (101) Fieldwork dates 13 January to 23 February 2020. (QD1-4)

Are you employed by…

…A local authority?	49
…Another public sector body or…	6
…A third sector agency?	34
…Other?	11
Prefer not to say	1

How long have you been working with families with complex needs, not necessarily in your current role?

Less than 6 months	4
More than 6 months…	4
1-2 years	8
3-5 years	8
6-10 years	15
11-20 years	36
21+ years	23
Prefer not to say	3

What type of organisation, agency, department or team do you represent?

Children's services/ Early help	50
Other	17
Youth support services	11
A specific SFAYC team within the local…	9
Mental health services (child or adult)	6
Youth justice services	3
Another team within the local authority	3
School, college or other education services	2
Adult health and social care	0
Community safety	0
Fire services	0
Housing services	0
Police	0
Regeneration and economic development	0
Substance misuse services	0
Prefer not to say	0

Base: All (101) Fieldwork dates 13 January to 23 February 2020. (QA2-A4)

II: Interventions by local authority

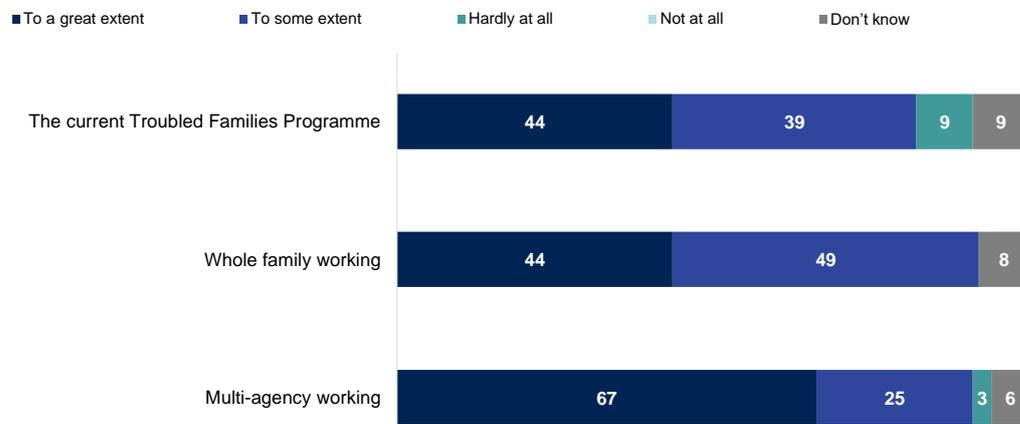| Area	Location				Type of intervention			Funding	
	London	North West	Midlands	South	School/ PRU based	VCS based	Police/ gangs	>£250k	<£250k
Area 1		X			X			X	
Area 2	X				X				X
Area 3	X						X		X
Area 4	X					X			X
Area 5		X			X				X
Area 6	X					X			X
Area 7	X					X			X
Area 8			X		X				X
Area 9		X			X				X
Area 10		X				X			X
Area 11	X					X			X
Area 12			X		X				X
Area 13				X					X
Area 14			X		X				X
Area 15	X				X	X			X
Area 16		X			X				X
Area 17	X				X	X		X	
Area 18	X				X				X
Area 19		X				X		X	
Area 20			X		X			X	
Area 21	X						X		X

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III: Reliance on Troubled Families Programme to implement SFAYC intervention

To what extent was the implementation of the SFAYC intervention reliant on using the existing set-up of….

■ To a great extent   ■ To some extent   ■ Hardly at all   ■ Not at all   ■ Don't know

The current Troubled Families Programme	44	39	9	9
Whole family working	44	49		8
Multi-agency working	67	25	3	6

Base: All (101) Fieldwork dates 13 January to 23 February 2020. (QM5))

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