



Home Office

Ending Gang and Youth Violence: Review 2012-13

Executive Summary

Background

This report supplements findings presented in the Ending Gang and Youth Violence Annual Report 2013. The original Ending Gang and Youth Violence report was published in November 2011 following the riots earlier in the summer. The subsequent programme re-prioritised £10 million of Home Office Funding for 29 areas identified as facing the biggest challenges in relation to youth violence and gangs to help these areas build their capacity to respond effectively to their particular local issues. These areas were also provided wider support and a peer review (which set out local strengths and recommendations for action). This report provides an overview on what happened in the 29 areas during the 2012-13 programme period, and how the programme performed.

Aims and Approach

We had two main questions:

1. What has the programme achieved in local areas?
2. Has the Home Office engagement with local areas been successful?

To answer these questions, we followed a mostly qualitative approach. A quantitative approach was also considered but not followed. First, there was a lack of national data which directly related to the aims of the programme (for example, there was no reliable national measure of gang-association to use to test impact on gangs). Second, generating a robust comparison group to identify the programme's impact on crime was not possible, as the priority areas were specifically selected due to them having particular issues with youth violence and gangs. However, we did look at police recorded crime data in order to put the qualitative findings into context.

The evidence examined therefore includes:

- Perceptions of key local contacts from the 29 priority areas, collected through interviews (conducted throughout the year) and surveys (conducted at the beginning and end of the 2012-13 programme period);
- Peer review reports for each priority area, completed in the course of the 2012-13 programme period; and,
- Police recorded crime data for 2012-13, focusing on selected violent offences. The figures should be considered as an early snapshot picture, as it is doubtful whether the full impact of the programme on levels of crime would have been seen in its first year. It is also important to note that these data provide only a partial picture of youth violence in the areas – they show victimisation, not what offences were committed by young people.

Key Findings

Overall, the first year of the Ending Gang and Youth Violence programme was considered to be a success by the local priority areas. In particular:

- Areas felt that they had been able to drive the programme to a greater extent than previous Home Office initiatives, in terms of influencing both how the programme supported them locally and the national impetus of the programme;

- Particular strengths of the programme were seen to be the peer reviews, the general manner of support (which was felt to be flexible and responsive to local issues), and the encouragement of local cross-agency working;
- Areas felt they benefitted from being a part of the programme, and that positive changes to addressing gangs and youth violence had occurred locally as a result of the programme; and
- Positive changes that were felt to have occurred due to the programme included: improvements to the local strategic direction / leadership around tackling gangs and youth violence (for example the clarity and communication of plans for the future); increased involvement of other local agencies (e.g. health, Job Centre Plus) and the voluntary and community sector; and, new improved approaches to specific issues (such as understanding the local problem with gang and youth violence, and supporting girls and women associated with gangs).

The reported benefits of the programme were accompanied by continued falls in police recorded youth violence overall (i.e. violence affecting 10-19 year olds) in the areas taken as a whole in 2012-13 compared with 2011-12. These falls continued those seen in 2011-12 compared with 2010-11 (i.e. before the programme began), and occurred against the background of national falls in levels of violent crime overall.

Lessons learnt

There were also lessons for the future, in particular concerning:

- **Programme timings** - local areas told us they had to satisfy both central and national commissioning processes, and this was seen to complicate the use of funding. In this context, some local area contacts would have preferred having their peer review earlier in order to make it easier to use the results to target the funding in the 2012-13 financial year.
- **Clarity around future engagement** - uncertainty about the programme in the following financial year (i.e. 2013-14) reportedly raised concerns amongst local areas about their ability to sustain local support for gangs and youth violence prevention work (in particular, sustaining links established with the voluntary sector over the course of the programme).

Local areas, particularly those in London, reported a desire to see the programme focus on cross-border working to a greater degree in 2013-14. They felt that this would enable them to identify gang issues in other locations that could affect them, or to recognise things happening in their area that could potentially lead to problems elsewhere.

There were also specific issues that some areas felt would benefit from further attention from the programme over the next year. These included ensuring effective referral pathways were in place for gang members, and data sharing between local agencies.

Main Report

Background

The Ending Gang and Youth Violence report was published in November 2011 following the riots earlier in the summer. The subsequent programme re-prioritised £10 million of Home Office funding for 29 priority areas identified as facing the biggest challenges in relation to youth violence and gangs. The programme areas were selected following consideration of local violent crime levels, hospital data relating to violence, and police and local authority intelligence on gangs and youth violence (e.g. the location and nature of gang issues). The funding was intended to help these areas build their capacity to respond effectively to their particular local issues, with half the funding intended to be used for services delivered by the non-statutory sector.

As part of the support offered, programme areas were also invited to collaborate in undertaking a peer review that would highlight particular local issues around gangs and youth violence. The peer reviews lasted for four days and consisted of discussions with community members and local partners on issues such as health, safeguarding, and employment. They concluded with a report and presentation to the local partnership identifying strengths, areas for improvement, and recommendations.

Participation in all aspects of the Ending Gang and Youth Violence programme was entirely voluntary, and the Home Office engagement was driven by the local areas' need. This meant that the levels of engagement by each area varied, and areas were not compelled to act on the recommendations of their peer review.

The present assessment provides an overview on what changed in the priority areas during the 2012-13 programme period (i.e. the first year of the programme), and how the programme can be seen to have performed so far.

Aims and approach

The local impact of large-scale, national programmes aimed at reducing violence can be difficult to measure via crime statistics or hospital data alone, as highlighted in previous assessments of serious youth violence programmes where information on what has happened locally as a result of the programme has been limited (e.g. Ward & Diamond, 2009; Ward, 2009). Statistical analysis of programme impact is complicated if, as is often the case, areas are selected to participate in the programme due to them having particular issues with violence. This makes it difficult to identify a robust comparison group to enable any changes seen to be attributed to the programme. Also a purely quantitative approach does not shed light on how local service delivery concerning violence prevention may have changed.

Such difficulties are exacerbated for the Ending Gang and Youth Violence, as we have no impact measures for key aspects of the programme. For example the programme focuses on a range of outcomes addressing youth vulnerability, which are difficult to measure (e.g. better access to local services). Additionally, there is no reliable national measure of gang-association to use to test impact on gangs.

The present review has, therefore, taken a different approach – providing a qualitative overview of the programme, contextualised by police recorded crime data. Two main research questions have been addressed:

1. What has the Ending Gang and Youth Violence programme achieved in local areas?
2. Has the Home Office engagement with local areas as part of the programme been successful?

The review looks specifically at the 29 original priority areas,¹ and does not consider the four additional areas that came onto the programme in December 2012. It is also important to note that some areas have evaluated violence prevention programmes that were commissioned locally using programme funding. This review does not consider the impact of these interventions on individuals – any findings relating to local evaluations will be reported separately by the local areas.

Method

A mixed-method (quantitative and qualitative) approach was followed in order to examine what happened locally during the first year of the Ending Gang and Youth Violence programme (2012-13). The approach consisted of four elements.

1. Surveys of Ending Gang and Youth Violence local contacts

Two online surveys were distributed to the main Ending Gang and Youth Violence programme local contacts (one per area, mostly community safety managers) in all of the original 29 areas. The first was completed in May and June 2012 and mainly explored perceptions of local work to combat gangs and serious youth violence before the Ending Gang and Youth Violence programme started. This retrospective approach also enabled aspects of early programme delivery to be explored. The follow-up survey was completed by areas in April and May 2013, at the end of the 2012-13 programme period, to help ascertain how things had changed according to the perceptions of participants.

Participation in the surveys was optional (engagement with all aspects of the programme was voluntary), and completion rates varied across the surveys (see Table 1). Multiple follow-up attempts were made on both the initial and follow-up waves to improve response rates, but it should be noted that because not all areas completed the surveys, we cannot be sure that the results are representative of all the programme areas. In order to increase confidence in the findings, where possible the results have been triangulated with other sources of information (see below). It is also important to note that during the course of the programme some local contacts changed roles, and so it may not have been the same participant answering both surveys. Despite these limitations, the survey results provide a useful indication (particularly in conjunction with the other data) of what happened in the areas during the programme period.

Table 1: Completion rates for the surveys

Initial survey	Follow-up survey	Completed both surveys
16 areas out of 29	19 areas out of 29	10 areas out of 29

2. Interviews with Ending Gang and Youth Violence local contacts

To provide in-depth information about perceptions of the programme locally, interviews were held with some of the Ending Gang and Youth Violence programme contacts following the completion of their peer review. The interviews were undertaken at several points in the 2012-13 period, so that results could be used to develop the programme in-year. The first two waves

¹ Barking and Dagenham, Birmingham, Brent, Camden, Croydon, Derby, Ealing, Enfield, Greenwich, Hackney, Haringey, Islington, Knowsley, Lambeth, Lewisham, Liverpool, Manchester, Newham, Nottingham, Oldham, Salford, Sandwell, Sheffield, Southwark, Tower Hamlets, Waltham Forest, Wandsworth, Westminster and Wolverhampton.

of interviews took place in September and October 2012, and January and February 2013 respectively. A third wave of shorter interviews was completed in July 2013, focusing specifically on overall perceptions of the programme. All interviews were conducted by a Home Office researcher via telephone, with interviews on waves one and two lasting approximately one and a quarter hours on average, and those on wave three lasting approximately forty-five minutes on average.

From the total list of areas eligible to participate during the first two interview waves (i.e. those who had completed their peer review), areas were selected to provide coverage of those at different stages of development of their gangs and youth violence strategies. The third wave was selected at random from the remaining areas. The interviews had to be fitted into the participants' schedules, and not everybody approached was able to take part in the research within the timescales available. A summary is provided in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Interview participants and approaches

Wave one	Wave two	Wave three	Total
4 areas (5 approached)	6 areas (8 approached)	3 areas (4 approached)	13 areas (17 approached)

Six areas did not contribute to the research in any way (either via surveys or interviews). Findings are therefore based on those who did provide their views (23 of the 29 areas).

3. Contextual information about the programme areas

Each of the priority areas participated in a peer review (described above), which resulted in a report outlining strengths and areas for development. A content analysis was undertaken on the peer review reports, using a simple framework focusing on specific aspects of local delivery.² The findings of the analysis for each review were then plotted on a timeline according to when the review took place in the year in order to explore whether there were developing issues that were identified through the reviews nationally.

It is important to note that the peer reviews were conducted by the Home Office in partnership with the local priority areas. A standard model for the reviews was followed, but the precise process was not exactly the same for each review. One area, for example, declined a full peer review and a 'light-touch' review was conducted. It is also not possible to tell from the reviews alone whether new issues emerged over the course of the year, or whether pre-existing issues were being identified as a result of changing understandings and experiences of the peer review team. The peer reviews are therefore considered in conjunction with the other qualitative data in order to take account of these potential effects.

4. Police recorded violent crime in the programme areas

A full statistical evaluation of impact for the Ending Gang and Youth Violence programme in 2012-13 was considered but discounted. The programme areas were not selected randomly: a data and intelligence analysis exercise identified areas with greater issues with gangs and youth violence than others. Hence, generating a reliable comparison group from the remaining non-programme areas in order to track programme impact was not deemed possible. An analysis of the impact of the Ending Gang and Youth Violence programme on individual's outcomes (e.g. re-offending, employment) was also considered but, after a feasibility exercise with local areas,

² Each section of the review findings was assessed against the following issues, derived using an inductive approach: Strategic, financial, human resources, awareness/understanding of gangs, specialist skills/knowledge, evidence, partnership, data/information sharing, identification/tracking, involving voluntary/community sector organisations, and gender issues.

was discounted for the national programme. In addition to low sample sizes, the programme was not working in isolation in areas, meaning some individuals were receiving interventions funded by several sources and it was not possible to isolate any programme effects for individuals.

Instead, this review focuses on providing police recorded crime data to show the general direction of travel in the priority areas. Two sources were used: programme management information data and police recorded crime data.

Programme management information data - Police forces in which the Ending Gang and Youth Violence programme areas are located were asked to submit selected recorded crime data to the Home Office throughout 2012-13, in order to help identify and manage any emerging issues. The Home Office additionally asked for data from 2010-11 and 2011-12 in order to assess trends. These data covered: homicide, attempted murder, wounding with intent to do GBH, and inflicting GBH without intent (including for knife involved and gun enabled offences). The data also broke offences down by age group, allowing us to look at youth-related crime separately.

These crime types were chosen to provide an indication of levels of violence in the local areas. Some limitations of these data should be noted:

- The data provides the age of the victim not the perpetrator, so we have only a partial picture of youth violence from the data;
- The offence data are as recorded by the police, and it is possible they are subject to reporting / recording effects (e.g. only incidents that are reported to or witnessed by police will be recorded); and
- There is no reliable national measure of gang-association to use to examine gang-related violence specifically.

National police recorded crime data - While a full comparison study was not undertaken, national police recorded crime numbers for selected violent offences (all ages) are presented at the end of this report in order to contextualise the youth crime data from programme areas. A small amount of data from the Crime Survey for England and Wales and NHS admissions are also used for this purpose.

Limitations with the approach followed

1) As stated above, the present review takes account of a wide range of data and was not designed to evaluate the impact of the Ending Gang and Youth Violence programme on local crime levels. Any changes seen in the police recorded crime data can, therefore, not be directly attributed to the programme, so caution should be taken when interpreting them.

2) All the crime data are reported up to the end of March 2013 (i.e. 2012-13) – the latest available data at the time of writing. It is unlikely that the full impact of work to address gangs and youth violence would have had the time to take maximum effect on crime levels in the short time this allows. Some of the changes that have been reported (for example, with relation to improved partnership working and strategic direction), may show benefit over the medium to long term. Similarly, commissioned programmes put in place using Ending Gang and Youth Violence programme funding might be expected to show their full impact beyond 2012-13 – particularly given the timescales in which they were delivered (which tended to be quite late on in the year). Since the longer-term impacts cannot yet be seen, this review focuses on what has been achieved so far – i.e. what has happened in the programme areas.

3) All qualitative work is based on perceptions, and is therefore subject to potential individual bias. Where possible, results have been triangulated between the data sources in order to increase confidence in them. The in-depth interviews also allowed particular issues of interest to be explored with participants, and to understand whether views reflected the general consensus or specific local concerns.

Findings

What was the position locally before the Ending Gang and Youth Violence programme?

Key findings

- According to the perceptions of participants, before the programme local areas' capability to deal with gangs and youth violence was mixed:
 - Local organisational structures to deal with gang and youth violence were sometimes not locally joined-up and/or had particular gaps;
 - The involvement of partner agencies and the community was variable;
 - There was a lack of local strategic direction and knowledge around gangs and youth violence.
- However, there was the potential for building on existing local practice in some areas that was seen positively by the Ending Gang and Youth Violence peer reviews, for example:
 - Good commissioning structures;
 - Strong examples of partnership working with local services, albeit in the context of specific gaps;
 - The ability of some local areas to track the outcomes of gang-associated individuals.

The in-depth interviews, peer review reports and the initial survey provide some insight into the local position in relation to gangs and youth violence before local areas' engagement with the Ending Gang and Youth Violence programme. It should be noted that there was some variation in how far areas had developed their capability to deal with gangs and youth violence before the programme started (e.g. some had been involved in previous government programmes). Overall, according to the perceptions of participants, while organisational structures were in place to deal with gang / youth violence issues in many of the programme areas before the programme was in place, these were sometimes not locally joined-up and / or had particular gaps (especially in relation to specific services). The local strategic direction was reportedly, in many cases, unclear.

Most areas who responded to the initial survey reported having had a dedicated strategy in place for tackling gangs (10 out of 14) with allocated resources (12 out of 14), and a problem profile or similar document for youth violence (11 out of 14). Most of the areas also had a regular meeting of operational partners to address gangs and youth violence (12 out of 14). However, not all partner organisations regularly attended these meetings – the engagement of local health and employment services in particular was generally perceived as being low (this could either be because areas were not seeking to involve these partners, or because the partners were not engaging). In contrast, the engagement of police, probation, community safety (local authority), housing, and local authority children's services was seen to be good. Finally, only half of the areas that responded to the survey (7 out of 14) reported having involved the community or local community leaders in the development of its response to gang violence.

Areas' peer reviews were generally conducted some months into the Ending Gang and Youth Violence programme year. However, since the peer reviews were often the basis for changes, they give an indication of the areas' existing response to gangs and youth violence, as perceived by the peer review team.³ Three aspects were more frequently mentioned as having the potential for improvement: strategic, human resources, and evidence.

The particular issues identified in these categories included a lack of:

- Overall direction and clear local leadership around gangs and youth violence;
- Availability of specialist skills (e.g. analytical skills) and high staff turnover, leading to issues with skills retention; and,
- Knowledge about of 'what works' in tackling gangs and youth violence.

Conversely, the following four aspects of delivery were mentioned more as local strengths in the peer review reports: financial, partnership working (in that there were some strong examples provided of this), identification of individuals involved in youth violence, and involving the voluntary and community sector. The particular strengths that were highlighted included areas being seen to have good commissioning structures in place, and programmes and funding specifically targeted at the gangs and youth violence agenda. There were some strong examples of cross-agency working, although again there were several instances of non-engagement by important local services such as health. In some (though by no means all) areas, the ability to track the outcomes of gang-associated individuals was noted as a strength.

From all of the evidence taken together, we may conclude that although many local areas potentially had the capability to deal with gangs and youth violence before the programme, some were further developed than others. Where the capability did exist, there were sometimes shortcomings in how work to tackle gangs and youth violence was organised, and with ensuring that all local agencies were focused on trying to achieve the same specific outcomes.

What changes occurred during the first year of the programme?

Key findings

- The Ending Gang and Youth Violence programme was seen to encourage positive changes in the local approach to gangs and youth violence
- The four main aspects where positive changes were noted were:
 - Improved strategic direction around gangs and youth violence;
 - Greater involvement of partner agencies;
 - Greater involvement of the voluntary and community sector; and
 - Addressing specific issues in tackling gangs and youth violence (e.g. gender issues).
- There were also aspects that were felt to still need attention, including ensuring effective referral pathways and data sharing.

Overall, the qualitative data suggest that substantial changes did occur during the first year of the Ending Gang and Youth Violence programme that were felt by local areas to have increased their capability to tackle gangs and youth violence, and to improve the outcomes for those affected by such violence. Many of these changes were strategic and / or organisational, and the level of engagement locally with gang and youth violence issues in the programme areas was correspondingly seen to have increased during the programme period. Programme funding

³ It should be noted that this analysis does not on its own provide an indication of the relative seriousness of any issues identified, only a general indication of what the peer review reports tended to see as strengths and areas of improvement.

also supported more specific work on increasing understanding of local issues (e.g. by increasing analytical capacity) and on commissioning particular programmes to address these issues. There were four main aspects where changes were noted:

1. Improved strategic direction around gangs and youth violence - Engagement with the Ending Gang and Youth Violence programme reportedly encouraged a greater sense of strategic direction, for example the clarity and communication of plans for the future, in the gangs and youth violence agenda. For example, of the areas that responded to the follow-up survey, most (15 out of 19) felt that the strategic vision to tackle gangs and youth violence had got much better or slightly better due to the programme, with four feeling that there had been no change (these were areas which already had a strong strategic direction). In the initial survey, two out of the areas that responded reported not having a dedicated gangs strategy in place before the programme. In the follow-up survey, all areas had a dedicated strategy. Both areas that reported not initially having a strategy said that they had one by the end of the programme.

2. Greater involvement of partner agencies - While there was still work to be done to encourage the involvement of partner agencies in the gangs and youth violence agenda, there were signs that substantial strides had been made in the 2012-13 period. Of the nineteen areas that responded to the follow-up survey, sixteen felt that multi-agency working to tackle gang and youth violence had got much better or slightly better due to the Ending Gang and Youth Violence programme. Three felt that there had been no change. Interview participants also felt that multi-agency work had improved, particularly as a result of an improved strategic vision (which all partners could sign up to) and the peer reviews, which encouraged consensus around a shared set of values and aims.

“[The Ending Gang and Youth Violence programme] has made [gangs and youth violence] everybody’s business”

– Wave 2 interview participant

In order to assess the engagement of local partner agencies, the surveys asked questions about strategic leadership, intelligence and data sharing, data quality, and perceptions of overall engagement with local gangs and youth violence issues. Overall, responses to the surveys highlighted variation in the level of involvement of different partner agencies in local anti-gangs work. Some partner organisations had a consistently high level of involvement across the Ending Gang and Youth Violence areas, e.g. the local authority (community safety), Youth Offending Service, and police. Some partner organisations initially had a relatively low level of involvement (e.g. Job Centre Plus, health services, and the local authority adult services), but there was evidence that there has been progress in building local partnerships.

There had reportedly been particular progress with health, Job Centre Plus, voluntary and community organisations and education. For example, of the ten areas that answered both surveys, six said that the overall engagement of health services was poor or very poor before involvement with the Ending Gang and Youth Violence programme, and one said it was fairly good. After involvement, six said that the engagement was fairly good or very good, and four said it was poor or very poor. One specific aspect of perceived progress was intelligence-sharing – five areas indicated that health services had not provided intelligence for local problem profiles before engagement with the programme, and one said they provided a little. After engagement, only two said health services provided no intelligence at all, four said they provided a little, and two said they provided a substantial amount.

While there may have been improvements in building local partnerships, the surveys, interviews and peer reviews suggest there remains some way to go to achieve full, effective multi-agency working. It was felt that this particularly affected prevention and early intervention activities, as they required information from several agencies to target effectively, and partner agencies to

support work that may not be directly linked to their remit (a point backed-up by the peer reviews). The message from interview participants overall was that engagement was quite patchy (i.e. there were pockets of good practice) and sometimes ad-hoc. Some of the most positive reports of multi-agency working were when personal links had been made between individuals working in different agencies, rather than formal processes existing.

3. Greater involvement of the voluntary and community sector (VCS) - The survey work and interviews suggested that local areas had engaged the VCS to a greater extent because of the Ending Gang and Youth Violence programme, with a number of interventions being delivered through the VCS. The follow-up survey indicated that the community was seen to be playing a particularly substantial role in strategic planning and providing intelligence; and the VCS had a vital role in delivering specific interventions. Some interview participants did identify issues with engaging the VCS, in particular ensuring that the specific organisations involved had the relevant skills to deliver the service that was wanted (which could itself be difficult to identify). In some areas, this required work to be undertaken to build the capability of the local VCS, which delayed the delivery of the particular services.

4. Addressing specific issues in tackling gangs and youth violence - According to the perceptions of those who participated in the assessment, local capability to address specific issues concerning gangs and youth violence has improved due to the Ending Gang and Youth Violence programme. In addition to the areas noted above, particular reported improvements included:

- Understanding of local gangs and youth violence issues: Of the 19 areas that responded to the follow-up survey, ten felt that understanding of their local gang and youth violence issues had got much better or slightly better due to the programme. Nine felt that there had been no change.
- Addressing gender issues: Of the 19 areas that responded to the follow-up survey, ten felt that their capability to address issues of girls and women associated with gangs had got much better or slightly better due to the programme, with nine feeling that there had been no change. Interview participants (which included some of the same areas) also noted that their awareness of, and local engagement with, gender issues had increased due to the programme.

There were also specific issues that areas felt would benefit from further attention. These included:

- Ensuring effective referral pathways: For the most part referral pathways were felt to be effective. However, four of the 19 areas that responded to the follow-up survey felt that there were local referral pathways for gang members in place that were not very effective (some respondents did not feel able to provide a definitive opinion, with six being unsure). The aspects of work with gang members that stood out in terms of referral pathways being felt to be ineffective were housing and mental health (with three areas feeling that they were ineffective).
- Data sharing: While areas reported that many agencies shared at least a little bit of raw data amongst the local community safety partnership, this was sometimes of poor quality. For example, while only three of the nineteen areas who completed the follow-up survey reported having no data from health services at all, four of the areas that did receive data felt that the data was not of sufficient quality for their use, and five felt it was only 'mostly' of sufficient quality. Some areas reported no data being shared at all by particular local agencies, including the local authority adult services (four areas), education (three areas) and Job Centre Plus (three areas).

Overall impressions of the areas involved in the programme

Key findings

- The Ending Gang and Youth Violence programme was seen very positively by the areas that participated in the research.
- The Home Office frontline team reportedly worked in close partnership with local areas, and the programme overall was seen to have struck the right balance between being directive and enabling local areas to set their own strategic direction.
- The programme reportedly encouraged local partnership working to tackle gangs and youth violence.
- The peer reviews were seen to have been helpful, despite being quite intensive and time-consuming to organise locally.

“Without a doubt, [the Ending Gang and Youth Violence programme] has been a help to our work locally... Without it we wouldn’t have been able to achieve half the things we have”

– Wave 3 interview participant

Areas who participated in the research provided positive feedback about the Ending Gang and Youth Violence programme. Of those who participated in the follow-up survey (which asked specifically about how the programme performed):

- Eighteen out of 19 areas agreed or strongly agreed that the programme had helped them tackle gangs and youth violence.
- All of the 19 areas agreed or strongly agreed that positive changes had occurred locally as a result of the programme.

While these results might not be representative of all the priority areas (as discussed above), the overwhelming positivity of the findings mean that even if all the areas not responding to the survey were more negative, the majority of programme areas would have felt that the programme helped their local areas to tackle youth violence and gangs.

Overall, participants from all three waves of interviews were also positive about their engagement with the Ending Gang and Youth Violence programme. This positivity increased over the duration of the programme, with the interviews suggesting that some issues experienced earlier in the programme had been addressed by the frontline team, and the programme engagement had improved over the course of the year. In particular, the third wave of participants, while still identifying some areas for development, strongly emphasised that overall the programme had benefitted their areas. Even where work on tackling gangs and youth violence had been undertaken before the programme started, it was felt that the programme had provided improved focus and vision for addressing local violence issues. This was supported by the survey results: of the 19 areas that participated in the follow-up survey, 15 felt that the development of a strategic vision to tackle youth violence and gangs had got much better or slightly better (four felt there had been no change).

Home Office engagement with local areas

Feedback from participants in the research was overwhelmingly positive about the Home Office engagement, citing examples of working closely with central teams and benefits of such partnerships. While participants in the first wave of interviews noted an initial lack of clarity around what information was wanted by the Home Office at the initial stages of the programme,

as the programme progressed such teething issues appear to have been addressed. Participants throughout the waves of interviews felt that they had been able to drive the programme to a greater extent than previous Home Office initiatives (in terms of influencing both how the programme supported them locally, and the national impetus of the programme). All participants felt that the programme had struck the right balance, overall, between being directive and enabling local areas to set their own requirements and strategic direction. However, participants did stress that engagement might need to be more closely tailored to meet the needs of particular areas, which was supported by wider findings from the interviews. For example, areas that were further along with their gangs and youth violence work tended to report wanting less hands-on support compared with those whose approaches still had to be developed. In addition, there was reportedly uncertainty in the early stages of the programme concerning what was wanted from local areas, with some participants feeling that an initially more directive approach from the Home Office might have been useful while they were getting used to the programme.

Participants consistently stated the value of having a single point of contact for the Ending Gang and Youth Violence programme (the Home Office frontline team's local area leads). This contact was perceived as providing consistency and enabled the local areas to build a relationship where they felt that the contact understood their local context and could offer advice specifically designed for them. Through this, according to the views of participants, the frontline team became a trusted broker for support rather than for inspection or monitoring.

“... It's really good to have an open discussion about a problem rather than talk about who to blame”

– Wave 3 interview participant

Work with local partnerships

The Ending Gang and Youth Violence programme was seen by interview participants to have been successful in solidifying local partnerships. This finding was supported by the surveys, which suggested an increased engagement of a number of local partners in the youth violence and gangs agenda. The peer reviews were mentioned by interview participants as a catalyst for greater levels of partnership work, with the peer review reports acting as a point of focus. Support from a number of local agencies centred on aims that were in the reviews. The individual support and involvement of the frontline team itself was mentioned as a particular strength of the programme. One participant, for example, described how having the frontline team going to speak with local community groups had reassured the community about the progress that had been made locally, and that local plans were fully supported at a national level. The participant also felt that having the frontline team to speak to was valuable to the community as another outlet (other than the local authority) for reporting their perceptions about what was happening locally. Improved engagement with the community was highlighted by survey responses.

The peer reviews

The peer review process typically involved discussions with local partners for four days about local gang and youth violence issues, with recommendations provided through a final report and presentation.

Responses of the local areas to the peer reviews were overall very positive. Eighteen of the nineteen areas that answered the follow-up survey reported that the peer reviews had been helpful to them. The one area that did not feel that the review was useful had opted for a one-day, reduced review, and it is possible that the area did not, therefore, receive the full benefit of the review experienced by the other Ending Gang and Youth Violence programme areas.

Participants in all three waves of interviews felt that the peer reviews had been a positive experience, providing valuable information about their local situation. A common thread was that the review report had highlighted particular issues locally, and indicated that they were important to address (in the context of a number of competing priorities for local areas). However, there were a number of caveats to the positive feedback that emerged from the qualitative work.

Interview participants generally felt that the peer reviews were quite burdensome to organise, although they did report that the time spent organising the peer review had been worth it in the end. There were also indications that the peer review process was improved as the 2012-13 programme progressed: a number of participants in the first wave of interviews reported the reviews feeling a bit like an inspection rather than a collaborative process. No participants in subsequent waves reported this perception, and indeed they took pains to stress the positive aspects of the peer reviews. Similarly, while some first wave participants had reservations about the form and style of the review feedback, later participants noted how useful the feedback was. Nevertheless, some issues with the feedback, particularly the peer review reports, remained.

Some participants felt that the recommendations were sometimes difficult to actually put into practice. The peer review recommendations were sometimes viewed as either being too vague (i.e. not prescriptive enough). This is an interesting point given the general positive feelings about the non-directive nature of the Ending Gang and Youth Violence programme overall. Recommendations were also sometimes viewed as being unclear in terms of which partner agencies they particularly related to (and why) – making it difficult to prioritise action. From this we might conclude that local areas saw the review in different ways – for example, as a roadmap, a starter for areas to understand what further support they needed, an objective view on the state of local services, and / or a document that could be used as a statement of intent for local partners to rally behind. While most areas appear to have been able to use the peer review outputs for what they needed locally, their differing requirements may have led to the peer review reports not meeting all local expectations.

What lessons are there for the future?

Key findings

- The Ending Gang and Youth Violence programme developed over the 2012-13 period, and although many refinements were made some issues remained as lessons for the future;
- Programme timings, particularly around providing the programme funding and timetables for the peer reviews, reportedly made it difficult for local areas to make changes or commission services within the 2012-13 period;
- Uncertainty about the future of the programme led to a concern amongst participants around their ability to sustain local support for gangs and youth violence prevention work;
- Cross-border working was a reported issue, particularly for participants based in London boroughs.

As noted above, some particular issues regarding the processes and form of the Ending Gang and Youth Violence programme were mentioned by interviewees. The anonymised results from the first wave were fed back to the frontline team within the 2012-13 period, and there was evidence from the second and third waves of interviews that many of the issues identified had been addressed. There were some issues that persisted, however, which might be considered as lessons for the future.

Programme timings - All the interview participants felt that the general engagement with the Home Office was positive. However, there were some concerns, particularly with participants in the second wave of interviews, that difficulties with the administrative timings of the programme had limited its effectiveness. For example, the peer reviews happened quite late in the year for some of the areas and the reports themselves were delivered some time after the actual review. This led to changes with implementing suggestions from the review within the Ending Gang and Youth Violence programme funding period (which was limited to the 2012-13 financial year). Some participants reported that, generally-speaking, the spending expectations over one year were not realistic when considering the length of time required to get money from central funding, complete commissioning processes, and ensure that projects could be sustained into the medium and long term.

As an example, before work could be commissioned from the voluntary and community sector, analysis of the gaps in local service provision was needed – a challenging task in itself. Subsequently, the commissioning needed to be undertaken according to local procurement frameworks, and meet the requirements for reporting costs to the Home Office. Such work was complicated by three factors. First, funding from other government programmes was arriving in local areas (such as from Troubled Families and Communities Against Guns, Gangs and Knives funding streams) that the local Community Safety Partnership needed to take account of in planning service delivery, both in terms of the amount being offered and how it was being used. Second, shrinking funds available to the Community Safety Partnership overall meant that existing service provision could potentially be at risk. Third, local staffing reductions meant that there were fewer people to actually do the commissioning work.

These factors combined to eat up the time available to the Ending Gang and Youth Violence areas, both to initially get the funding from the Home Office (which required a breakdown of cost against spend) and then to actually commission projects. This had the result of making the one-year programme, which was reportedly already difficult to plan a commissioning strategy for, effectively much shorter. Some local areas felt that what was expected to be achieved in the remaining time was sometimes unrealistic.

“The problem wasn’t caused in six months, and it won’t be solved in six months”

– Wave 2 interview participant

Clarity around future engagement - An issue of concern to participants was uncertainty around the future form of the Ending Gang and Youth Violence programme, and in particular what the next steps were for centrally co-ordinated programmes over the next two to three years. It was felt that a long-term plan would be beneficial for ensuring continued local support for gangs and youth violence prevention work, and for arranging continued service provision. A particular reported issue was that a great deal of work had been conducted to ensure the involvement of the voluntary and community sector, and that a degree of stability was needed in order to solidify these relationships. Some participants felt that it would have been helpful to have worked collaboratively on a plan coming out of the peer reviews, and then to have been able to set out which aspects they could expect support from. The wider issue was to what extent the programme was able to support local areas with delivery.

Addressing cross-border working - Several of the interview participants, particularly based in London boroughs, mentioned cross-border working as an important aspect of delivery that they felt could have been emphasised more by the Ending Gang and Youth Violence programme (an impression also supported by the survey work). Of the 19 areas that participated in the follow-up survey, six felt that cross-border working had improved due to the programme, 12 felt there had been no change, and one felt that the situation had got much worse due to the programme (unfortunately, there were no further comments from this respondent with which to clarify their

position). Focusing on cross-border issues was seen to have the potential to improve areas' ability to identify gang issues elsewhere that could affect them (or conversely, issues in their area that could potentially lead to issues elsewhere).

Police recorded violent crime in the Ending Gang and Youth Violence areas

Key findings:

- Overall, reductions were seen in the Ending Gang and Youth Violence programme areas in the selected violent crime offences involving 10-19 years olds in 2012-13 compared with 2011-12, continuing those seen in 2011-12 compared with 2010-11 (i.e. before the programme).
- Overall, knife-related and gun-related crime in the programme areas decreased over the programme period.
- These reductions occurred in the context of falls in violence nationally, as measured by police recorded crime, NHS hospital admissions, and the Crime Survey for England and Wales.

This review was not intended to evaluate the impact of the Ending Gang and Youth Violence programme. Selected violence offences for the programme areas are presented below in order to add context to the qualitative findings of the review. It is important to note that any changes in the data cannot be directly attributed to the programme. Additionally, it is unlikely that the full impact of the programme would be seen within its first year.

Selected violent offences data from the programme areas are presented at the end of this report. As the programme focused on youth violence, we concentrate here on crime experienced by 10-19 year olds (i.e. as victims rather than perpetrators). Data are presented for all of the programme areas together, as the number of offences in the individual areas is sometimes so small as to make identification of trends difficult. Because the numbers of homicides and attempted murders are also very small, looking at serious wounding and grievous bodily harm (GBH) arguably gives the best picture of what happened in programme areas in 2012-13.⁴

Overall, reductions were seen in the programme areas in the selected violent crime offences involving 10-19 years old victims in 2012-13 compared with 2011-12, continuing those seen in 2011-12 compared with 2010-11 (i.e. before the Ending Gang and Youth Violence programme).

- **Inflicting GBH without intent:** In 2012-13 compared with the previous year, GBH (10-19 year olds) fell in both London programme areas (around 25 per cent) and non-London programme areas (around 33 per cent).⁵ In both London and non-London programme areas, these falls continued downward trends seen the previous year, although the fall was substantially greater in 2012-13 (see Figures 1 and 2).

⁴ The data split per area are presented in Annex A

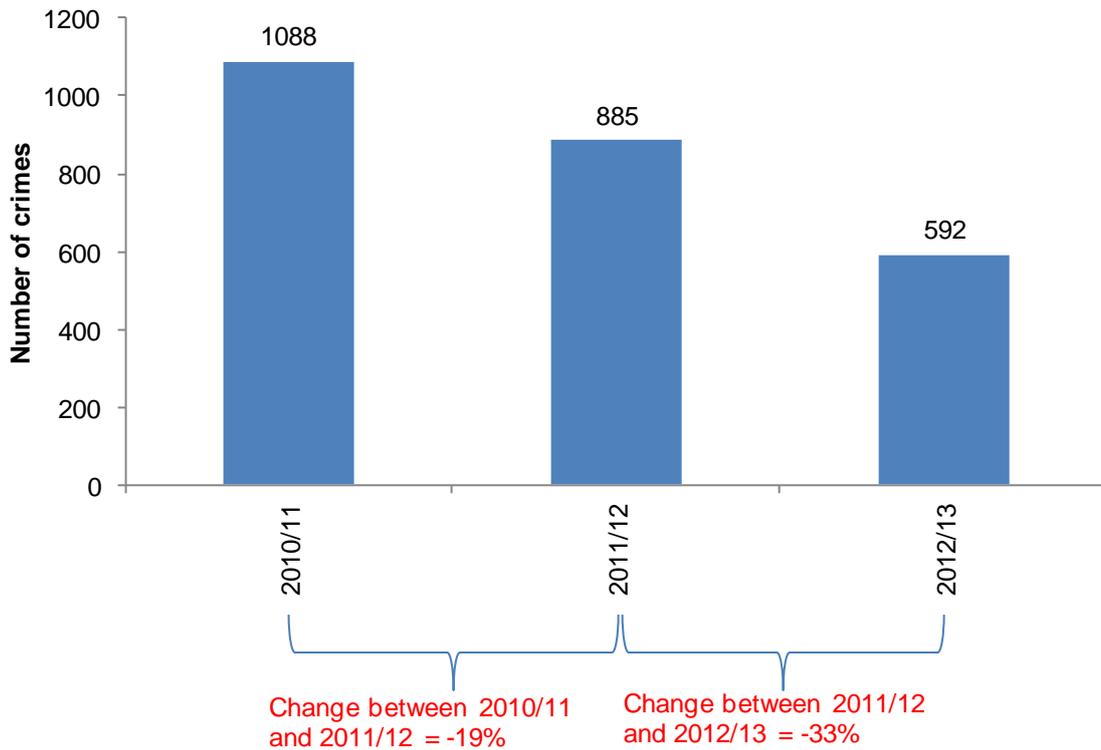
⁵ Changes to the Home Office Counting Rules in 2008 to accommodate the counting of 'Most Serious Violence' allowed forces to either separate and capture lower level woundings as a new category or to count these within the ABH category if they were unable to do this. The Metropolitan Police Service adopted the latter position and as a result could not provide data which mirrors that supplied by other member forces to the Ending Gang and Youth Violence programme. The GBH data provided by the Metropolitan Police Service only incorporates the more serious offence type and for this reason they have been separated from the data provided by other forces which aggregate lesser and more serious offences. This issue has been identified and resolved by the Metropolitan Police Service and does not affect Annual Data Returns or previously published National Statistics for police recorded crime.

Figure 1: Inflicting GBH without intent – yearly change 2012-13 compared with 2011-12, London Ending Gang and Youth Violence areas (10-19 year olds)*



* The GBH data provided by the MPS only incorporates the more serious offence type and for this reason they have been separated from the data provided by other forces which aggregate lesser and more serious offences. See footnote 5 for more information.

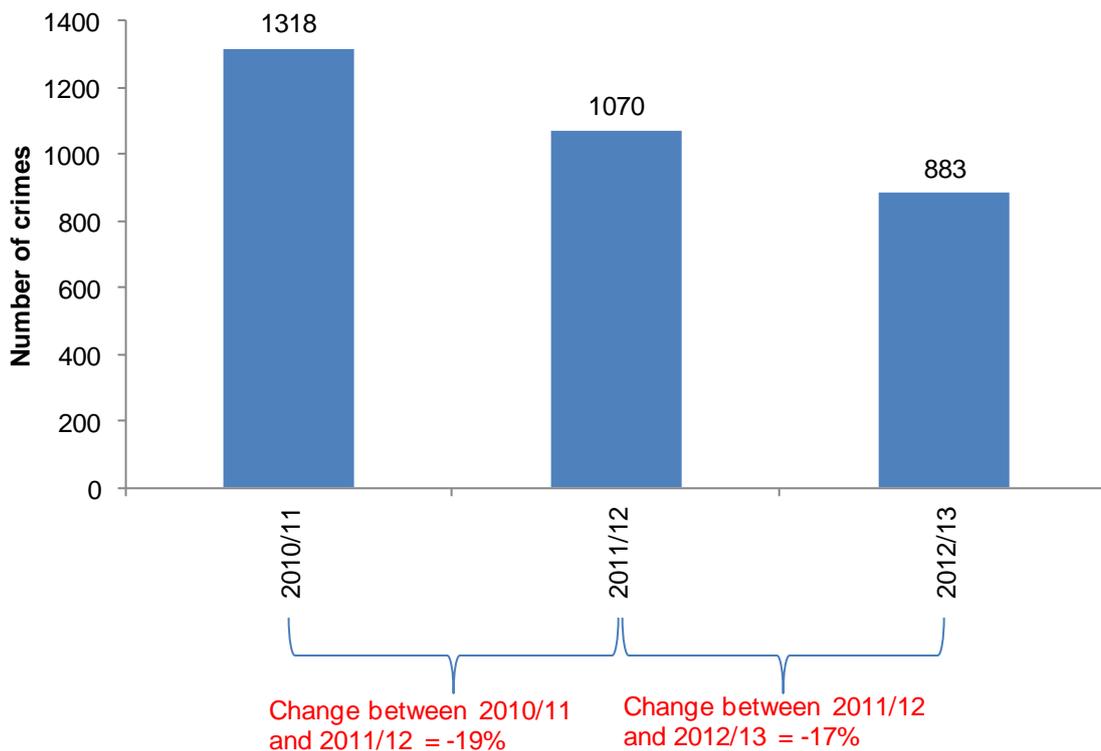
Figure 2: Inflicting GBH without intent – yearly change 2012-13 compared with 2011-12, non-London Ending Gang and Youth Violence areas (10-19 year olds)*



* The GBH data provided by the MPS only incorporates the more serious offence type and for this reason they have been separated from the data provided by other forces which aggregate lesser and more serious offences. See footnote 5 for more information.

- **Wounding:** Wounding (10-19 year olds) fell by around 17 per cent in Ending Gang and Youth Violence areas in 2012-13 compared with the previous year (from 1,070 to 883 offences). This continued downward trends seen the previous year (see Figure 3).

Figure 3: Wounding with intent to do GBH – yearly change 2012-13 compared with 2011-12 (10-19 year olds)



It is important to note that these reductions in the Ending Gang and Youth Violence areas occurred in the context of national falls in violent crime (with all age groups considered together – youth-specific data are not available), as indicated by police recorded crime, the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) and NHS hospital admissions data:

- In 2012-13 across England and Wales, the level of overall police recorded violence against the person showed a 4 per cent fall compared with the previous year (from 626,720 to 601,134 offences), continuing long term reductions in levels of police recorded violent crime.⁶
- Violence against the person with injury (i.e. more serious violence) showed an 8 per cent fall compared with the previous year (from 338,125 to 312,076 offences), again continuing long term trends.
- The CSEW indicates that there was no statistically significant change in the levels of violence in the 2012-13 survey compared with the previous year, although this continues a general trend seen over the last decade where the CSEW has seen a sustained period of modest annual decreases (often not large enough to be statistically significant year on year).⁷
- NHS data showed that there was a 15 per cent fall in admissions for assault in 2012-13 compared with the previous year (from 38,766 to 32,979 finished admission episodes), continuing long term falls.⁸

To further contextualise the programme areas' levels of youth violence, Table 3 below presents selected police recorded violent crimes for all ages in programme areas. To give more

⁶ Office for National Statistics (2013). Crime in England and Wales, Year ending March 2013. Retrieved from: <http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/dcp171778_318761.pdf> [3/12/13]

⁷ Office for National Statistics (2013), *ibid.*, note 6

⁸ Provisional data; Health and Social Care Information Centre (2013). *Provisional monthly topic of interest: Assaults*. Retrieved from: <www.hscic.gov.uk> [3/12/2013]

meaningful context than simply looking at national averages, the programme areas are presented alongside their most similar groups (as defined by the Home Office).⁹ It is important to note that the most similar groups are based on factors that may not take account of the dynamics of violence (e.g. the impact of gangs), so comparisons should be considered as indicative of relative changes only. The analysis suggests:

- Changes in rates for attempted murder and homicide differed slightly in 2012-13 compared with 2011-12, but the overall numbers are too small to discern any trends (i.e. the proportion changes are potentially misleading).
- The levels of assault decreased at about the same level in Ending Gang and Youth Violence programme areas and non-programme areas in 2012-13 compared with 2011-12, continuing trends seen the previous year.
- The fall in youth-related violent crime in programme areas (10-19 year olds) in 2012-13 compared with 2011-12 reported above occurred in the context of falls in violent crime for all ages in the areas. The falls in violent crime for all ages were in-line with non-programme areas.

Table 3: Crime rates – Ending Gang and Youth Violence programme areas and comparable non-programme areas

		Rates per thousand population			Change in rates per thousand population			
		2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2011-12 compared to 2010-11		2012-13 compared to 2011-12	
Attempted murder	Programme	0.020	0.018	0.013	-0.002	(-10%)	-0.005	(-38%)
	Non-Programme	0.007	0.008	0.008	0.001	(12%)	0.000	(0%)
Homicide	Programme	0.022	0.017	0.018	-0.006	(-36%)	0.001	(7%)
	Non-programme	0.013	0.012	0.011	-0.001	(-4%)	-0.001	(-6%)
Assault inc racially / religiously aggravated	Programme	8.738	7.394	6.803	-1.344	(-18%)	-0.591	(-9%)
	Non-programme	7.072	6.388	5.859	-0.528	(-11%)	-0.528	(-9%)

Data source: Police Recorded Crime, Home Office

Population: ONS mid year estimates for 2010, 2011 and 2012 respectively

Non- programme areas are based on the areas' Most Similar Group (without other programme areas)

Knife-related violence

It is difficult to interpret trends for serious yet relatively rare events, as the data may be subject to 'natural' variation. For this reason, care must be taken in interpreting data concerning the number of knife-related offences across the Ending Gang and Youth Violence areas for 10-19 year olds. The monitoring data does suggest that overall, knife-enabled crime in the programme areas decreased over the programme period, to a greater extent than in previous years. The numbers of knife-related homicides and attempted murders are too small to enable meaningful interpretation.

- In 2012-13, the number of knife-related wounding offences involving 10-19 year olds in programme areas fell by around 25 per cent from 2011-12 (from 589 to 439 offences). This was compared with a fall of around 9 per cent the previous year.
- The number of knife-related inflicting GBH without intent offences fell by around 38 per cent in 2012-13 compared with 2011-12 in London programme areas (from 176 to 109 offences), and 56 per cent in non-London programme areas (from 41 to 18 offences). The previous year, there had been falls of around 1 per cent and 7 per cent respectively.

⁹ The Most Similar Groups can be found on <<http://www.police.uk>> [3/12/2013]

These falls in programme areas were in-line with national falls in selected knife-related offences. In England and Wales (for all age groups considered together), in the year ending March 2013, the police recorded 26,336 offences involving a knife or sharp instrument, a 15 per cent decrease compared with the previous year (31,147).¹⁰ Similarly, NHS admissions data for assault with a sharp object in England show a 15 per cent reduction in 2012-13 compared with 2011-12 (from 4,490 to 3,833 finished admission episodes).

Gun-related violence

As with the knife-related offences, the number of gun-related crimes across Ending Gang and Youth Violence programme areas was very low (particularly for the youth cohort), so care must be taken in interpreting the data. The offence category with the highest number of gun-related offences (and so the one we may be most able to discern trends in) is wounding, but these are still very small numbers which are potentially subject to random fluctuation.

- In 2012-13, the number of gun-related wounding offences involving 10-19 year olds in programme areas fell by 22 offences (from 54 to 32 offences). This was compared with a fall of 24 offences (from 78 to 54 offences) between 2011-12 and 2010-11.

There were national declines in firearms offences in 2012-13. Figures for 2012-13 show that the police recorded 5,094 firearm offences in England and Wales, a 15 per cent decrease on the previous year (6,022).¹¹ Similarly, NHS admissions data for assault by firearm discharge¹² show an 18 per cent reduction in 2012-13 compared with 2011-12 (from 141 to 116 finished admission episodes).

Discussion

Looking at the findings of the assessment as a whole (taking into account the qualitative and quantitative data), a positive picture has emerged about the Ending Gang and Youth Violence programme in 2012-13.

While we cannot make firm conclusions relating to the impact of the Ending Gang and Youth Violence programme, local area representatives reported that the programme was beneficial to local areas in tackling gangs and youth violence. The peer reviews, a key part of the programme overall, were also seen to have been helpful in helping local work to address gangs and youth violence. The improvements reported by the local areas were accompanied by continued falls in police recorded youth violence.

The Ending Gang and Youth Violence approach was collaborative, emphasising local partnerships in order to support early intervention activities, and trying to support local areas rather than direct them. This manner of engagement was seen in an overwhelmingly positive light. (Although more so by those areas who were further along in work to address gangs and youth violence). Nevertheless, there were some particular lessons for the future:

- **Programme timings** - the complexity of working to both central and local commissioning processes reportedly made it difficult for the local areas to effectively utilise programme funding. This was made more challenging by the relatively late stage of the year that some areas had their peer review, which they wanted to use to gauge where to commission services.

¹⁰ Office for National Statistics (2013), *ibid.* note 6

¹¹ Office for National Statistics (2013), *ibid.* note 6

¹² Including codes for Assault by handgun discharge, Assault by rifle shotgun and larger firearm discharge, and Assault by other and unspecified firearm discharge

- **Clarity around future engagement** - the uncertainty around the future form of the programme had the potential to create some difficulties for local areas. In particular, not being able to guarantee future funding reportedly made it challenging to sustain the good links established with the voluntary sector over the course of the programme.
- **Cross-border working** - there was a reported need, particularly amongst areas in London, to focus on cross-border working to a greater degree in the future. Focusing on cross-border issues was seen to have the potential to improve areas' ability to identify gang issues elsewhere that could affect them (or conversely, issues in their area that could potentially lead to issues elsewhere).

Annex A: Police recorded crime data

Table A1: Homicides and attempted murders (10-19 year olds)

AREA	2010-11		2011-12		2012-13		Change from 2011-12 to 2012-13	
	Homicide	Att. murder	Homicide	Att. murder	Homicide	Att. murder	Homicide	Att. murder
Barking & Dagenham	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Birmingham	0	7	2	9	2	2	0	-7
Brent	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Camden	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
City of Westminster	0	1	1	2	1	0	0	-2
Croydon	1	1	0	0	1	1	1	1
Derby	1	1	0	0	2	0	2	0
Ealing	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Enfield	0	0	2	2	0	0	-2	-2
Greenwich	1	2	1	0	0	2	-1	2
Hackney	1	0	0	0	1	1	1	1
Haringey	2	3	0	5	0	1	0	-4
Islington	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Knowsley	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Lambeth	1	3	3	3	1	0	-2	-3
Lewisham	1	0	0	2	2	1	2	-1
Liverpool	2	0	1	0	0	1	-1	1
Manchester	2	1	0	4	0	2	0	-2
Newham	4	1	1	0	0	0	-1	0
Nottingham City	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	0
Oldham	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Salford	0	1	0	2	0	1	0	-1
Sandwell	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1
Sheffield	0	0	2	1	0	1	-2	0
Southwark	5	5	0	2	1	1	1	-1
Tower Hamlets	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Waltham Forest	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	0
Wandsworth	0	0	1	0	1	1	0	1
Wolverhampton	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Table A2: Wounding and inflicting GBH (10-19 year olds)*

AREA	2010-11		2011-12		2012-13		Change from 2011-12 to 2012-13	
	Wounding	Inflicting GBH	Wounding	Inflicting GBH	Wounding	Inflicting GBH	Wounding	Inflicting GBH
Barking & Dagenham	30	14	22	16	25	16	3	0
Birmingham	104	510	87	402	94	295	7	-107
Brent	47	25	46	34	33	26	-13	-8
Camden	33	25	33	19	14	15	-19	-4
City of Westminster	40	43	44	37	24	19	-20	-18
Croydon	58	32	38	36	38	40	0	4
Derby	21	32	13	26	17	15	4	-11
Ealing	52	22	29	19	30	20	1	1
Enfield	20	30	9	29	22	25	13	-4
Greenwich	62	9	44	18	26	18	-18	0
Hackney	49	27	29	18	42	20	13	2
Haringey	46	27	55	16	35	17	-20	1
Islington	31	36	23	36	18	18	-5	-18
Knowsley	8	5	11	9	15	3	4	-6
Lambeth	122	34	86	27	51	30	-35	3
Lewisham	32	74	12	54	37	21	25	-33
Liverpool	54	63	54	50	54	29	0	-21
Manchester	59	92	46	68	40	51	-6	-17
Newham	103	15	75	26	46	17	-29	-9
Nottingham City	35	48	27	39	23	8	-4	-31
Oldham	16	41	11	31	9	19	-2	-12
Salford	18	25	16	19	7	17	-9	-2
Sandwell	21	110	23	95	22	55	-1	-40
Sheffield	31	82	30	80	32	48	2	-32
Southwark	49	63	51	57	31	33	-20	-24
Tower Hamlets	98	18	83	23	41	24	-42	1
Waltham Forest	48	16	48	38	26	15	-22	-23
Wandsworth	15	16	9	15	17	13	8	-2
Wolverhampton	16	80	16	66	14	52	-2	-14

* The GBH data for London areas should not be compared with non-London areas. See footnote 5 in the main report for further details.