

Avon & Somerset OPCC

Evaluation of the Avon &
Somerset VRU: Impact
evaluation of the Education
Inclusion work in Bristol

July 2022

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Executive Summary

Introduction

This report presents the findings from the independent impact evaluation of the education inclusion work introduced by Bristol VRU (also known as Safer Options) in September 2019¹.

The evaluation took place between July 2021 and March 2022 and aimed to explore the impact of Safer Options education inclusion work on outcomes for young people, education settings and the wider system.

This evaluation has run alongside an evaluation of the regional Teachable Moments: Education Inclusion Project, which aimed to scale up Bristol's education inclusion work across the other four areas in Avon & Somerset; Bath and North East Somerset (BANES), North Somerset, Somerset, and South Gloucestershire. The Teachable Moments project also involved extra resource for Safer Options to scale up their education inclusion work in six additional schools in Bristol.

Please note: Findings related to the implementation of Bristol's education inclusion work, and its scale up, and about the wider issue of the disproportionality of exclusions affecting Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic young men, and children and young people with SEND needs are covered in the separate evaluation report of the Education Inclusion Project (see Appendix 1 in section 7.1).

Evaluation methodology

The impact evaluation of Bristol's Education Inclusion work involved:

- Review of programme documentation and local Strategic Needs Assessments on youth violence.
- Rapid evidence review around what works in education inclusion interventions.
- Scoping discussions and consultation via interview or survey with project leads, delivery staff, organisations working alongside the project, one child/young person and their parent.

¹ The constitutes was selected as the focus for an impact evaluation of Avon and Somerset Violence Reduction Unit (VRU), which was commissioned by the Police and Crime Commissioner for Avon and Somerset. This focus was agreed following discussions with OPCC and VRU colleagues.

- Analysis of available monitoring and outcomes data.²

About Bristol's Education Inclusion Work

Safer Options' Education Inclusion work aims to work with children and young people (and their families and schools) who are facing permanent exclusion (PEX), a Fixed Term Exclusion (FTE) or a managed move due to reasons associated with serious youth violence (SYV), child criminal exploitation (CCE) and/or child sexual exploitation (CSE).

Key features of the work are:

- The education inclusion team consists of three Education Inclusion Managers (EIM) and three Youth Justice Support Workers (YJSW).
- EIMs provide interventions and support for individual young people, larger cohorts, and advice, guidance and training for school staff. They also do strategic work on exclusion and attendance and Alternative Learning Provision (ALPs).
- The EIMs also work with YJSWs to deliver the Weapons in School (WiS) Pathway. When a child or young person is found with a weapon in education provision, the education provider can report this to Safer Options through the WiS pathway. The EIM advocates for the child or young person to maintain their school place and supports education professionals to ensure decisions in relation to weapons are safe and appropriate. YJSWs work directly with children and young people and their families to understand the reasons for their possession of a weapon and identify appropriate interventions and support in response.

The work aims to:

- Improve partnership working between education providers, the VRU and the police
- Increase education providers' reporting of weapons in school incidents
- Provide education providers with greater confidence and awareness and a clear, defensible pathway to help them to respond effectively to children and young people at risk of exclusion relating to (risk of) involvement in violence

² A limited amount of data is currently collected in a shareable format as part of monitoring the education inclusion work in Bristol. In particular, there is limited outcomes data available, due in part to challenges with collating data across different sources (such as across Safer Options, OOC panels and Bristol Youth Offending Service (YOS)). This means that findings relating to outcomes are mostly based upon qualitative consultation only.

- Reduce exclusions and managed moves for children and young people
- Support and educate children and young people to help them to avoid future involvement in serious violence.

Evidence base and rationale for education inclusion work

There is a relatively wide range of evidence to suggest that school exclusion correlates with involvement in the criminal justice system and wider adverse life experiences. However, the current evidence base does not provide any conclusive evidence about whether or not school exclusion is a causal factor in involvement in offending or in violence. There is also **no well-established evidence base to suggest that education inclusion interventions reduce and/or prevent serious youth violence.**

Nevertheless, this type of programme is increasingly of interest to central government and local areas. The theory that sits behind this is that positive behavioural change will lead to reduced exclusion from education and longer-term impacts on reduced offending.

In Bristol specifically, a focus on education inclusion aligns with national and local policy priorities in responding to SYV. The need for this work is also supported by exclusion and absence data. FTE rates remain higher than the regional average, and absence rates remain higher than both national and regional rates. Although PEX rates have been declining dramatically in Bristol over the last five years, historically these rates have been much higher than other areas.

Characteristics of referred children and young people

403 children and young people were referred for education inclusion support in Bristol between 08/01/2020 and 23/02/2022. Of these, 337 were referred for support from an EIM only, 55 were referred for the WiS pathway, and 12 were referred for the Drugs in School (DiS) pathway, which follows a similar process to the WiS pathway but for young people found with drugs in school.³

Of these referrals:

- 59 are known to have been suspended
- 22% are known to be affected by exploitation

³ Please note that the DiS pathway is not a focus of this evaluation as it was in its early stages, so would be unlikely to achieve impact within the timescales of the evaluation.

- 28% to have had at least one missing episode in the two years prior to data submission (which is a known risk factor for exploitation.)⁴
- 9% are known to have been involved in offending.
- The average age of children and young people at the point of referral was 13.5 years.
- 64% were receiving some form of SEND support at the point of referral.

Stakeholders reported that children and young people with SEND are more at risk of exclusion, SYV, and exploitation.⁵ They suggested that this may be because of a lack of appropriate support in place in education provision and limited appropriate education placements.

Impact of the education inclusion work for children and young people

There is some evidence from qualitative consultation with stakeholders and responses to the education e-survey to suggest that **almost all young people who have been supported by the education inclusion work have experienced improved stability of placement**, in terms of avoiding managed moves and PEX. For instance, **the EIMs reported that 91% of the children and young people supported in 2019-2020 maintained their school placements when they may otherwise have been permanently excluded or moved.**

This may be a result of the input and support from EIMs and YJSWs in the WiS pathway specifically improving children and young people's relationships with education providers, as well as improving education providers' own skills and confidence to support sustained placements.

However, fixed-term exclusions and managed moves continue to be used by education providers. Moreover, analysis of nationally available data indicates that PEX rates and FTE rates in Bristol have been steadily declining over the last five years. It is therefore challenging to attribute the impact of the education inclusion work, particularly on PEX rates

Direct work with YJSWs may be helping to improve attendance and engagement at school for some of the children and young people being supported, and **mental health and wellbeing**, the latter enabling them to acknowledge their own behaviours and develop new conflict resolution strategies.

⁴ See, for example Devon County Council *Prevention Exploitation Toolkit*. Available at: <https://www.preventingexploitationtoolkit.org.uk/home/what-is-exploitation/what-is-vulnerability/missing-persons/#:-:text=Vulnerability%20to%20exploitation,return%20for%20providing%20these%20needs>. [Accessed 28/04/22]

⁵ Timpson, E. (2019). *Timpson Review of School Exclusion*. Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/807862/Timpson_review.pdf [Accessed 12 April 2022] provides evidence that children and young people with SEN are disproportionately excluded.

However, there is agreement that **more long-term support is needed to sustain this impact.**

Filling a gap in the system

There was evidence from both those closely involved in project delivery and the small sample of educational professionals consulted during the evaluation that **the education inclusion work is having a positive impact in improving education providers' confidence in holding and managing risks that might relate to a child or young person's (risk of) involvement in serious violence.**

This in turn has helped stability of placements for young people. This may be linked to:

- **Positive relationships** being built between education providers and EIMs.
- The support EIMs have provided with **risk assessments and planning.**
- **The speed and ease with which support is accessed** through EIMs or the WiS pathway.
- **The WiS pathway providing a clear and defensible position** for education providers to maintain places for children and young people who have brought a weapon into school.
- The project facilitating **information sharing between other agencies and education providers**, particularly through WiS pathway risk assessments. This has given education professionals information about wider contextual factors affecting young people's behaviour that was not available previously, enabling them to be more mindful of these factors and put appropriate support in place for young people.

Working towards a whole-system inclusive approach

As a result of the education inclusion work, stakeholders suggested that there is beginning to be a cultural shift in the system (particularly in education settings, YOTs and the police) towards a more inclusive and trauma-informed approach. This shift may be linked to the training on trauma-informed policies and practices provided by EIMs, and education providers having an improved understanding of the factors influencing individual young people's behaviours.

In general, evidence from qualitative consultation with stakeholders and responses to the education professionals e-survey suggest **there has been improved partnership working between different agencies working with the cohort**, particularly between the local authority children's services and education providers. This has resulted in reduced duplication and a more effective and measured use of resource across the system. Safer Options multi-agency meetings have been important in facilitating this information-sharing, which has improved risk assessments and reduced exclusions, because EIMs can flag up

and set in place preventative measures to support children and young people before they are formally excluded.

Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic pupils, young men, and children and young people with SEND needs are disproportionality identified as being at risk of exclusion across the system. This is reflected in the monitoring data, which suggests that a higher proportion of Black and Minority Ethnic children and SEND children and young people are represented in the education inclusion cohort than the general population in Bristol (see 4.3.4 for more detail). The extent to which the scale and detail of this disproportionality is understood is currently limited.

Conclusions

Overall, there is some qualitative evidence to suggest that Bristol's education inclusion work, particularly that undertaken by EIMs and YJSWs as part of the WiS pathway, has had positive outcomes for many of the children and young people it has worked with, and that it has improved the confidence of education providers who have worked with EIMs or YJSWs in holding and managing risk.

Having said this, it is not possible at this stage to confidently assess the impact of Bristol's education inclusion work, or to attribute any impact that has been seen for those it has worked with firmly to the work of the education inclusion team. This is because

- **There is not currently a co-developed and formally agreed Theory of Change for the education inclusion model** which clearly articulates the theory and assumptions underpinning the education inclusion work and illustrates how specific activities will lead to specific outcomes and impacts. Developing this may help in further defining and communicating the purpose of the work and could be used as a basis for identifying and agreeing outcome measures for future monitoring.
- **A limited amount of data is currently collected in a shareable format as part of monitoring the education inclusion work in Bristol.** Systematic data collection on a broader range of outcomes for young people receiving support from the Education Inclusion team might help Safer Options to measure the wider impact of the education inclusion work. Cordis Bright will be undertaking work with Bristol and Avon and Somerset OPCC to develop specific recommendations about outcomes monitoring.
- **Data around managed moves is not currently collected at a national, regional or local level.** This makes it difficult to demonstrate any impact the education inclusion work has had on reducing the number of managed moves for children and young people it has worked with, and across Bristol more widely. This is particularly challenging considering that a reduction in managed moves is a key intended impact of the work.

Reducing Violence and Exploitation through Education Inclusion in Bristol: A summary from Safer Options

Since Safer Options was established, education inclusion has underpinned the city's strategic plan for reducing violence and exclusion. From the beginning communities, professionals and children told us that access to opportunities, harnessing their future potential and routes out of poverty were fundamental conditions for empowering change. We see educational engagement as central to that approach.

Bristol has a historically challenging picture in terms of inclusion in education. We have stubbornly low rates of attendance for vulnerable children across the city including those with education, health care plans. Whilst rates of permanent exclusion – previously high – have been addressed through significant work across education and children's services, rates of fixed term exclusion, internal exclusion and managed moves remain too high. When we established Safer Options and began understanding the experiences of our cohort better we saw that they were disproportionately likely to be in alternative learning arrangements or excluded from education. It was clear that there was a correlation between harm happening in the community and disruption in educational outcomes. There was also evidence that risks significant escalated for these children in the community following exclusion from mainstream settings with increasing criminal exploitation, youth conflict and poorer outcomes. This finding was reinforced by the findings of the national child safeguarding practice review "It was hard to escape".

Given this picture Bristol took the view that taking a public health response, investing in Education Inclusion would contribute to turning the curve in reducing violence in the city. Over this period we have seen unexpected education exclusion through the various covid-19 pandemics, and while this makes it very challenging to benchmark, it was notable that rates of serious violence, county lines and exploitation in the city peaked following the lockdowns. The programmes undertaken have sought to intervene at points where exclusion is a likely outcome from the decision to bring drugs or weapons into school; referrals by school to Bristol Inclusion Panel to look at alternative school moves; and education inclusion support for children where risk in the community was escalating.

While impact measures have been difficult to capture with disruption through COVID, the project have found that no child referred to the drugs or weapons in school projects has had a permanent exclusion and school moves have been very low. All the children have received an out of court disposal having engaged with the youth justice intervention with successful diversion from offending which impact educational outcomes and opportunities. In addition schools tell us that they feel more supported and confident in managing risks and keeping children in educational settings. We are now considering broadening our approach to consider other potential early intervention indicators to fast track children to early intervention support.

Recommendations

Figure 1 presents recommendations for the future implementation of education inclusion work across Avon and Somerset, based on findings from this evaluation and that of the Education Inclusion: Teachable Moments Project. These include recommendations for consideration by funding bodies, the OPCC, Safer Options, local authorities across Avon and Somerset, and the Bristol education inclusion team.

Those recommendations and considerations which are more specific to the Education Inclusion: Teachable Moments Project are outlined in more detail in the separate evaluation report for this project (see Appendix 1 in 7.1).

Figure 1: Recommendations for future Safer Options' education inclusion work

Recommendation	Evidence base	Bristol Education Inclusion work Report section:	Education Inclusion Project Report section:	For consideration by:
1. Increase the length of funding cycles for education inclusion work.	The short funding cycle and uncertainty about future funding decisions in the Education Inclusion Project made it difficult to recruit staff who would prefer longer contracts. It also meant there was not sufficient time to reflect on specific skill sets needed. In some areas, workers had to be seconded from elsewhere in the local authority to ensure people were in post in the necessary timescales, but this has resulted in under-capacity in other teams. Short funding cycles can also make it challenging to build positive working relationships with multi-agency partners.	n/a	3.2.5 4.4 5.4.1 8.2.1	Funders and commissioners
2. Conduct a robust needs assessment of young people at risk of exclusions and SYV/CCE/CSE	There is limited understanding of disproportionality of exclusions in Avon and Somerset, and around the intersectionality of SYV, exploitation, exclusion, gender, age SEND, and ethnicity. Nevertheless, there is some evidence from qualitative consultation to suggest that young males and children and young people with SEND are disproportionality	4.3.5	4.3 8.2.4 8.3.4	OPCC stakeholders

Recommendation	Evidence base	Bristol Education Inclusion work Report section:	Education Inclusion Project Report section:	For consideration by:
in Avon and Somerset.	<p>identified as at risk of exclusion. Avon and Somerset colleagues may wish to consider conducting a robust needs assessment in the future to help fully these needs so that support can be better targeted to local need.</p> <p>This aligns with Recommendations 16 and 18 in Avon and Somerset Criminal Justice Board's recently published review of disproportionality, which suggest that that Local Authorities and YOTs need to address current issues with collecting high-quality data and analyse linked school exclusion (including managed moves, internal exclusions, "off-rolling" and informal exclusions) and offending data to understanding whether children and young people from Black, Asian and Ethnic Minority backgrounds are more likely to be excluded</p>			

Recommendation	Evidence base	Bristol Education Inclusion work Report section:	Education Inclusion Project Report section:	For consideration by:
	from school, and whether that exclusion increases the likelihood of them entering the criminal justice system. ⁶			
3. Establish agreed referral criteria which balance widening reach with managing demand and targeting resource to those with greatest risk and need.	Overall, there was a consensus among stakeholders across all areas that stability of educational placement is a protective factor against SYV, and as such targeting anyone at risk of exclusion, regardless of whether SYV was a specific concern at the point of referral, was the most suitable approach to tackle both exclusion and SYV in the long-term. Future education inclusion work may therefore wish to consider removing SYV as a referral criterion. This could also help address the disproportionate risk of exclusion faced by	4.4	3.3.1 5.2 8.2.4 8.3.3	Local authority and OPCC stakeholders

⁶ Avon and Somerset Criminal Justice Board (2022) *Identifying Disproportionality in the Avon and Somerset Criminal Justice System* Available at: <https://www.avonandsomerset-pcc.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/Identifying-Disproportionality-Report.pdf> [Accessed 17 June 2022].

Recommendation	Evidence base	Bristol Education Inclusion work Report section:	Education Inclusion Project Report section:	For consideration by:
	<p>children and young people with SEND, who may not necessarily be at risk of SYV or exploitation.</p> <p>Having said this, for future projects that focus on ‘teachable moments’ for young people at risk of SYV, CCE or CSE, stakeholders may wish to consider removing exclusion as a referral criterion. This is because some children and young people are at risk of SYV and exploitation but not exclusion (young women and girls, for example).</p> <p>Broadening the referral criteria in Bristol specifically, for example by opening it to children and young people who attend out-of-county education provision, or do not attend school, would help widen the reach of the education inclusion work. In particular, early intervention with children and young people in primary schools may reduce the risk of serious youth violence later on.</p> <p>However, more open referral high levels of demand which criteria risk generating very outstrip the delivery resource.</p>			

Recommendation	Evidence base	Bristol Education Inclusion work Report section:	Education Inclusion Project Report section:	For consideration by:
	This might result in inability to meet demand, or the need to triage referrals based on severity of need.			
4. Revise the Theory of Change and develop outcomes measurement approaches in collaboration with the OPCC to support ongoing impact evaluation. (Resource has already been identified for Cordis Bright to support actioning this recommendation).	<p>A co-developed Theory of Change could help inform the design of future education inclusion work, as it may help clarify the key mechanisms of change and intended impacts and outcomes of work, which could help refine the target cohort and the referral criterion. This will help local areas offer more effective, evidence-based support that is specifically designed to achieve intended impacts and outcomes for the target cohort.</p> <p>Systematic collection of outcomes data is important to attribute impact of education inclusion work on any reduction in SYV or other aspect of children and young people's lives. This data is not currently available for Bristol VRU's core education inclusion offer and is under development for the Education Inclusion Project. Development of outcomes measurement frameworks might help capture the wider</p>	1.6	2.5.1	Local authority and OPCC stakeholders

Recommendation	Evidence base	Bristol Education Inclusion work Report section:	Education Inclusion Project Report section:	For consideration by:
	impact of the education inclusion work and build up the evidence base of “what works” in violence reduction.			
5. Collect more detailed, consistent and complete profile, intervention and outcomes monitoring data for the cohort.	Within the central data framework reported to the OPCC by the Education Inclusion Project, there is limited and inconsistent demographic data and data on the form and extent of support ⁷ . In addition there was very little data available to the evaluation in relation to the outcomes of both the education inclusion work in Bristol and the wider Education Inclusion Project. This makes it difficult to understand impact and any differential impact for different groups, to unpick what constitutes a successful education inclusion intervention, and to compare progress across the different sites.	3.5.3 5.1	3.4.1 5.4.1	Local authority and OPCC stakeholders

⁷ The precise nature and quality of the data provided varied across the local areas involved in the Education Inclusion Project.

Recommendation	Evidence base	Bristol Education Inclusion work Report section:	Education Inclusion Project Report section:	For consideration by:
	Safer Options and Bristol colleagues should consider how to capture data which could demonstrate longer-term outcomes and impacts. This could include, for example, self-reported measures (e.g. around wellbeing) at the beginning and end of intervention and at regular follow-up points, as well as individual-level data on education inclusion and engagement and involvement with the criminal justice system.			
6. Consider adopting a 'scoping phase' of implementation for future education inclusion work. This could include time to review best practice examples and guidance.	Local strategic stakeholders involved in the Education Inclusion Project shared that more central guidance from Avon and Somerset OPCC, especially sharing evidence about the impact of existing education exclusion and examples of best practice in education inclusion work, may have helped improved relationships with education providers, increase the efficacy of interventions, and refine referral criteria.	n/a	3.2.2 3.2.3 4.2 4.3.5 8.3.4	Local authority and OPCC stakeholders

Recommendation	Evidence base	Bristol Education Inclusion work Report section:	Education Inclusion Project Report section:	For consideration by:
	<p>This guidance could be reviewed as part of an extended scoping phase at the beginning of any future education inclusion work. For Bristol VRU's education inclusion work, EIMs had scoping time at the beginning of the implementation period which enabled them to design the role around local need, reduce duplication, and build positive relationships with education providers.</p>			
<p>7. Consider opportunities to share learning and resources across local delivery teams more widely.</p>	<p>In Bristol VRU there are three EIMs. The joint working between them has facilitated outcomes on a larger scale, because they each focus on specific issues and outcomes, reducing the duplication of work and increasing capacity.</p> <p>Increased sharing of learning and resources more widely across Bristol and Avon and Somerset might help to further improve the support the delivery teams provide going forwards. Colleagues at Avon and Somerset OPCC may consider creating and disseminating guidance on specific</p>	n/a	4.5 6.2	Local authority and OPCC stakeholders and local delivery teams

Recommendation	Evidence base	Bristol Education Inclusion work Report section:	Education Inclusion Project Report section:	For consideration by:
	interventions and creating more forums for members of local site delivery teams to share learning.			
8. Locate education inclusion delivery teams in organisations with strong links with other providers.	As part of Bristol VRU's education inclusion work, the team are based within Early Help. This was highlighted as a key enabler for successful implementation, because it supports engagement with children and young people and multi-agency partnership working. Across other areas, engagement and co-ordination of support with education providers, and partnership working was more successful in models based in organisations with strong pre-existing relationships with education providers and other agencies, and particularly those all or partly based in the YOS. This can also help with completing onward referrals as part of exit planning.	n/a	3.2.3 4.4.3 5.3.1 5.4.1 8.3.1	Local delivery teams
9. Carefully consider the skills of those recruited to delivery roles in	There was strong consensus across all areas that the skills and expertise of the EIMs and support workers are central in achieving positive outcomes for children and young people, education, and the wider system. In particular, stakeholders	n/a	4.4.1 6.2 8.3.2	Local delivery teams

Recommendation	Evidence base	Bristol Education Inclusion work Report section:	Education Inclusion Project Report section:	For consideration by:
future iterations of the Education Inclusion project or similar workstreams.	highlighted the importance of the EIMs and support workers having an education background, which can facilitate good relationships with education providers due to EIMs' ability to present complex information in ways suitable for and education providers to easily understand. Communication and rapport building skills with children and young people, being representative of the community, and diplomacy, proactiveness and adaptability were also highlighted as important skills to engage children and young people and provide effective support targeted to their needs.			
10. Consider the possibilities of delivering longer interventions.	All delivery stakeholders involved in the Education Inclusion Project (support workers and EIMs) agreed that although the project could be more effective with and benefit from a whole-family approach, the short-term nature of the intervention does not allow time for this wider approach. A longer intervention period could also result in a wider reach of the project, as it could support children and young people with	n/a	5.4.3 7.2.4 8.2.1	Local authority and OPCC stakeholders

Recommendation	Evidence base	Bristol Education Inclusion work Report section:	Education Inclusion Project Report section:	For consideration by:
	more complex needs that need consistent support over a longer period of time.			
11. Consider offering more regular check-in sessions between education providers and EIMs.	<p>There was some confusion around referral pathways for Bristol VRU's education inclusion work; some stakeholders noted that some education providers are still confused about the difference between the formal and informal referral procedures for support. They reported that in some instances education providers are not using the appropriate referral forms but still expect support.</p> <p>With regards to the Education Inclusion Project, several education professionals who we interviewed raised that communication and information-sharing is still a challenge, and that improvements in this area might help them coordinate support more effectively.</p> <p>Delivery teams also reported that education providers sometimes make inappropriate referrals, with particular</p>	5.3.1	5.2 5.3.3	Local delivery teams

Recommendation	Evidence base	Bristol Education Inclusion work Report section:	Education Inclusion Project Report section:	For consideration by:
	<p>education providers referring many pupils who do not meet the needs thresholds required for support. This was particularly the case in areas where referral criteria have been broadened. This has resulted in demand outweighing the capacity of delivery teams. This is further exacerbated by capacity and resource constraints across the system, which limits the number of onwards referrals to specialist support which can be made.</p>			
<p>12. Offer training across Avon and Somerset on trauma-informed practice, contextual safeguarding approaches and support for SEND</p>	<p>Children and young people with SEND are currently overrepresented in the education inclusion cohort across Avon and Somerset. Some key stakeholders suggested this is because there is often a lack of support in schools for children and young people with undiagnosed SEND needs which leads to them being at risk of exclusion.</p> <p>There was consensus among stakeholders consulted as part of the Education Inclusion Project evaluation, that more training on trauma-informed methods, supporting SEND</p>	<p>5.4.2</p>	<p>4.3.4 5.3.4 6.3 7.3 8.2.3 8.3.5</p>	<p>Local authority and OPCC stakeholders, and local delivery teams</p>

Recommendation	Evidence base	Bristol Education Inclusion work Report section:	Education Inclusion Project Report section:	For consideration by:
pupils across the system.	<p>needs in school, and contextual safeguarding and contextual risk factors could be useful for all teachers (i.e. not only those with wellbeing or SEN responsibilities) and wider partners. This might help co-ordinate inclusion support being offered to the children and young people by all partners, and in turn help sustain any impact achieved. Consulting education colleagues on their training needs could help inform this training.</p> <p>Stakeholders suggested that SEND training could include training to destigmatise certain presentations of SEND, which might help to reduce exclusions for these children and young people.</p>			
13. Further clarity for professionals in the YOT, Early Help and Safer Options	Although the YOT and police ratify decision-making around the WiS pathway through the OOCd panel, the EIMs and YJSWs sit within Early Help. This has the potential to create issues of accountability (i.e. if the EIMs and OOCd panel	3.4.1 5.3.1	n/a	Safer Options

Recommendation	Evidence base	Bristol Education Inclusion work Report section:	Education Inclusion Project Report section:	For consideration by:
about the responsibilities and aims of the YJSW, EIM and Families in Focus roles.	disagree on required support for a young person) and can result in some confusion around expectations of YJSWs, as they are expected to work across multiple agencies. Stakeholders suggested that greater clarity around roles and responsibilities of education inclusion professionals would help address these tensions and increase the reach of support (for example, by potentially reducing YJSW caseloads if expectations are managed more effectively). For future sites looking to implement this model, stakeholders also suggested that scoping time for YJSWs as well as EIMs prior to project launch might help to more clearly delineate the responsibilities of the project team and tailor support to identified need.			
14. Consider updating the way Safer Options identify young people at	Data is not always shared systematically or consistently across Safer Options, especially with regards to data from education providers and police. This makes it harder to successfully identify young people at risk of SYV, CCE, CSE,	5.4.1	n/a	Avon and Somerset OPCC

Recommendation	Evidence base	Bristol Education Inclusion work Report section:	Education Inclusion Project Report section:	For consideration by:
<p>risk of exclusion, SYV, CCE and/or CSE, for example by standardising data collection and recording across Safer Options and its partners, and including education providers in Safer Options meetings.</p>	<p>and/or exclusion. A lack of information-sharing from police also limits the ability of education providers to put in place robust risk assessments. Standardising data collection and sharing processes (including the use of digital platforms) and including education providers in the Safer options meetings (as opposed to the EIM acting in lieu of education providers) might help improve information sharing and identification of young people at risk.</p> <p>More consistent and systematic data collection might also reduce reliance on more subjective, qualitative measures of risk and therefore reduce the risk of disproportionality. It could also be used to inform and clarify eligibility criteria for the Education Inclusion work.</p>			Safer Options

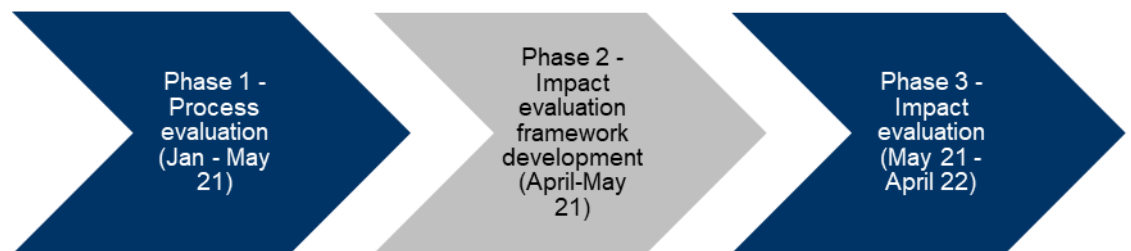
1 Introduction and methodology

1.1 Chapter overview

This chapter introduces the education inclusion work in Bristol and its independent evaluation by Cordis Bright. It outlines the evaluation questions and methodology, as well as the main challenges and limitations for the evaluation. It also includes a glossary of key terms used within the report.

1.2 About this report

Cordis Bright was commissioned by the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) for Avon and Somerset to conduct a process and impact evaluation of the Avon and Somerset Violence Reduction Unit (VRU). The evaluation was delivered in three phases:



This report outlines the findings from the impact evaluation, which constitutes Phase 3 of the evaluation. It explores the impact of Bristol VRU's (also known as Safer Options) education inclusion work. It can be read in conjunction with the Phase 1 process evaluation report.

The impact evaluation focused on two strands of the Bristol education inclusion work, which are summarised in section 1.3.

This impact evaluation took place in parallel to an evaluation of the Education Inclusion: Teachable Moments Project, in which the Education Inclusion work was introduced into the four other areas in Avon & Somerset VRU and the existing work in Bristol was extended.

A separate report is available on the Education Inclusion: Teachable Moments Project evaluation (see Appendix 1 in 7.1). This report includes discussion relating to implementation of education inclusion work drawn from both evaluations that are relevant across Avon and Somerset. It also includes a more detailed discussion on the issue the disproportionality of exclusions for certain groups of children and young people (including those from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Backgrounds, children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and young males).

1.3 Overview of the education inclusion work

Two of the main strands within Bristol's education inclusion work – and the two which are the focus of the evaluation – are:

- **Education Inclusion Managers (EIMs)**, located in North Bristol, South Bristol, and East Central Bristol. EIMs work with education providers and other professionals to manage risk and build confidence in responding to the needs of children and young people. Through this they hope professionals will avoid the immediate consideration of a managed move, reporting to the police, or attempting to manage risk internally. This allows children and young people themselves the opportunity to address risk factors and motivations leading to their situation.
- **The Weapons in School (WiS) pathway**. This works to support education professionals in responding to weapons found in school. The pathway involves education providers reporting WiS incidents to the EIM who will assign the child/young person a Youth Justice Support Worker (YJSW) to deliver a six-to-ten-week intervention to the child/young person to address the underlying risk factors that led to the incident. The EIM provides additional support to their school and the child/young person to support the child/young person to remain in the education setting if possible

In addition to these two strands, towards the beginning of the evaluation Safer Options was also introducing a Drugs in School (DiS) pathway, which largely followed the same process as WiS but for children and young people found with drugs in school.

Because this aspect of the work was in its early stages, it was agreed with OPCC and Bristol colleagues that the evaluation would not focus on DiS, as it would be unlikely to achieve impact within the timescales of the evaluation. However, where relevant, findings related to the DiS pathway have been included in this report. We hope that the findings of this report in relation to the WiS pathway might also be helpful in informing future delivery of the DiS pathway and any other education inclusion work undertaken locally.

More detailed information about the Bristol education inclusion work is available in Chapter 3.

1.4 Evaluation questions

The key evaluation questions are outlined below. These were agreed in collaboration with the OPCC and Bristol Safer Options colleagues. The outcomes-focused questions cover the intended outcomes and impacts of the education-inclusion based initiatives for which it might be feasible to achieve and measure change within the programme delivery period and evaluation

timescales. They therefore do not focus on some longer-term intended outcomes and impacts of the initiatives.⁸

Outcomes for children and young people

1. What impact have the Education Inclusion Manager roles and the Weapons in School Pathway in Bristol had for children and young people? Particularly, and with a recognition of disproportionality within these systems and processes, what has been their impact on:
 - a. Children and young people's school attendance (including stability of placement)?
 - b. Children and young people's engagement with education?
 - c. Children and young people's awareness of the risks and possible consequences of carrying weapons?
 - d. Children and young people's involvement in serious violence or likelihood of future involvement in serious violence?
 - e. Children and young people's health, wellbeing, relationships or other areas of their lives which are important to them?
2. Which aspects of the Education Inclusion Manager roles and the Weapons in School Pathway in Bristol have made the greatest contribution to any improved outcomes for children and young people?
3. Have any aspects of the Education Inclusion Manager roles and the Weapons in School Pathway or the context in which they are delivered hindered the achievement of better outcomes for children and young people?

Outcomes for schools/education providers

4. What impact have the Education Inclusion Manager roles and the Weapons in School Pathway in Bristol had on the local education providers? Particularly, what has been their impact on their:
 - a. Understanding of available support services and referral pathways?
 - b. Confidence in managing and holding risk?
 - c. Understanding of factors influencing children and young people's behaviour and which put them at risk of exploitation and/or SY?
 - d. Confidence, views and skills in addressing serious violence or risk of involvement in it?

⁸ Please note that the evaluation questions have evolved over the course of the project to reflect changing priorities of the evaluation. This includes a reduced focus on the transferability of the intervention to other areas in Avon and Somerset and outcomes for the local community. This was due to the fact that the Education Inclusion: Teachable Moments Project was launched part-way through the Bristol evaluation, and therefore scoping out the demand for similar initiatives was no longer relevant, and because following discussions with Bristol strategic stakeholders and OPCC colleagues, we agreed that the education inclusion work does not intend to act directly on community-level outcomes.

- e. Partnership working with partners, police and the community?
- 5. Which aspects of the Education Inclusion Manager roles and the Weapons in School Pathway in Bristol have made the greatest contribution to any improved outcomes for schools?
- 6. Have any aspects of the Education Inclusion Manager roles and the Weapons in School Pathway or the context in which they are delivered hindered the achievement of better outcomes for schools?

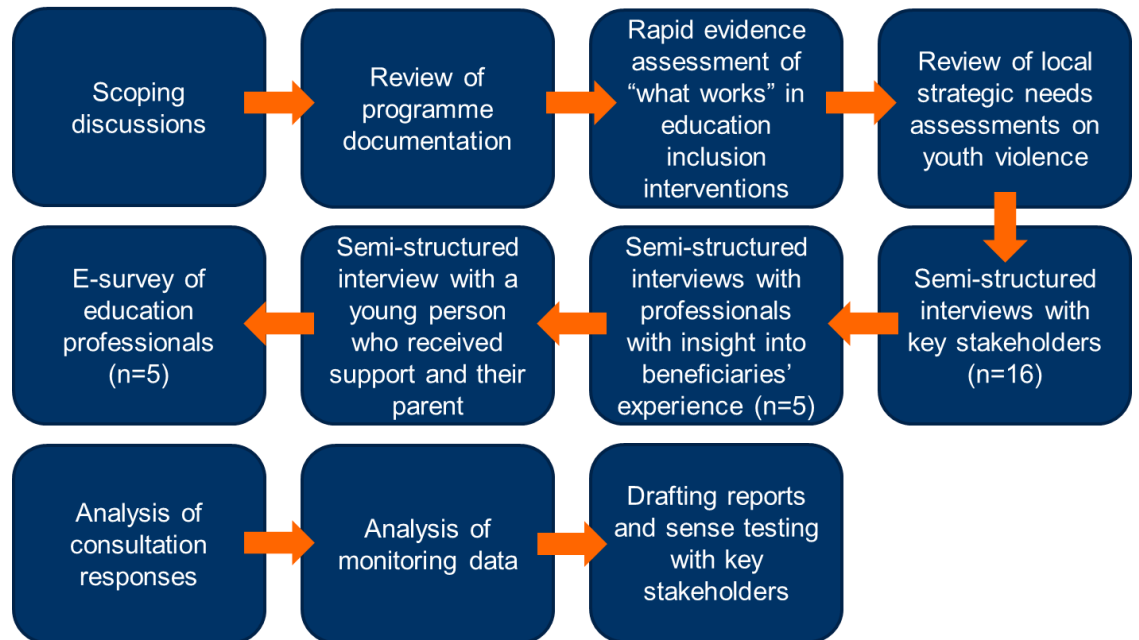
System-level changes

- 7. What has been the impact of the Education Inclusion Manager roles and the Weapons in School Pathway on local multi-agency approaches to addressing serious violence and education inclusion in Bristol? In particular, what has been their impact on:
 - a. Identifying children and young people (either individuals or cohorts) who might be at risk of involvement in serious violence and/or exclusion from education? (including understanding of disproportionality of exclusion affecting male black pupils)
 - b. Providing options and pathways to engage and support children and young people who might be at risk of involvement in serious violence and/or exclusion from education?
 - c. Professionals' (e.g. YOT workers, police, OOCDC teams) confidence, views and skills in addressing serious violence or risk of involvement in it (including trauma-informed decision-making and responses)?
 - d. The extent and quality of partnership working to support children and young people at risk of involvement with serious violence and/or exclusion from education?
 - e. The use of police resource and the youth justice system?
 - f. Any other system-level changes?
- 8. Which aspects of the Education Inclusion Manager roles and the Weapons in School Pathway in Bristol have made the greatest contribution to any system-level changes?
- 9. Have any aspects of the Education Inclusion Manager roles and the Weapons in School Pathway or the context in which they are delivered hindered the achievement of system-level changes?

1.5 Evaluation methodology

The evaluation took a collaborative approach. All approaches and research tools were designed by Cordis Bright and agreed before use with key stakeholders from the OPCC and Safer Options. Figure 2 outlines the evaluation methodology.

Figure 2: Methodology for the evaluation of Bristol's education inclusion work



1.5.1 Scoping discussions

We conducted scoping discussions with project leads to understand the implementation and intended outcomes of the initiatives, the available evidence to evaluate impact and any additional resource to support the evaluation. Stakeholders included the VRU Strategic Lead, the Safer Options Manager, Families in Focus Managers, EIMs, and colleagues from the Out of Court Disposal Panel.

1.5.2 Document review

We reviewed documentation provided by Safer Options colleagues to understand the aims, governance and delivery structure, key activities, outcomes and impacts, target cohort and local context underpinning the delivery of the education inclusion work in Bristol. This documentation included:

- Education Inclusion Managers Report 2020-21
- Safer Options Partnership Intelligence Form
- Weapons in School pathway referral form
- Education Inclusion Manager Job Description
- Education Inclusion Manager Person Specification
- Guidance for education settings around offensive weapons and covering letter for Head Teachers

- Safer Options update for EIMs March 2020
- The Education Inclusion: Teachable Moments Project Bid
- The Education Inclusion: Teachable Moments Project Theory of Change
- Avon & Somerset VRU's Education Protocol

1.5.3 Rapid evidence assessment

We conducted a rapid evidence assessment to identify evidence relating to both the theory underpinning education inclusion interventions and their impact on education inclusion and involvement in offending/violence. This has informed both the Bristol and the Education Inclusion: Teachable Moments Project evaluation.

1.5.4 Review of Strategic Needs Assessments

We conducted a review of recently updated “problem profiles” for all local VRUs in Avon and Somerset and the regional VRU Strategic Needs Assessment to gain a better understanding of the aims and priorities for all local VRUs. This helped inform the evaluation questions and consultation topic guides.

1.5.5 Semi-structured interviews with key stakeholders

We conducted semi-structured interviews via Teams/Zoom with 16 key stakeholders involved in the design, delivery and monitoring of education-inclusion based initiatives in Bristol. These included EIMs, YJSWs, Safer Options strategic and operational leads, Families in Focus Managers, YOT area managers, Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs) in schools and other education provision, and a Youth Engagement Officer who sits on the OOC Panel. These stakeholders were nominated for interview by Safer Options colleagues. The interviews focused on the work of the EIMs and WiS pathway, and the impact the work had on children and young people, schools and education providers, and for the wider system. We also discussed what worked well or could have been improved in the implementation of the work, and any learning that had emerged.

1.5.6 Semi-structured interviews with professionals with insight into beneficiaries' experiences and outcomes

We also conducted semi-structured interviews and with five professionals with insight into beneficiaries' experiences. These included representatives from education providers, social care, and the YOT, who were nominated by Safer Options colleagues. The interviews focused on the impact that Bristol's education inclusion work had on the interviewee's role, and on the children and young people they had worked with who may have received support from an EIM or YJSW.

1.5.7 Interviews with beneficiaries

In addition, we spoke with one child/young person who had received support from the Bristol Education Inclusion work and their parent⁹. The family were contacted by their YJSW, who obtained written, informed consent from both the child/young person and parent to take part. Both interviews took place via telephone at separate times. The YJSW was present at the interview with the child/young person as a point of contact in case any safeguarding issues arose. We aimed to ensure the interviews were a positive experience by focusing on the support received from the YJSW and anything which would have made it better.

1.5.8 E-survey of education providers

We conducted an e-survey of education stakeholders to understand their views on the impact of the education inclusion work in Bristol. In total, we received five responses from representatives from five different education providers in Bristol.¹⁰ The survey was circulated to 18 points of contact in 13 education settings identified by the EIMs, who were asked to share the survey with any additional colleagues who might be able to comment on the education inclusion work.

1.5.9 Analysis of performance data

We analysed performance data for Bristol's Education Inclusion work. This included individual-level data for 403 children and young people referred for support from YJSWs. We also analysed school and education provider-level data from across Bristol relating to exclusions and managed moves.

We explored the data available to support the evaluation with colleagues in Safer Options, Bristol YOS, Bristol OOC panel and Avon & Somerset OPCC. Data was then collated and shared by Bristol City Council. We extended the original timescales for the data collation and sharing in order to maximise the amount and quality of data we were able to receive.

⁹ We intended to interview up to seven young people and four parents from Bristol. However, YJSWs reported challenges with gaining consent from young people and parents to take part in interviews, mainly due to heavy caseloads making it difficult to find the time to travel to gain consent in person. In response, we adapted the consent process so that only written consent from a parent was needed for a young person to be contacted for an interview. The young person could then give verbal consent at the start of the interview. It was also agreed that for parent interviews, the parent could give verbal consent at the beginning of the interview. Due to limited capacity of the YJSWs and a desire for views of beneficiaries from the Education Inclusion: Teachable Moments project in other areas to be included in that project's parallel evaluation report, it was agreed with OPCC colleagues that some of the resource for interviews with young people and families would be transferred to the Education Inclusion Teachable Moments evaluation. More detail about this and how challenges around interviewing families were mitigated are described in section 1.6.

¹⁰ All contacts were sent a follow-up email as a reminder. EIMs reported that limited capacity, staff shortages and other survey requests outside the project had resulted in lower-than-expected completion rates. To mitigate low response rates, the initial window for completion was extended twice, and EIMs were also asked to get in touch with their contacts and ask them to complete the survey. Further detail on how this challenge of low completion rate has been mitigated is outlined in section 1.6.

The final dataset included 21 variables shown in Figure 3. It covered individuals referred for education inclusion support in Bristol between January 2020 and March 2022, when data was submitted to the evaluation. It therefore does not represent all referrals received for education inclusion support in Bristol, which began in September 2019.

The dataset does not include some variables and data types that we had originally hoped to analyse in the data study, such as project-level monitoring data (for example, number of WiS and DiS incidents, number of EIM consultations with education providers) or outcomes data (such as offending history and repeat offences (pre- and post-intervention), individual level exclusion rates, or data related to any other outcomes (such as those collected through self-reported measures)).

More systematic collection or collation of outcomes data for the cohort might help Safer Options to assess the impact of the education inclusion work on an ongoing basis. It might also contribute to the evidence base for “what works” in violence reduction.

Figure 3: Variables in the referral database

No.	Variable
1	School type
2	Gender
3	Age at start
4	Current age
5	Ethnicity
6	Disability
7	SEND status
8	Ward
9	Known to have been suspended
10	Known to be involved in offending
11	Known to be affected by exploitation
12	Open referral to social care in two years prior to referral
13	Open early help episode in two years prior to referral
14	Total missing episodes in two years prior to data submission

No.	Variable
15	Regular missing person (3+ episodes in three months prior to data submission)
16	Working with YOT on referral
17	Attendance rate academic year 2018/19
18	Attendance rate academic year 2019/20
19	Attendance rate academic year 2020/21
20	Referral date
21	Most recent contact in current financial quarter

1.5.10 Sense-testing meeting

We produced a draft report and met with key stakeholders to sense-test the main findings and receive feedback on the draft report. We then finalised the evaluation findings and report on the basis of their feedback.

1.6 Challenges and limitations

The following outlines some key challenges and limitations to the evaluation:

- Attribution of impact.** A challenge for evaluations like this is attribution of impact to the education inclusion work over and above other interventions or factors that may influence participant outcomes. Randomised Control Trials and Quasi-Experimental Designs are recognised as strong methods to support the attribution of impact. It was not possible in this evaluation to design and implement these. Theory-based methods also proved more difficult to implement because there was not an agreed Theory of Change or logic model for the education inclusion work, which could then be tested via the evaluation. Rather, in line with the specification and stakeholders' priorities we focused on covering EIMs and the WiS pathway as comprehensively as possible within the evaluation resource. Our approaches include mixed methods and triangulation which allows us to make judgements concerning implementation and also emerging areas of impact and good practice.



Recommendation: Cordis Bright to revise the Theory of Change for the Education Inclusion Project and develop outcomes measurement approaches in collaboration with the OPCC and Bristol Safer Options to support ongoing impact evaluation of all education inclusion work.

We will develop a more extensive Theory of Change of the Education Inclusion Project based on the findings of the evaluation of the project and of the impact evaluation of the Bristol education inclusion work. This will be generated in collaboration with colleagues from the OPCC and the five local areas in Avon and Somerset implementing education inclusion interventions.

Linked to this, we will also provide specific recommendations about future outcomes measures and monitoring, which might inform and enable future evaluation of the impact of any continuation of the projects. Systematic collection of outcomes data is important to attribute impact of education inclusion work on any reduction in SYV or other aspect of children and young people's lives. This data is not currently available for Bristol VRU's core education inclusion offer and is under development for the Education Inclusion Project.

- **Capturing a wide range of perspectives.** It is often challenging to ensure that beneficiaries' perspectives and experiences are adequately reflected in evaluation of this nature. It is also often a challenge to capture the views of education professionals due to limited capacity. These challenges are reflected in the low response rate to the education e-survey and beneficiaries and parent interviews (please see sections 0 and 1.5.8 for more detail). We have attempted to mitigate these issues through:
 - Developing case studies through analysis of qualitative interviews. During interviews with 16 stakeholders and 21 professionals, the evaluation team focused on impacts and outcomes for children and young people who had received support and identified a series of case study examples of individual impact which are spread throughout this report. This ensures that space is given to individuals' experiences and how the service has impacted upon their lives.
 - Interviews with professionals with experience of working with beneficiaries. These included representatives from education providers, social care, and the YOT. These people were able to give a second-hand insight into individuals' experiences.
 - Interviews with key stakeholders. We interviewed a range of stakeholders to ensure that despite lower-than-expected completion rates of the education professionals e-survey, the views and experiences of education professionals were captured within these interviews.
- **Availability and shareability of data relating to performance and outcomes.** A limited amount of data is currently collected in a shareable format as part of monitoring the education inclusion work in Bristol. In particular, there is limited outcomes data available, due in part to challenges with collating data across different sources (such as across Safer Options, OOCN panels and Bristol YOS). This means that findings relating to outcomes are mostly based upon qualitative consultation only.

1.7 Glossary of key terms

Figure 4: Glossary of key terms

Term	Definition
Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)	When a child or young person under 18 has manipulated, deceived, coerced, or controlled to undertake activity which constitutes a criminal activity. ¹¹
Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)	A form of sexual abuse where a child or young person is exploited (and given things like gifts, drugs, money status and affection) in exchange for performing sexual activities. Children and young people are often groomed into believing they are in a loving and consensual relationship. ¹²
Permanent Exclusion (PEX)	A permanent exclusion refers to a pupil who is excluded and who will not come back to that school (unless the exclusion is overturned). ¹³
Fixed-term exclusion (FTE)	A fixed-term exclusion is where a child or young person is temporarily removed from school. A pupil may be excluded for one or more fixed periods (up to a maximum of 45 school days in a single academic year). The law does not allow for extending, or 'converting' a FTE into a permanent exclusion. If the exclusion is longer than five school days, the school must arrange suitable full-time education from the sixth school day, e.g., at a pupil referral unit.
Managed move	A managed move is a voluntary agreement between education providers, parent(s)/carer(s) and a pupil, for that pupil to change school or educational programme under controlled circumstances. Managed moves are often used as an alternative to permanent exclusion; the result is that no exclusion is formally logged on the pupil's school record.

¹¹ The Children's Society (2021) *Defining child criminal exploitation*. Available at: <https://www.childrenssociety.org.uk/information/professionals/resources/defining-child-criminal-exploitation> [Accessed 28 April 2022].

¹² NSPCC *Child Sexual Exploitation*. Available at: <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/what-is-child-abuse/types-of-abuse/child-sexual-exploitation/> [Accessed 28 April 2022].

¹³ Department for Education and National Statistics (2019) *Permanent and fixed period exclusions in England 2017 to 2018*. Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/820773/Permanent_and_fixed_period_exclusions_2017_to_2018_-_main_text.pdf [Accessed 28 April 2022].

Term	Definition
Out of Court Disposal panel (OOC panel).	A panel used by Police to deal with less serious, and often first-time, offending without going to court. An OOC panel is the resolution of a low level offence, where it is not in the public interest to prosecute, through a community resolution, youth caution, or youth conditional caution. ¹⁴
Serious Youth Violence (SYV).	Violence that occurs among young people aged 25 and under, outside of the home. It is between children and young people who are not related, and who may or may not know each other. ¹⁵
Violence Reduction Unit (VRU)	The Avon and Somerset VRU model is based on a “hub and spoke” model. This involves central strategic oversight and coordination through a Strategic Governance Group and a core team of OPCC and police personnel (the hub) but localised decision-making and delivery to enable local VRUs (the spokes) to target resources within their specific locality, based on local need and resources.
Safer Options	Safer Options is the name of the Bristol local VRU. There is a central Safer Options hub which oversees the delivery of the VRU across three localities in the city.
Education provision/provider	An education setting which might include secondary schools, primary schools, private schools, SEN schools, specialist schools, Pupil Referral Units (PRU) and colleges.

1.8 Report structure

The remainder of this report is structured as follows:

- **Chapter 2** outlines the findings from a rapid evidence assessment of the existing evidence base for the theory and impact of education inclusion interventions.

¹⁴ HM Inspectorate of Probation (2018) *An inspection of youth offending services in Bristol*. Available at: https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmiprobation/wp-content/uploads/sites/5/2018/09/Inspection-of-youth-offending-services-in-Bristol-report_2.pdf [Accessed 28 April 2022].

¹⁵ Bristol City Council (2020) *Bristol Safer Options Approach to Serious Youth Violence and Child Criminal Exploitation (2020-2030)*. Available at: <https://bristolsafeguarding.org/media/yu5li4ke/syv-bristol-approach-2020-2030.pdf> [Accessed 21 April 2022].

- **Chapter 3** outlines the aims, governance and delivery structure, delivery model and local context for education inclusion work in Bristol.
- **Chapter 4** describes the number of children and young people reached by Bristol's education inclusion work and the characteristics of those who have been referred into the education inclusion team.
- **Chapter 5** discusses the outcomes and impacts that the Bristol education inclusion work has had for children and young people, education provision, and the wider system.
- **Chapter 6** presents conclusions from the evaluation of the Bristol VRU's education inclusion work.

A note on terminology

Stakeholders from a range of organisations were consulted as part of this evaluation, including:

- Youth Justice Support Worker (YJSW)
- Education Inclusion Manager (EIM)
- Families in Focus Manager
- Youth Offending Team Area Manager (YOT Area Manager)
- Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)
- Strategic stakeholders (from OOC panels or local VRUs)
- Professionals with insight into beneficiaries (e.g., education professionals and YOT practitioners.)
- Education professionals (Designated Safeguarding Leads or those who work in schools or other education settings)

Throughout this report, the term 'stakeholders' is used as an umbrella term to refer to all those who took part in those who took part in interviews. Where views were held by stakeholders in particular roles, this has been specified in the text.

2 Evidence base for education inclusion interventions



Key findings

- There is a relatively wide range of evidence to suggest that school exclusion correlates with involvement in the criminal justice system and wider adverse life experiences.
- However, the current evidence base does not provide any conclusive evidence about whether or not school exclusion is a causal factor in involvement in offending or in violence.
- In addition, there are limitations in using risk factors to identify individual children and young people at risk. This means that targeting interventions to children and young people at risk of exclusion may not necessarily ensure that all those at risk of involvement in serious violence are targeted and may also involve targeting children and young people who were never going to progress to involvement in serious violence in any case.
- At this stage, there is no well-established evidence base to suggest that education inclusion interventions reduce and/or prevent serious youth violence, although this type of programme is increasingly of interest to central government and local areas.
- The available theoretical basis for education inclusion interventions to reduce serious violence posits that positive behavioural change will lead to reduced exclusion from education and longer-term impacts on reduced offending. However, at this stage the evidence base underpinning this theory is not well-established.
- The Youth Endowment Fund toolkit summarises the existing evidence base for a range of approaches to preventing serious youth violence, including education inclusion interventions.
- It also finds that the existing evidence of impact in relation to reducing serious youth violence is relatively limited in terms of both the size of the evidence base and the scale of estimated impact and is of lower quality than the evidence for positive exclusion outcomes.

2.1 Chapter overview

This chapter summarises the findings of a very brief and rapid assessment of the existing evidence base for the theory and impact of education inclusion

interventions. Resourcing for this rapid assessment was not included within the evaluation budget, but we conducted it to provide additional context for the evaluation and for the education inclusion work in Avon and Somerset.

2.2 Relationship between school exclusion and offending/violence

Programme documentation indicates that a key rationale for introducing the education inclusion work in Bristol is that in recent years there has been a rise in SYV and CCE in Bristol and children and young people who have been excluded appear to be at greater risk of becoming victims and perpetrators of crime.¹⁶ There is also a broad pattern of multiple educational moves coinciding with increased risk of CCE and CSE.¹⁷

There is evidence from a range of literature to suggest that school exclusion correlates with involvement in the criminal justice system and wider adverse life experiences, and that these links are increasingly recognised by policy-makers and funders. For example, the Government's *Serious Violence Strategy*¹⁸, the *Timpson Review of School Exclusion*¹⁹ and the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Knife Crime²⁰ cite research and testimonial evidence indicating a higher incidence of exclusion amongst those involved in offending, gangs and violence.

Similarly, the Youth Endowment Fund includes high rates of school exclusion and overall poor school performance as community-level risk factors for involvement in crime and low engagement with school as an individual-level risk factor²¹. However, these are included as part of a wide range of inter-connected community, family and individual risk factors which are situated in the wider context of social and economic inequalities, such as poverty and racism.

Most research into this relationship seeks to establish correlation by identifying a higher incidence of offending/violent offending amongst those who have been excluded or vice versa. For instance, recent research by the Department for Education and Ministry of Justice examined differences in the educational and

¹⁶ Bristol City Council offensive weapons guidance covering letter to headteachers.

¹⁷ Avon and Somerset OPCC bid for Home Office 'Teachable Moments' funding.

¹⁸ HM Government (2018). *Serious Violence Strategy*. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/serious-violence-strategy> [Accessed 12 April 2022].

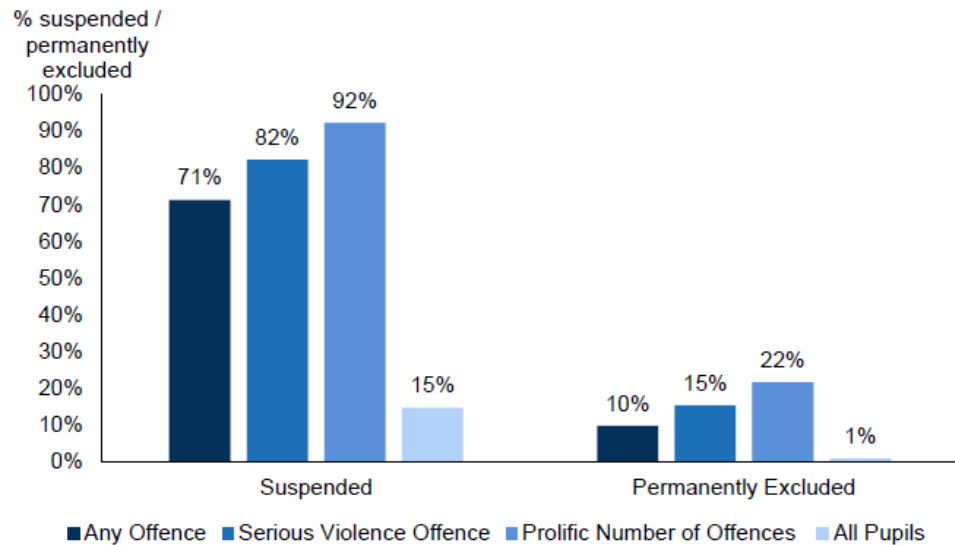
¹⁹ Timpson, E. (2019). *Timpson Review of School Exclusion*. Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/807862/Timpson_review.pdf [Accessed 12 April 2022].

²⁰ All-Party Parliamentary Group on Knife Crime. (2019). *Back to School? Breaking the link between school exclusions and knife crime*. Available at: <http://www.preventknifecrime.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/APPG-on-Knife-Crime-Back-to-School-exclusions-report-FINAL.pdf> [All accessed 12 April 2022].

²¹ Youth Endowment Fund (2020). *What works. Preventing children and young people from becoming involved in violence*. Available at: https://youthendowmentfund.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/YEF_What_Works_Report_FINAL.pdf [Accessed 12 April 2022].

social care background of a cohort of school pupils who had been cautioned or convicted for an offence and all other school pupils in the same academic years.²² It found that children and young people who had been cautioned or sentenced for an offence were more likely to be both suspended and permanently excluded than the all-pupil cohort (see Figure 5).

Figure 5: Suspension and exclusion rates for pupils with cautions and convictions and all pupils in the KS4 cohorts of 2012/13, 2013/14 and 2014/15



Source: Department for Education and Ministry of Justice (2022)

Equally, a large-scale, longitudinal study of the effects of exclusions on a nationally representative sample of US young people found that young people who had previously been excluded were 38% more likely to be arrested than those who had not been excluded.²³

However, the current evidence base does not provide any conclusive evidence about whether or not school exclusion is a causal factor in involvement in offending or violence.²⁴ In addition, there are limitations in using risk factors to

²² Department for Education and Ministry of Justice. 2022. Education, children's social care and offending: Descriptive Statistics. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/education-childrens-social-care-and-offending> [Accessed 21 April 2022]. This included pupils in the Key Stage 4 academic years of 2012/13, 2013/14 and 2014/15 and included around 1.63 million pupils.

²³ Rosenbaum, J. (2020). Educational and criminal justice outcomes 12 years after school suspension. *Youth & Society*, 52(4), 515-547. Cited in Gaffney, H., Farrington, D. & White, H. (2021a). Interventions to prevent school exclusion: Toolkit technical report. [online] Youth Endowment Fund. Available at: <https://youthendowmentfund.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/School-exclusions-technical-report-june.pdf> [Accessed 21 April 2022].

²⁴ Gaffney, H., Farrington, D. & White, H. (2021a). Interventions to prevent school exclusion: Toolkit technical report. [online] Youth Endowment Fund. Available at: <https://youthendowmentfund.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/School-exclusions-technical-report-june.pdf> [Accessed 21 April 2022] and Timpson, E. (2019). *Timpson Review of School Exclusion*. Available at:

identify individual children and young people at risk.²⁵ This means that targeting interventions to children and young people at risk of exclusion may not necessarily ensure that all those at risk of involvement in serious violence are targeted and may also involve targeting children and young people who were never going to progress to involvement in serious violence in any case.

2.3 Impact of education inclusion interventions

2.3.1 Theory of impact

At this stage, there is no well-established evidence base to suggest that education inclusion interventions reduce and/or prevent serious youth violence, although this type of programme is increasingly of interest to central government and local areas.²⁶ Most literature describes components of education inclusion interventions which have been implemented rather than discussing existing evidence of their impact, the theories in which they are grounded and the causal mechanisms on which they rely.²⁷

The Youth Endowment Fund toolkit summarises the existing evidence base for a range of approaches to preventing serious youth violence.²⁸ This includes a focused review of education inclusion interventions, which does discuss the presumed causal mechanisms behind these education inclusion intervention (especially school-based interventions).²⁹ This theory links positive behavioural change with reduced school exclusions and longer-term impacts on reduced offending.

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/807862/Timpson_review.pdf [Accessed 12 April 2022].

²⁵ Youth Endowment Fund (2020). What works. Preventing children and young people from becoming involved in violence. Available at: https://youthendowmentfund.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/YEF_What_Works_Report_FINAL.pdf [Accessed 12 April 2022] and Timpson, E. (2019). *Timpson Review of School Exclusion*. Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/807862/Timpson_review.pdf [Accessed 12 April 2022].

²⁶ In addition to the education inclusion work in Avon and Somerset which is the focus of this evaluation, further examples of education inclusion programmes include the [Department for Education funded SAFE task forces and related provision](#) in 10 local authority areas, for which funding was announced in December 2021, and [MOPAC's Supporting Inclusive Schools programme](#) in London boroughs.

²⁷ Valdebenito, S., Eisner, M., Farrington, D.P., Ttofi, M. M., & Sutherland, A. (2018). What can we do to reduce disciplinary school exclusion? A systematic review and meta-analysis. *Journal of Experimental Criminology*, 15(3), 253-287.

²⁸ Youth Endowment Fund. (2022). YEF toolkit: An overview of existing research on approaches to preventing serious youth violence. Available at: <https://youthendowmentfund.org.uk/toolkit/> [Accessed 12 April 2022].

²⁹ Gaffney, H., Farrington, D. & White, H. (2021a). Interventions to prevent school exclusion: Toolkit technical report. [online] Youth Endowment Fund. Available at: <https://youthendowmentfund.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/School-exclusions-technical-report-june.pdf> [Accessed 21 April 2022].

Figure 6: Presumed causal mechanisms linking education inclusion and violence reduction



Source: Diagram developed by Cordis Bright based on discussion in Gaffney, Farrington and White (2021a)

2.3.2 Impact on exclusion rates

The focused review of education inclusion interventions as part of the YEF toolkit explores their impact on exclusion rates.²⁹ It draws primarily on two systematic reviews: Mielke and Farrington (2021), which reviewed evaluations of 14 different education inclusion interventions, and Valdebenito et al. (2018), which reviewed 37 evaluations.³⁰ It finds that the efficacy of education inclusion interventions on reducing school exclusion was high, including an estimate by Valdebenito et al. (2018) of a 35% reduction in all suspensions and exclusions, falling to 19% after 12 months or more. It also rated the quality of evidence for the impact on exclusion outcomes as relatively high, with a four out of five evidence quality rating.

2.3.3 Impact on offending/violence

The focused review of education inclusion interventions as part of the YEF toolkit also examines evidence of their impact on offending (though not specifically violent offending).³¹ It finds that there is currently limited evidence relating to the direct impact of education inclusion interventions on offending, that the existing evidence suggests that impact is relatively low and that evidence quality (with a three out of five evidence rating). This is based mainly on evidence from a single systematic review by Mielke and Farrington (2021), which estimates that education inclusion interventions led to a 2% reduction in arrests.³²

2.3.4 Point of exclusion as a “teachable moment”

³⁰ Mielke, M., & Farrington, D.P. (2021) School-based interventions to reduce suspension and arrest: A meta-analysis. *Aggression and Violent Behaviour*, 56. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.avb.2020.101518> and Valdebenito, S., Eisner, M., Farrington, D.P., Ttofi, M. M., & Sutherland, A. (2018). What can we do to reduce disciplinary school exclusion? A systematic review and meta-analysis. *Journal of Experimental Criminology*, 15(3), 253-287.

³¹ Gaffney, H., Farrington, D. & White, H. (2021a). Interventions to prevent school exclusion: Toolkit technical report. [online] Youth Endowment Fund. Available at: <https://youthendowmentfund.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/School-exclusions-technical-report-june.pdf> [Accessed 21 April 2022].

³² Mielke, M., & Farrington, D.P. (2021) School-based interventions to reduce suspension and arrest: A meta-analysis. *Aggression and Violent Behaviour*, 56. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.avb.2020.101518>. [Accessed 21 April 2022].

In the Avon and Somerset context, intervention at the point of (risk of) school exclusion is being conceptualised as a “teachable moment”, i.e. a moment at which services might be better able to engage children and young people in interventions focused on changing their behaviours and circumstances. The main types of teachable moment recognised in existing literature in relation to involvement in violence are offering support after a child or young person has been to hospital following a violent assault or been in contact with the police.³³ The positioning of education exclusion as a similar teachable moment is therefore an extension of the concept.

At present, the evidence base for interventions following hospital attendance is not robust enough to draw firm conclusions about their impact, including whether they reduce involvement in violence.³⁴ The evidence base for interventions following contact with the police, such as pre-court diversion, is more well-established and suggests that they have a moderate impact on reducing reoffending or the severity of reoffending, though these findings are not specific to violent offending.³⁵ In addition, further evidence is required to understand which programmes are most effective at supporting children and young people.³⁶

³³ Youth Endowment Fund (2020). What works. Preventing children and young people from becoming involved in violence. Available at: https://youthendowmentfund.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/YEF_What_Works_Report_FINAL.pdf [Accessed 12 April 2022].

³⁴ Gaffney, H., Jolliffe, D. and White, H. (2021). Emergency department violence interventions. Toolkit technical report. Youth Endowment Fund. Available at: <https://youthendowmentfund.org.uk/toolkit/ae-navigators/> [Accessed 12 April 2022].

³⁵ Gaffney, H., Farrington, D. and White, H. (2021b). Pre-court Diversion: Toolkit technical report. Youth Endowment Fund. Available at: <https://youthendowmentfund.org.uk/toolkit/pre-court-diversion/> [Accessed 12 April 2022].

³⁶ Youth Endowment Fund (2020). What works. Preventing children and young people from becoming involved in violence. Available at: https://youthendowmentfund.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/YEF_What_Works_Report_FINAL.pdf [Accessed 12 April 2022].

3 Summary of Bristol's education inclusion approach



Key findings

Through a review of Safer Options documentation and interviews with stakeholders, we identified the following key features of Bristol's education inclusion work:

- Safer Options' Education Inclusion work aims to work with children and young people (and their families and schools) who are facing exclusion or a managed move due to reasons associated with SYV, CCE and/or CSE.
- The work aims to:
 - a) Improve partnership working between education providers, the VRU and the police
 - b) Increase education providers' reporting of weapons in school incidents
 - c) Provide education providers with greater confidence and awareness and a clear, defensible pathway to help them to respond effectively to children and young people at risk of exclusion relating to (risk of) involvement in violence
 - d) Reduce exclusions and managed moves for children and young people
 - e) Support and educate children and young people to help them to avoid future involvement in serious violence.
- The education inclusion team consists of three Education Inclusion Managers (EIM) and three Youth Justice Support Workers (YJSW).
- It is governed by the VRU Locality Teams but management oversight of the EIMs sits with the Families in Focus Managers, based in Early Help. There are specific management and delivery arrangements in the different localities.
- The EIMs work with education providers and other professionals to manage risk and build confidence in responding to the needs of children and young people at risk of exclusion. This includes guidance and training for education providers, sharing of effective practice, and more strategic work on exclusions, attendance, and Alternative Learning Provision (ALPs). They work with schools across Bristol.
- EIMs and YJSWs work alongside each other as part of a Weapons in School Pathway (WiS). When a child or young person is found with a

weapon in education provision, the education provider can report this to Safer Options through the WiS pathway. The EIM advocates for the child or young person to maintain their school place and supports education professionals to ensure decisions in relation to weapons are safe and appropriate. YJSWs work directly with children and young people and their families to understand the reasons for their possession of a weapon and identify appropriate interventions and support in response.

- Stakeholders reported that across Bristol, the education inclusion support needs differ, linked to the demographic makeup of each neighbourhood and the previous, pre-existing provisions available in each area.
- Education inclusion work in Safer Options and the WiS pathway align with a number of other local and national policy and research frameworks. This has resulted in senior buy-in from the local authority which allows the education inclusion work to sit in local agendas
- The need for this work is also supported by exclusion and absence data. FTE rates remain higher than the regional average, and absence rates remain higher than both national and regional rates. Although PEX rates have been declining dramatically in Bristol over the last five years, historically these rates have been much higher than other areas. Maintaining low numbers of exclusions and reducing the number of FTEs and managed moves therefore remains a priority for decision-makers across the local authority.

3.1 Chapter overview

This chapter outlines the aims, governance and delivery structure, delivery model and local context for education inclusion work in Bristol. It is based primarily on documentation provided by Safer Options (see section 1.5.2 for more detail). Views from stakeholder interviews have also been included where relevant.

3.2 Target cohort

The education inclusion work in Bristol aims to work with children and young people facing exclusion or a managed move due to reasons associated with SYV, CCE and/ or CSE. This includes, but is not limited to, being found with a weapon in school. The extent to which the work is reaching this cohort is discussed in Chapter 4.

3.3 Project aims

Documentation from Safer Options states that the education inclusion work in Bristol aims to increase partnership working between education providers, the VRU and the police in relation to children and young people at risk of involvement in serious violence and exclusion to achieve a range of other aims, including:

- Exclusions and managed moves to other education settings are only used when deemed a proportionate and reasonable sanction or response.³⁷
- Reporting of WiS incidents by education providers to the VRU/police increases and is more standardised and the response to these incidents only involves criminalisation if this is absolutely necessary. It aims to achieve this by encouraging education providers to report incidents to Safer Options, who will pass this on to the OOC panel for their records.
- Pupils are diverted, educated, and informed, so that they can make better choices in the future.

It is also intended that education providers be given advice and guidance on contextual safeguarding (particularly in terms of identifying and understanding contextual, extra-familial risks) and how to support children and young people at risk of exclusion, as well as a more positive, defensible pathway for dealing with significant incidents.³⁸

Stakeholders reported that through this work, they also hope to improve understanding of the risks and consequences of Serious Youth Violence (SYV) in the community and reconfigure perceptions of and confidence in the police.

3.4 Delivery model

3.4.1 Governance and delivery structure

Figure 7 outlines the intended staffing and management structure for Safer Options and the education inclusion work. This has been developed on the basis of stakeholder consultation and agreed with Safer Options stakeholders. The education inclusion work is governed by the VRU Locality Teams but management oversight of the EIMs sits with the Families in Focus Managers, based in Early Help.

There are three EIMs, who each work alongside a YJSW on the WiS pathway.

The governance framework and staffing and delivery structure in the three locality teams differ slightly. The main structural difference is in the line management of the YJSWs. Stakeholders reported that initially the YJSWs were based in the YOTs and seconded to Safer Options. Now, two YJSWs are located directly in Safer Options, managed by the Senior Youth and Community Workers, with only one YJSW still located in the YOS.

³⁷ Bristol City Council and Avon and Somerset Constabulary (2020) *Offensive weapons in educational settings: Guidance for schools, colleges and other educational settings*.

³⁸ Contextual Safeguarding is an approach to understanding, and responding to, young people's experiences of significant harm beyond their families. It recognises that the different relationships that young people form in their neighbourhoods, schools and online can feature violence and abuse. (Source: Contextual Safeguarding Programme website. Accessible at: <https://contextualsafeguarding.org.uk/> [Accessed 28 April 2022].)

Line management and responsibilities

The education inclusion work in Bristol mainly sits under the Early Help Families in Focus team. This team has similar roles and aims to the YOTs, but different approaches and target cohorts. This has resulted in some confusion about line management and responsibilities; stakeholders reported that in some instances YJSWs are expected to work across multiple agencies and to manage separate caseloads in each. This confusion is further compounded by the fact that in some local areas the YJSWs are employed by Early Help, and in others they are part of the YOT.



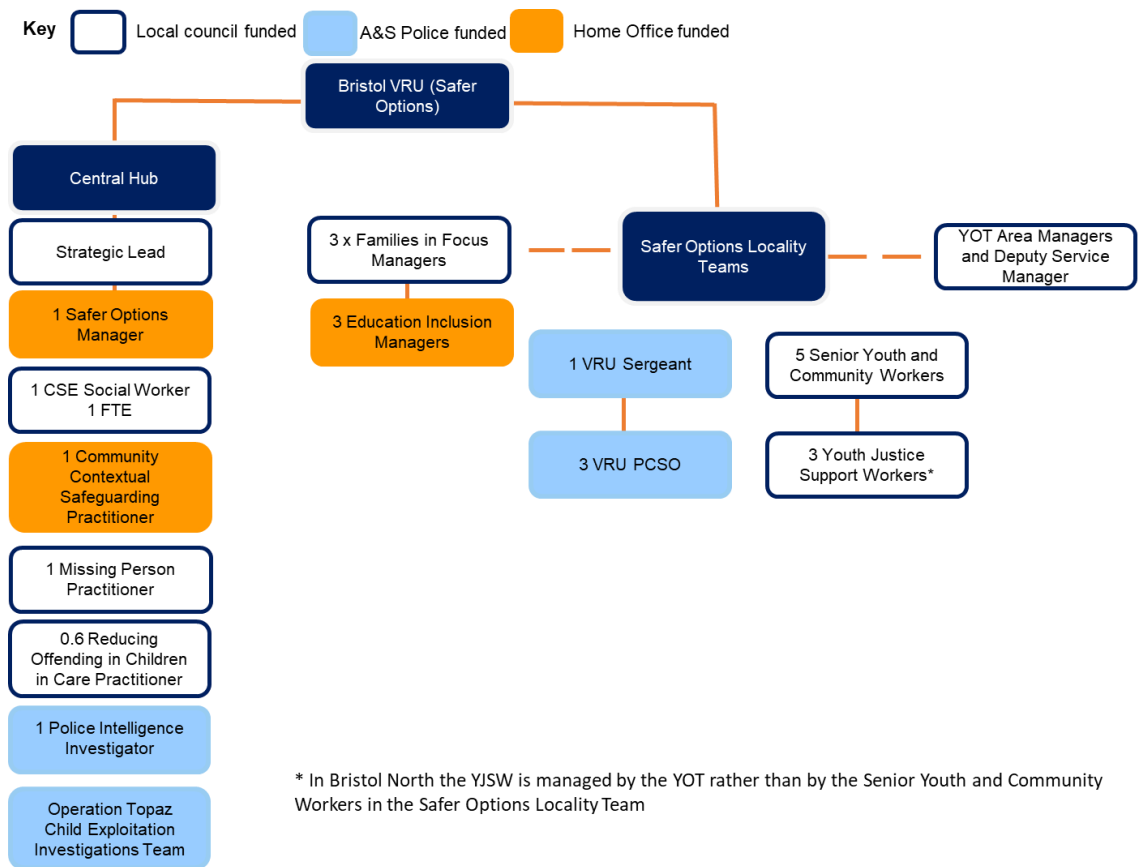
Recommendation: Further clarity for professionals in the YOT, Early Help and Safer Options about the responsibilities and aims of the YJSW, EIM and Families in Focus roles.

Although the YOT and police ratify decision-making around the WiS pathway through the OOC panel, the EIMs and YJSWs sit within Early Help. This has the potential to create issues of accountability (i.e. if the EIMs and OOC panel disagree on required support for a young person) and can result in some confusion around expectations of YJSWs, as they are expected to work across multiple agencies. Stakeholders suggested that greater clarity around roles and responsibilities of education inclusion professionals would help address these tensions and increase the reach of support (for example, by potentially reducing YJSW caseloads if expectations are managed more effectively).

Stakeholders also suggested that increasing the number of support workers, improving partnership working and increasing line management support in existing delivery teams could help reduce workload and improve quality of bespoke support. This is discussed further in the separate evaluation report of the Education Inclusion: Teachable Moments Project (please see Appendix 1 in 7.1).

Safer Options also report to the Avon & Somerset VRU central strategic board via quarterly monitoring reports on interventions being delivered to individuals through the VRU. This includes demographic details of the child or young person, risk factors, referral details, intervention details, and intended aims and outcomes.

Figure 7: Bristol Education Inclusion work governance structure



3.4.2 Key activities and intended outcomes and impacts

Figure 8 outlines the specific activities of both EIMs and the WiS pathway and the intended outcomes and longer-term impacts of the work. This has been produced by Cordis Bright on the basis of reviewing programme documentation and discussing the work with key stakeholders.³⁹ At this stage, the project does not have an agreed logic model or Theory of Change. As a result stakeholders outside of the programme might find it difficult to interpret how inputs link to activities and outputs and then contribute to specific intended outcomes and longer-term impacts, particularly when these latter do not always relate directly to the activities being delivered.⁴⁰

Developing a Theory of Change for the education inclusion model which clearly articulates the theory and assumptions underpinning the education inclusion work and illustrates how specific activities will lead to specific outcomes and impacts

³⁹ More information about the inputs, activities and outputs of the model can be found in Appendix 2 in 7.2.

⁴⁰ For example, none of the activities explicitly address young people’s educational outcomes, and stakeholders reported that ‘improved educational outcomes for young people’ is a long-term outcome that may occur as a result of young people maintaining their school placement, but is not necessarily something that the education inclusion work itself has a direct influence on.

may help in further defining and communicating the purpose of the work. The process of development may also help to identify outcomes and impacts which are less firmly the model's sphere of influence. The final agreed outcomes and impacts for inclusion in any Theory of Change or logic model could also be used as a basis for identifying and agreeing outcome measures for the future monitoring of the work.

More detail on the inputs, activities, outputs, outcomes and impacts of the Bristol education inclusion work can be found in Appendix 2 in 7.2.

Figure 8: Activities, outcomes and impacts of the Bristol VRU's education inclusion work

Activities	Outcomes	Impacts
<p>EIMs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interventions and support for individual young people (and their families) who have been identified at risk of exclusion due to exploitation and/or serious youth violence. • Interventions and support for larger cohorts of children and young people and/or families. • Advice, guidance and training for school staff. • Sharing learning and promoting effective practice within existing local forums and workstreams. • Working with post-16 education providers. • A review of ALPs across Bristol. • Strategic work on exclusions and attendance. <p>YJSWs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Befriending, assisting and supporting children and young people involved or at risk of involvement in offending and antisocial behaviour, their parents/ carers and relevant professionals. • Specific work with the child or young person and/or their family relating to individual 	<p>For children and young people:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved understanding of the impact, risks and consequences of weapon possession and knife crime.⁴¹ • Increased feelings of safety in school. • Improved behaviour, interactions with school and authority among children and young people. • Improved coping skills for anxiety or fear. • Improved understanding of parents' and carers' around the reasons for their child or young person's behaviour. • Improved skills and confidence in parents and carers around how to address causes of the child or young people's behaviour/weapon possession. • Improved social and emotional wellbeing. <p>For schools and education providers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased school understanding of available support services and referral pathways. • Increased understanding of factors influencing children and young people's behaviour and which put them at risk of exploitation and/or serious youth violence. 	<p>For children and young people:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduced involvement in serious youth violence, antisocial behaviour, criminality, and exploitation. • Improved educational outcomes for children and young people. • No repeat offences involving WiS. • No permanent exclusions as a result of WiS. • Improved school attendance and engagement. • Improved transition outcomes into further education. • Supported transition into new educational settings for children and young people who cannot remain in their original setting. <p>For schools and education providers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A culture of inclusion within education communities. • Increased school confidence in managing and holding risk. • Increased appropriate referrals for EHC plans for those at risk of exclusion. • Reduced numbers of transfers • Fewer children and young people on reduced timetables. • Reduced numbers of permanent exclusions <p>For the wider system:</p>

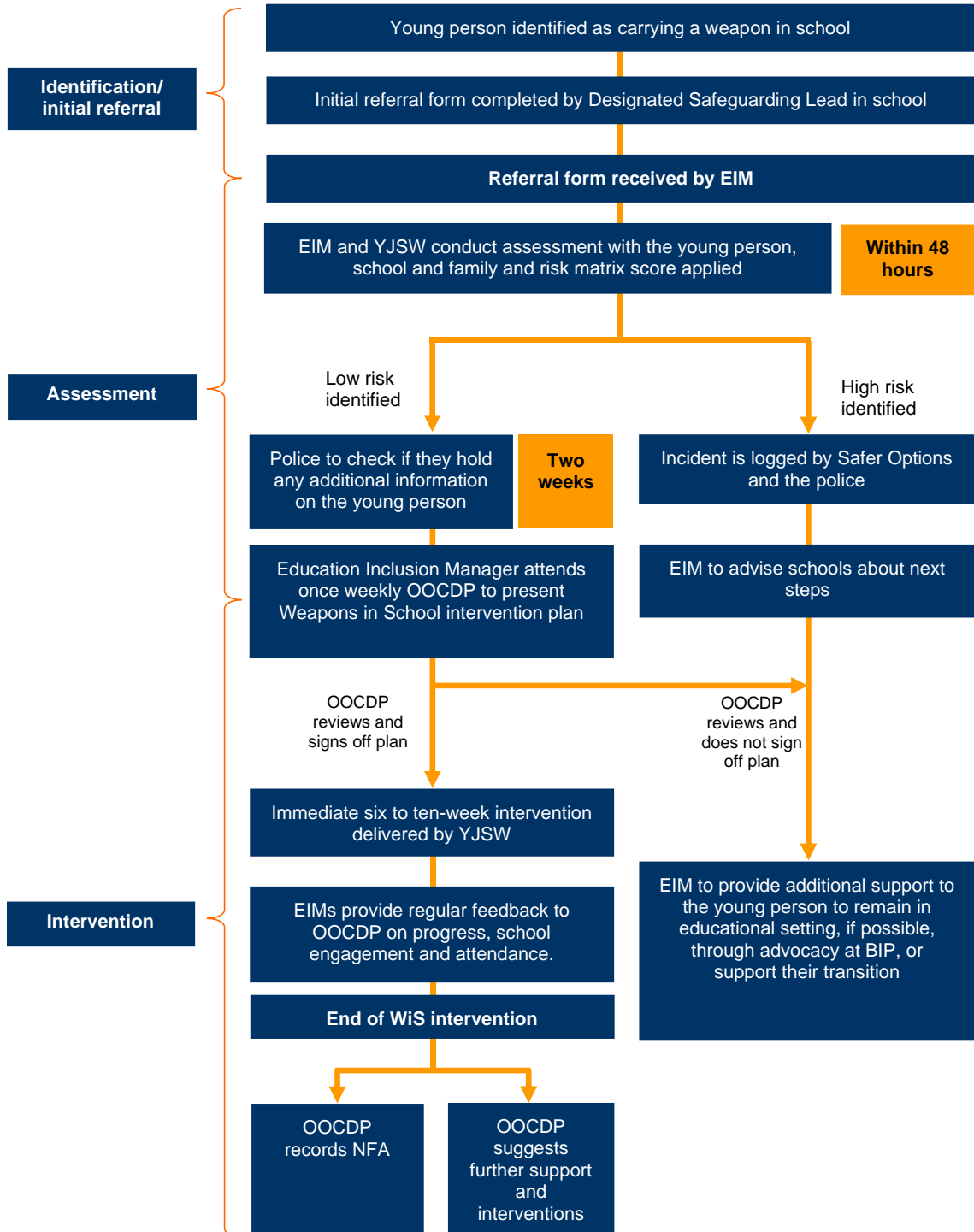
⁴¹ This also applies to children and young people across Avon & Somerset, as well as those worked with individually through the EIMs/WiS pathway.

Activities	Outcomes	Impacts
<p>needs, for example, anger management work or parenting support.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group work and outreach programmes. • Delivering sessions on knife safety, legality of carrying weapons and consequences of knife crime. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased knowledge of how to support children and young people at risk of exploitation or serious youth violence. • Increased reporting of incidents by schools to Safer Options and/or the Police. • Post-16 providers feel supported to maintain college places for vulnerable children and young people known to Safer Options. <p>For the wider system:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Well-established reciprocal intelligence sharing protocols between education providers and the VRU. • Improved access to the Education Directorate's resources for Families in Focus and social care. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong relationships established between EIMs/the VRU and senior leaders in all secondary, post-16 and ALP settings. • A culture of trauma informed response and decision making. • Greater understanding of the disproportionality of exclusions affecting Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic young men. • Appropriate and measured use of police resource and the criminal justice system. • Fewer children and young people entering the criminal justice system. • Increased feelings of safety in the community. • Improved identification of children and young people at risk of serious violence and/or exclusion from education. • Increase in options to engage and support children and young people at risk of involvement with serious youth violence and/or exclusion from education.

3.4.3 Weapons in Schools Pathway

When a child or young person is found in possession of a weapon in school, schools and other education providers follow the pathway outlined in Figure 9.

Figure 9: Detailed referral pathway for WiS



3.5 Local context

3.5.1 Local area demographics and pre-existing provisions

Stakeholders reported that across Bristol, the education inclusion support needs differ, linked to the demographic makeup of each neighbourhood and the previous, pre-existing provisions available in each area. For example, they reported that:

- In **North Bristol**, there are more issues related to anti-social behaviour (ASB) and drug dealing, with a small number of prominent criminal groups and gang affiliations linked to East Central Bristol. They shared that children and young people at risk of SYV are primarily white, and around 15 years old.
- In **South Bristol**, most of the children and young people at risk of SYV are white working-class. Before the inception of Safer Options, South Bristol had several education inclusion outreach provisions. Stakeholder revealed that roll-out to primary schools was facilitated by these provisions, as education provisions were already bought-in and aware of education inclusion interventions.
- In **East Central Bristol** young Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic working-class men are disproportionately identified as at risk of SYV by education provision. The risk of SYV is often tied to criminal groups and gang affiliations.

Bristol has produced a Serious Youth Violence Problem Profile, which was updated with more recent data in 2021, and is partly used to inform the VRU provision (including the education inclusion work). A more detailed and robust assessment of needs around education inclusion specifically might help support further tailoring of support to address local needs across Bristol. This may be especially useful as currently the availability of data from education providers, particularly around exclusion and ethnicity, is limited.

3.5.2 Policy context

Education inclusion work in Safer Options and the WiS pathway align with a number of other local and national policy and research frameworks.

In particular, the work is closely aligned with the Bristol One City Plan's Children and Young People Theme, and the Drugs in School (DiS) pathway, which mirrors the WiS pathway to better manage instances of drug possession in education settings. In response to the Lammy Review and the Cabinet Office Race Disparity Audit there is also a focus on the high proportion of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic students who are excluded and enter the criminal justice system. Please see Appendix 3 in 7.3 for more detail.

The Commission on Young Lives recently published 'All Together Now' report also emphasises the importance of school inclusion as a mechanism to divert

children and young people away from serious youth violence.⁴² Its recommendations include promoting a new culture of inclusion in schools, additional support for those children who need more specialist help, and an end to racial bias and discrimination in the school system. These recommendations align with some of the challenges discussed in this report and subsequent recommendations – please see sections 5.4.2 and 5.4.3 for more detail.

The alignment of Bristol's education inclusion work with the national policy and research frameworks described above has resulted in senior buy-in from the local authority which allows the education inclusion work to sit in local agendas.

3.5.3 Regional and national exclusion and absence rates

In comparison to national and regional rates, historically Bristol has had high FTE and PEX rates (i.e. the percentage of total pupils experiencing PEX and FTE), but there have been some positive changes with rates declining over the last five years. Although PEX rates are now much lower than national and regional rates (see Figure 10), FTE rates remain higher than across the rest of Avon and Somerset, as shown in Figure 11. This suggests there is demand for a continued focus on education inclusion in Bristol, particularly with regards to FTE.

It is important to note that data on managed moves is currently not collected consistently across the UK. It is therefore not possible to benchmark Bristol rates of managed moved against national and regional rates, despite a reduction in managed moves being another intended outcome of the education inclusion work. Bristol and OPCC colleagues may therefore wish to consider implementing recommendation 16 in the Avon and Somerset Criminal Justice Board's 'Identifying Disproportionality' Report, which states:

Local Authorities in Avon and Somerset need to urgently address the current issues with the collection, quality and scrutiny of up-to-date detailed local school exclusion data to include managed moves, internal exclusions, 'off-rolling' and informal exclusions.

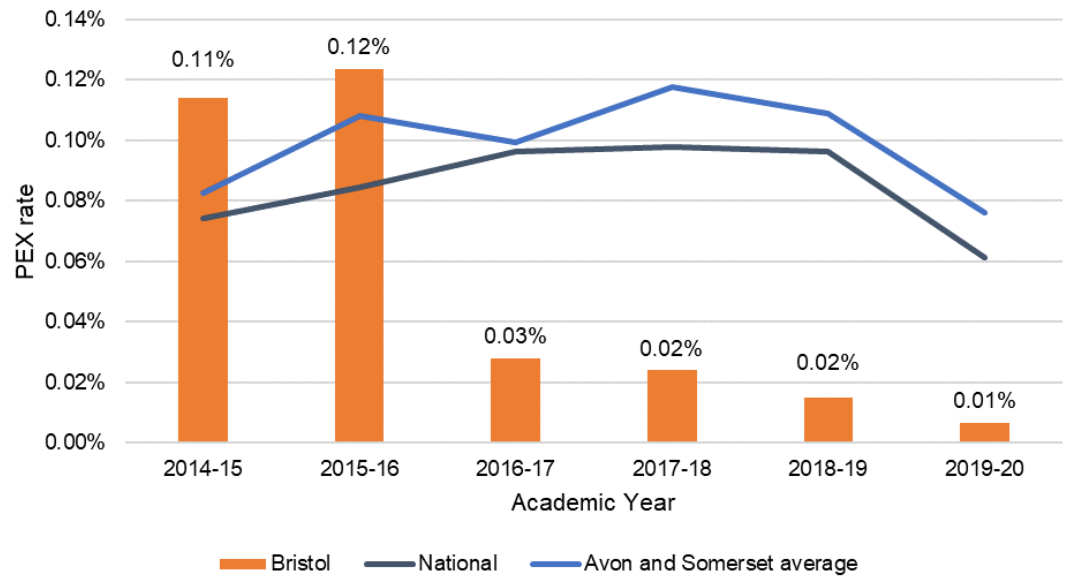
*Identifying Disproportionality*⁴³

See section 5.1 for a more detailed recommendation about data collection for education inclusion work across Avon and Somerset.

⁴² The Commission on Young Lives (2022) *All Together Now. Inclusion not exclusion: supporting all young people to succeed in school*. Available at: <https://thecommissiononyounglives.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/COYL-Education-report-FINAL-APR-29-2022.pdf> [Accessed 21 June 2022].

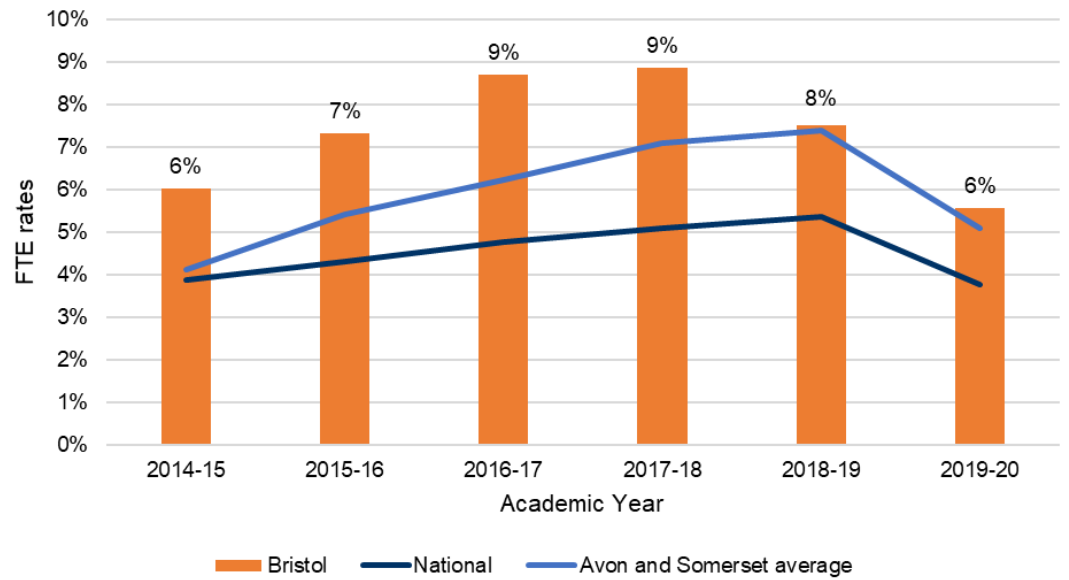
⁴³ Avon and Somerset Criminal Justice Board (2022) *Identifying Disproportionality in the Avon and Somerset Criminal Justice System* Available at: <https://www.avonandsomerset-pcc.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/Identifying-Disproportionality-Report.pdf> [Accessed 17 June 2022].

Figure 10: Avon and Somerset and National permanent exclusion rates (total) 2014/15 to 2019/20



Source: Department for Education: Permanent exclusions and suspensions in England: 2019 to 2020

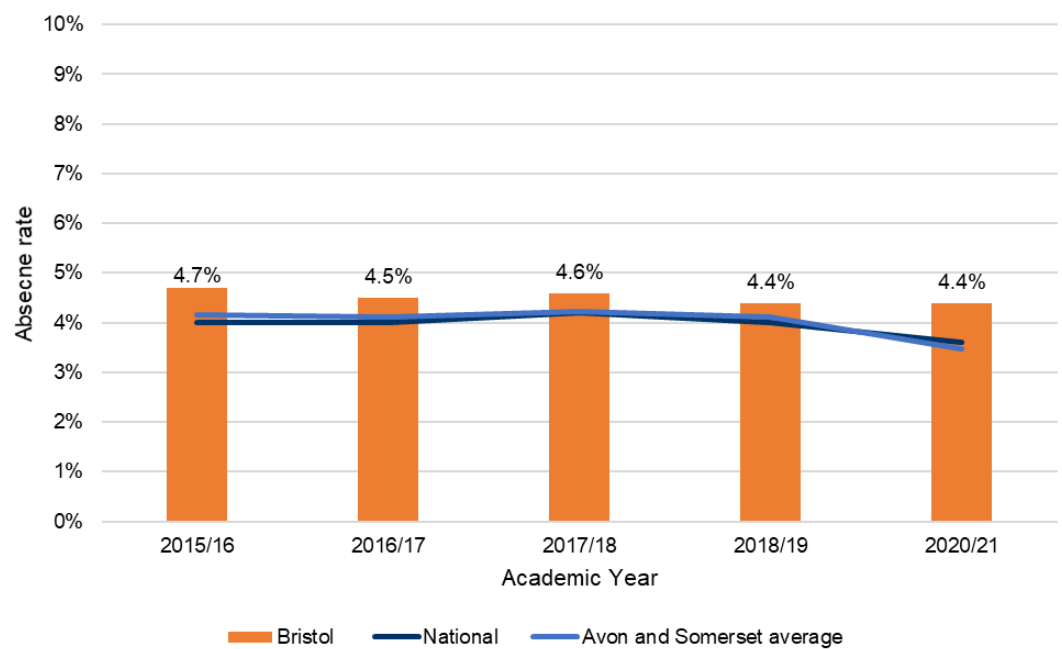
Figure 11: Avon and Somerset and national FTE rates (total) from 2014/15 to 2019/20



Source: Department for Education: Permanent exclusions and suspensions in England: 2019 to 2020

Bristol-wide absence rates have remained at consistent levels across state-funded secondary schools and primary schools since 2015/16 (see Figure 12 and Figure 13). Absence rates for all schools remain higher than national rates and the regional average for Avon and Somerset, suggesting a continued demand for work that increases attendance across Bristol. Please see the full data study (Appendix 4 in 7.4) for more detail.

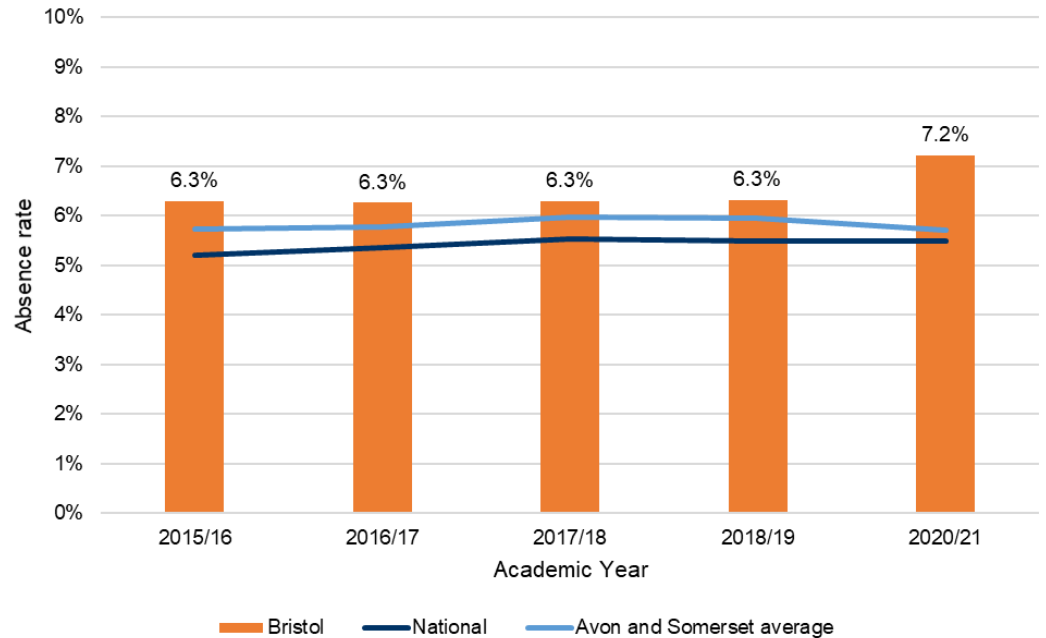
Figure 12: Absence rates for state-funded primary schools between academic years 2015/16 and 2020/21 ⁴⁴



Source: Department for Education: Pupil absence in schools in England 2020 to 2021

⁴⁴ Absence rates are provided on pupil-level and are calculated by the number of sessions missed by pupils as a percentage of total possible sessions that could have been attended. Please note that absence rates were not available for the academic year 2019/20 because the Department for Education cancelled the release to focus on priority analysis and statistics in the response to the COVID-19 pandemic. For the majority of the Spring term 2021, only children of critical workers and vulnerable pupils could attend school during the period of lockdown from 4 January 2021. Restrictions were lifted on attendance from 8 March 2021 for all other pupils. Due to this disruption, caution should be taken when comparing data from 2020/21 across previous years.

Figure 13: Absence rates for state-funded secondary schools between academic years 2015/16 and 2020/21⁴⁵



Source: Department for Education: Pupil absence in schools in England 2020 to 2021

⁴⁵ Absence rates are provided on pupil-level and are calculated by the number of sessions missed by pupils as a percentage of total possible sessions that could have been attended. Please note that absence rates were not available for the academic year 2019/20 because the Department for Education cancelled the release to focus on priority analysis and statistics in the response to the COVID-19 pandemic. For the majority of the Spring term 2021, only children of critical workers and vulnerable pupils could attend school during the period of lockdown from 4 January 2021. Restrictions were lifted on attendance from 8 March 2021 for all other pupils. Due to this disruption, caution should be taken when comparing data from 2020/21 across previous years.

4 Reach of the education inclusion work



Key findings

- 403 children and young people were referred for education inclusion support in Bristol between 08/01/2020 and 23/02/2022.
- Of these, 337 were referred for support from an EIM only, 55 were referred for the WiS pathway, and 12 were referred for the DiS pathway.
- The majority of children and young people referred to the education inclusion work are known to have been suspended (59%), suggesting that they are at risk of exclusion or a managed move.
- 22% are known to be affected by exploitation and 28% to have had at least one missing episode in the two years prior to data submission (which is a known risk factor for exploitation.)⁴⁶
- 9% are known to have been involved in offending.
- The average age of children and young people at the point of referral into the education inclusion work was 13.5 years.
- Stakeholders reported that although children and young people with SEND are not explicitly identified within target cohort of the education inclusion work, they are more at risk of exclusion, SYV, and exploitation. As such, a large proportion of the cohort (64%) have SEND needs. This is a much higher proportion than of pupils with SEND than in the wider school population in Bristol.

4.1 Chapter overview

This chapter describes the number of children and young people reached by Bristol's education inclusion work and outlines the characteristics of those who have been referred into the education inclusion team. This is based on analysis of monitoring data. It also presents stakeholders' views from interviews on other potential target groups.

⁴⁶ See, for example Devon County Council *Prevention Exploitation Toolkit*. Available at: <https://www.preventingexploitationtoolkit.org.uk/home/what-is-exploitation/what-is-vulnerability/missing-persons/#:-:text=Vulnerability%20to%20exploitation,return%20for%20providing%20these%20needs>. [Accessed 28/04/22]

4.2 Number of children and young people reached

Data shared with Cordis Bright showed that there were 403 referrals between 08/01/2020 and 23/02/2022 for education inclusion support in Bristol. Of these:

- 337 were referred for support from an EIM only.
- 55 were referred for the WiS pathway, and 12 were referred for the DiS pathway.

This likely under-estimates the total number of children and young people referred to the education inclusion work because data was not available first four months in which the programme was operating (September 2019 to early January 2020).

4.3 Characteristics of referred children and young people

The monitoring data shared by Bristol City Council provides information about the demographic characteristics (ethnicity, age, gender and Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)) of those children and young people referred to the education inclusion team. It also provides detail about some of the risk factors they experienced. Each characteristic is discussed in turn in sections 4.3.1 to 4.3.5.

4.3.1 Risk factors

Analysis of monitoring data indicated that the majority of children and young people referred to the education inclusion work are known to have been suspended (59%), suggesting that they are at risk of exclusion or a managed move.

It also indicated that 22% are known to be affected by exploitation and 28% to have had at least one missing episode in the two years prior to data submission (which is a known risk factor for exploitation.)⁴⁷ Finally, it indicated that 9% are known to have been involved in offending. This suggests that, although a proportion of the cohort have known risk factors associated directly SYV, CCE and/or CSE, this is either not the case or not known to be the case for the majority of the cohort.

Figure 14 provides more detail of the prevalence of eight risk factors among individuals referred to the programme overall and referred for EIM only support and the WiS pathway. It indicates that many children and young people in the cohort had an open referral to social care and open early help episodes in the

⁴⁷ See, for example Devon County Council *Prevention Exploitation Toolkit*. Available at: <https://www.preventingexploitationtoolkit.org.uk/home/what-is-exploitation/what-is-vulnerability/missing-persons/#:-:text=Vulnerability%20to%20exploitation,return%20for%20providing%20these%20needs>. [Accessed 28/04/22]

two years prior to referral. This suggests that children and young people open to social care or early help may be more at risk of exclusion.

Collecting more detail around the reasons why children and young people are facing exclusion or a managed move, particularly around reasons associated with SYV or exploitation, might help the VRU better understand whether the target cohort is being reached, and whether the team should be more closely targeting other groups, such as those open to early help or social care, who may be at a higher risk of exclusion than their peers.

Figure 14: Risk factors experienced by individuals referred for education inclusion support in Bristol

Risk factor	Total cohort (n=403)	EIM only (n=337)	WiS (n=55)
Known to have been suspended	59% ⁴⁸	59%	54%
Known to be involved in offending	9%	10%	2%
Known to be affected by exploitation	22%	25%	4%
Open referral to social care in two years prior to referral	44%	47%	31%
Open early help episode in two years prior to referral	38%	41%	24%
At least one missing episode in two years prior to data submission	28%	30%	15%
Regular missing person ⁴⁹	2%	3%	0%
Working with YOT on referral	9%	10%	2%

Contextual risk factors

A number of stakeholders discussed how many of the children and young people in the education inclusion cohort present with a range of contextual risk factors, and that an important impact of the work has been increasing partners' understanding of these risk factors, how they might affect a child or

⁴⁸ Suspension data was unavailable for 54 individuals. This percentage is out of a total of 349 individuals.

⁴⁹ Individuals were classified as a regular missing person if they had three or more missing episodes in the three months prior to data submission.

young person's behaviour in their education setting, and how they could respond to this.

Some stakeholders also suggested that the intervention is most effective and appropriate for children and young people with fewer contextual risk factors. This is because for those with a greater number of risk factors in and out of school, longer, more intensive, and additional support may be needed to reduce the risk of reoffending.

Although stakeholders highlighted the individual-focused approach as a strength of Bristol's education inclusion work in allowing individual needs to be addressed effectively. OPCC and Bristol colleagues may wish to consider how the existing work undertaken by EIMs with wider groups could be expanded to help address these wider contextual risks directly and improve outcomes for a larger group of children and young people across Bristol. This could include, for example, context weighting, context mapping, and creation of 'safe spaces'.⁵⁰

4.3.2 Age

The average age of children and young people at the point of referral was 13.5 years. This was similar for the EIM only (13.6 years) and DiS cohorts (13.8 years). However, it was almost a year lower for those referred to the WiS pathway, at 12.6 years. This is reflected in the fact that a higher percentage of referrals for the WiS pathway come from primary schools (13%) than in the EIM only cohort (5%).

4.3.3 Gender

The majority of those referred to the education inclusion work are male (75%). This aligned with stakeholders views on the target cohort for the work; they reported that these are mostly boys and young men. Possible reasons for this are discussed more in section 5.4.2.

Nevertheless, a substantial proportion all referrals (25%) were for females. This proportion was similar for EIM only support and the WiS pathway. A higher proportion of females were referred for the DiS pathway (42%, n=5) but due to small numbers it is not possible to draw firm conclusions from this.

Stakeholders reported that specific support for young women is particularly important because often the risk factors and motivations for weapon possession are different to those for young men, with a greater focus on intimate

⁵⁰ For more detail, please see Firmin, C., and Knowles, R. (2020) *The legal and policy framework for Contextual Safeguarding approaches (A 2020 update on the 2018 legal briefing)* Available at: <https://contextualsafeguarding.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/CS-Legal-Briefing-2020-FINAL-1-1.pdf> [Accessed 28/04/22].

relationships and friendships. Efforts are underway to organise groups for young women to attend.

4.3.4 Ethnicity

The majority of those referred to the education inclusion work were White British (58%). A relatively large proportion of referrals were for children and young people from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic backgrounds (35%). These rates were similar for individuals referred for the WiS pathway.

A 2021 report from Bristol City Council states that individuals from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic groups make up 28% of the child or young person (aged 0-15) population in Bristol, suggesting that individuals from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic backgrounds are slightly overrepresented in the education inclusion cohort.⁵¹ However, this report is based on data from the 2011 census, and trends suggest the percentage of this population in Bristol is increasing over time.

When asked about the target cohort, stakeholders reported that a relatively high proportion are likely to be from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic backgrounds.⁵² This was supported by findings from analysis of data provided for the evaluation of the Education Inclusion project, which shows that 36% of children and young people referred for the schools-based education inclusion work funded through the project were from Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic Groups.

Stakeholders linked this to the fact that children and young people from some minority ethnic backgrounds, such as Black Caribbean and Mixed White and Black Caribbean, are disproportionately excluded from education and criminalised.⁵³ Further information on this is available in section 5.4.2.

4.3.5 Special Education Needs and Disabilities

Stakeholders reported that although children and young people with SEND are not explicitly identified within target cohort of the education inclusion work, they

⁵¹ Bristol City Council (2021) *The population of Bristol*. Available at: <https://www.bristol.gov.uk/statistics-census-information/the-population-of-bristol> [Accessed 28 April 2022].

⁵² As per recommendation 24 from the [Government Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities](#), the term 'Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic' has been used instead of BAME.

⁵³ Timpson, E. (2019). *Timpson Review of School Exclusion*. Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/807862/Timpson_review.pdf [Accessed 12 April 2022] and Lammy, D. (2017). *The Lammy Review An independent review into the treatment of, and outcomes for, Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic individuals in the Criminal Justice System*. Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/643001/lammy-review-final-report.pdf [Accessed 21 April 2022].

are more at risk of exclusion, SYV, and exploitation.⁵⁴ Possible reasons for this are discussed more in section 5.4.2).

They also reported that a large proportion of the cohort do have SEND needs and this was borne out in the monitoring data on referrals to the education inclusion work. 64% of referred children and young people were receiving some form of SEND support (see Figure 15). This is a much higher proportion than of pupils with SEND than in the wider school population in Bristol.

Figure 15: SEND status of individuals referred for education inclusion support in Bristol (n=403) compared to all Bristol pupils (n=69,412)

SEND status	EI support cohort (n=403)	All pupils Bristol (n=69,412) ⁵⁵
No special educational need	36%	83%
Education, Health and Care Plan	23%	3%
SEN support	41%	14%
Total	100%	100%



Recommendation: Conduct a robust needs assessment of young people at risk of exclusions and SYV/CCE/CSE in Avon and Somerset.

There is limited understanding of disproportionality of exclusions in Avon and Somerset, and around the intersectionality of SYV, exploitation, exclusion, gender, age SEND, and ethnicity. Nevertheless, there is some evidence from qualitative consultation to suggest that young males and children and young people with SEND are disproportionality identified as at risk of exclusion. Avon and Somerset colleagues may wish to consider conducting a robust needs assessment in the future to help fully these needs so that support can be better targeted to local need.

This aligns with Recommendations 16 and 18 in Avon and Somerset Criminal Justice Board’s recently published review of disproportionality. These recommendations suggest that that Local Authorities and YOTs need to address current issues with collecting high-quality data and analyse linked

⁵⁴ Timpson, E. (2019). *Timpson Review of School Exclusion*. Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/807862/Timpson_review.pdf [Accessed 12 April 2022] provides evidence that children and young people with SEN are disproportionately excluded.

⁵⁵ Department for Education and National Statistics (2021) *Special educational needs in England*. Available at: <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/special-educational-needs-in-england> [Accessed 21 April 2022].

school exclusion (including managed moves, internal exclusions, “off-rolling” and informal exclusions) and offending data to understanding whether children and young people from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic backgrounds are more likely to be excluded from school, and whether that exclusion increases the likelihood of them entering the criminal justice system.⁵⁶

4.4 Stakeholders’ views on other potential target groups

Stakeholders also identified groups of children and young people whom they believe to be at risk of exclusion related to SYV, CCE and CSE and who are currently less directly targeted by the education inclusion work. However, there was limited evidence available to the evaluation as to the scale of need or demand for provision targeted to these groups and therefore it is difficult to triangulate stakeholders’ views on this subject with other evidence sources. Groups identified by stakeholders were:

- **Children and young people in primary schools.** A focus on primary school education inclusion work has already begun in South Bristol but is not currently happening in other areas. The data study showed that 6% of all children and young people supported are currently in primary school and 15% were aged 11 or under at the point of referral, with the youngest individual aged 5 at the point of referral.⁵⁷ This suggests that there is a demand for support for primary-aged pupils. Stakeholders suggested that a focus on primary schools is important for three reasons:
 - The age of criminal responsibility is ten years old in England, and therefore weapons, crime and exploitation should be discussed from a younger age.
 - Younger children are more likely to engage with this kind of work (especially that of the EIMs) which would increase the effectiveness of the intervention.
 - Focusing on the important transition stage between primary and secondary school may help to reduce serious youth violence later on.

A YJSW shared that:

“Schools could start a lot earlier. They need to educate children and young people in primary school as opposed to in secondary school. By secondary school age, it may be too late to try and change the way people think. The children and young people might have to go through difficult stages in life to learn.”

⁵⁶ Avon and Somerset Criminal Justice Board (2022) *Identifying Disproportionality in the Avon and Somerset Criminal Justice System* Available at: <https://www.avonandsomerset-pcc.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/Identifying-Disproportionality-Report.pdf> [Accessed 17 June 2022].

⁵⁷ Current school type was not available for seven children and young people aged 11 or under (2% of total cohort), 11 children and young people aged 11 were in secondary school (3%) and six children and young people aged 11 or under attended special state or alternative SEN leaning provision (1%).

YJSW

- Children and young people who live in Bristol but are attending **out-of-county education provision**. Stakeholders reported that there are currently no referral routes in place for these children and young people.
- Children and young people who **do not attend school**. Stakeholders reported that there are some children and young people who do not attend school but may be carrying weapons in the community, for which there is no referral route.

Further discussion around how referral criteria could be broadened to increase the reach of education inclusion work in Bristol and address issues of disproportionality of exclusions is available in section 5.4.2.

5 Impact of the work



Key findings

Covid-19 reduced the accessibility of services for children and young people and increased their exposure to new and unfamiliar risks. The evidence of impact must therefore be considered in light of the fact that Covid-19 affected the roll-out of Safer Options' education inclusion work.

Outcomes for children and young people:

There is evidence from consultation to suggest that:

- Almost all children and young people supported by the education inclusion work experienced improved stability of placement. For instance, the EIMs reported that in the 33 WiS incidents reported to Safer Options in the 2019-2020 academic year and receiving education inclusion support through the WiS pathway, 91% of the children and young people maintained their school placements when they may otherwise have been permanently excluded or moved. This may be a result of the input and support from EIMs and YJSWs in the WiS pathway specifically improving children and young people's relationships with education providers, as well as improving education providers' own skills and confidence to support sustained placements.
- However, fixed-term exclusions and managed moves continue to be used by education providers, including instances when children and young people have been excluded or moved whilst engaging in the WiS pathway and a YJSW intervention. This can undermine the work being done and limit the scope for future positive outcomes.
- Direct work with YJSWs may be helping to improve attendance and engagement at school for some of the children and young people being supported, and mental health and wellbeing, the latter enabling them to acknowledge their own behaviours and develop new conflict resolution strategies.
- Children and young people supported by the education inclusion work have experienced, or are likely to experience in future, reduced criminalisation. This may be a result of the support increasing their awareness of the risks and consequences of serious violence.
- A longer intervention might allow education inclusion professionals to work more successfully with those children and young people who are not currently engaged effectively by the intervention.

Outcomes for education providers:

Evidence from consultation suggests that:

- Education providers who have worked with EIMs and YJSWs have an improved understanding of support services available to children and young people at risk of exclusion and of referral pathways to the WiS programme.
- The education inclusion work has helped to provide a more visible and accessible form of quality assurance to reassure some education providers who already promote an inclusive culture and who appreciate an external review and endorsement of their decisions.

Some education professionals who have received direct input from Bristol's education inclusion work in relation to specific children or young people:

- Are more confident in holding and managing risk relating to involvement in serious youth violence. Stakeholders attributed this to the positive relationships being built between education providers and EIMs, the support EIMs have provided with risk assessments, and confidence in the speed and ease with which support is accessed through EIMs or the WiS pathway.
- Have an improved understanding of the factors influencing individual children and young peoples' behaviour, including those that put them at risk of exploitation and/or serious youth violence. This is due to EIMs and YJSWs being able to share specific details about the cohort's underlying vulnerabilities that the school may not have been aware of previously.
- Wider training on specific vulnerabilities delivered by EIMs to education providers may not necessarily have improved education providers' understanding of risk factors for exclusion or involvement in serious youth violence. There was also a consensus that more information and training need to be available around the risks of social media.

Outcomes for the wider system

Qualitative consultation indicates that:

- Partnership working has improved as a result of EIMs acting as a bridge between different organisations, especially between local authority children's services and education providers who have received support from the education inclusion work.
- The identification of children and young people at risk of serious violence, exploitation, and/or exclusion from education may have improved as a result of the education inclusion work.
- However, key stakeholders suggested that Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic pupils, young men, and children and young people with SEND

needs are disproportionality identified as being at risk of exclusion. This is reflected in the monitoring data, which suggests that a higher proportion of Black and Minority Ethnic and SEND children and young people are represented in the education inclusion cohort than the general population in Bristol (see 4.3.4 for more detail). The extent to which the scale and detail of this disproportionality is understood is currently limited.

5.1 Chapter overview

This chapter discusses the outcomes and impacts that the Bristol education inclusion work has had for children and young people, education provision, and the wider system. It mainly draws on findings from semi-structured interviews with key stakeholders, professionals with insight into beneficiaries' experience, and responses to the education professionals e-survey. Where relevant, analysis from monitoring data has also been included.

Note on the evidence of outcomes and impact

At this stage stakeholders were only able to comment on shorter-term outcomes due to the timescales over which this work has been delivered and evaluated. However, they did suggest that improving stability of placement in particular is likely to have long-term outcomes for children and young people in terms of improving their mental health and wellbeing and reducing the likelihood of involvement in criminal activity in the future.



Recommendation: Collect more detailed, consistent and complete profile, intervention and outcomes

There was very little data available to the evaluation in relation to the outcomes of the work. This makes it difficult to understand impact and any differential impact for different groups and to unpick what constitutes a successful education inclusion intervention.

Safer Options and Bristol colleagues should consider how to capture data which could demonstrate longer-term outcomes and impacts. This could include, for example, self-reported measures (e.g. around wellbeing) at the beginning and end of intervention and at regular follow-up points, as well as individual-level data on education inclusion and engagement and involvement with the criminal justice system.

5.2 Outcomes for children and young people



Case study: Jack's experience⁵⁸

We spoke to one child/young person who had received support through the WiS pathway and their parent as part of the evaluation. This case study is based on the findings from those interviews and is an example of how the education inclusion work has achieved positive outcomes for one child/young person.

Prior to being referred to the WiS pathway, Jack had been getting into trouble at school and socialising with people who had drugs and knives. Jack had been extremely quiet and did not get on particularly well with his family. He was facing exclusion from his school.

Jack was assigned a YJSW, who talked to him about his feelings, signposted him to weekly mentoring support, and helped him transition into a new school when he was moved.

This support seems to have had a really positive impact on the lives Jack and his family. Jack has successfully moved to a new school, which is supporting him more effectively with his learning needs and is getting along with teachers better. Jack reported feeling happier and less scared, and his mum said this is reflected in the fact that he is more talkative and eating more. Jack has stepped away from problematic friendships and made new friends, is getting on better with his parents and siblings, and has generally improved his behaviour in and out of school. His mum reported:

“He’s a different child to a year ago. He still has a temper now and again and doesn’t always make the right choices, but a year ago we thought things were going to end badly, and it’s completely different. Things are going well, he is opening up more, making different decisions about friendships. He must be taking on what [YJSW] is saying to him.”

These positive changes were largely attributed to the fact that Jack is able to talk about his feelings and interests with the YJSW, which has helped him understand the risks and consequences of his behaviour and improved his wellbeing. For example, Jack stated:

“I was an angry kid in school but when I started speaking to [YJSW] about it I felt calmer.... Whenever I felt angry, I could speak to them and it would calm me down... Speaking about what I had done in the past and stuff like that. It made me think a bit more, it [past behaviour] was pathetic. I need to grow up a bit...I was hanging around the wrong type of people. So I stopped speaking

⁵⁸ The name of the child/young person has been changed for anonymity.

to them and I've changed I've learned why my behaviour wasn't good before and how to behave now".

Both Jack and his mum were very positive about the support received and did not think anything could have been improved. His mum stated: “[The YJSW] has achieved more than I could have wanted.”

5.2.1 Improved stability of placement

It is not possible to provide quantitative data on the improvement of placement stability among those receiving support from the project. This is because data regarding fixed-term exclusions, permanent exclusions and managed moves for individuals receiving support was not made available to the evaluation. However, city-wide exclusion rates were available and are discussed in section 3.5.3.

Stakeholders reported examples of instances where the education inclusion work in Bristol has improved the stability of placements for children and young people being supported, particularly in terms of reducing the incidence of fixed term exclusions and managed moves (see section 1.71.6 for a definition of these terms). For instance, the EIMs highlighted that in the 33 WiS incidents reported to Safer Options in the 2019-2020 academic year and receiving education inclusion support through the WiS pathway, 91% of the children and young people maintained their school placements when they may otherwise have been permanently excluded or moved.

They attributed this to:

- The EIM's presence at the Bristol Inclusion Panel and ability to advocate for children and young people maintaining their current placements (see 5.4.6 for more detail).
- Education providers' improved understanding of the contextual risk factors that children and young people face and confidence in holding the risk.

They also highlighted the success of the education inclusion work in reducing the length of fixed-term exclusions, attributing this to the responsiveness of the EIMs and YJSWs, and the speed of their assessments, especially when compared to the police- and school-led investigations that were taking place previously. For example, one EIM stated:

“If we get in within 48 hours, we hope to limit the fixed term exclusion to two days, which is shortened from a possible five, which lasted until the schools had done their own enquiries.”

EIM

However, stakeholders also highlighted that there are still examples of fixed-term exclusions and managed moves taking place during the period in which children and young people have been receiving support from the WiS pathway. They perceived this as resulting from a lack of buy-in from some education providers into the WiS pathway and concerns about their own reputations as education

providers being damaged if they are perceived as not tackling serious youth violence effectively.

Stakeholders reported that continued instability of placements has two main effects on the education inclusion work:

- It can change the focus of the work from preventing exclusion, managing the risk and tackling underlying vulnerabilities in the existing placement, to supporting the child or young person to move and settle in a new placement).
- It can undermine the trusting relationship between the YJSW and child or young person, because the YJSWs have previously told the child or young person their role is to support them to stay in their placement. As a result, sometimes children and young people are less likely to engage with the support being offered.

5.2.2 Improved attendance at education placements

Qualitative consultation with those most closely involved in the delivery of the education inclusion work indicated that it supports children and young people to improve their attendance at education placements, although findings from the e-survey were more mixed. There was limited monitoring data available to enable the evaluation to explore changes in attendance rates for those who are supported, but the data available for a small cohort of children and young people (n=17) who were referred to the WiS pathway showed that their attendance rates continued to decline following the intervention but that the rate of decline had slowed.

Qualitative consultation indicated that improved attendance at education placements was an important outcome for some children and young people who were supported by the education inclusions work. For example, EIMs and YJSWs provided examples of cases where the education inclusion work has resulted in improved attendance for the children and young people being supported. They attributed this to:

- The direct work on safety planning YJSWs do with the children and young people which is used to address any concerns around safety which children and young people might have which is affecting their attendance.
- Education providers having an improved understanding of, and access to information about, contextual risk factors that might be affecting children and young people's attendance which they can then address (see section 5.3.)

For example, one EIM described how they support education professionals to identify the reasons behind poor attendance and to respond to this:

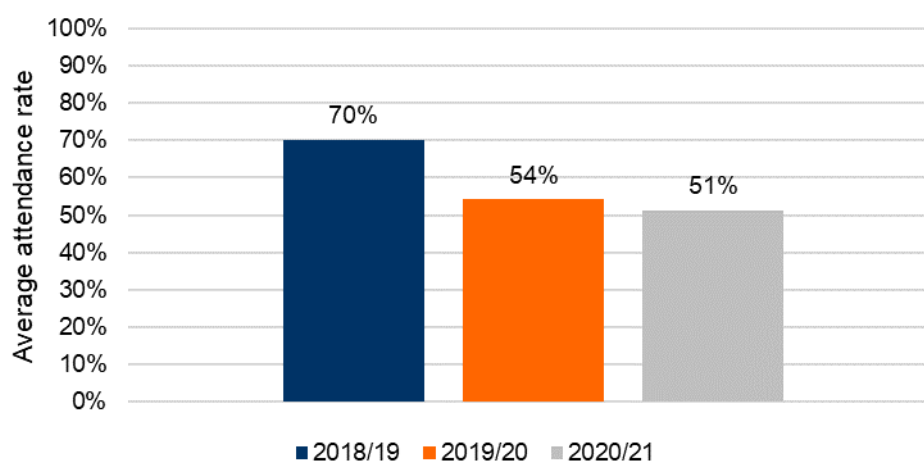
“Schools will sometimes come to us and say there is poor attendance, or the child seems really disengaged and we will try and figure out the reasons for it e.g., is there a bus route that goes through a dangerous area they're afraid to use? We look at contextual risk factors.”

EIM

Findings from the education professionals e-survey however were more mixed; three out of five respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the input children and young people received as part of the education inclusion work improved their attendance at the education setting.

Moreover, analysis of change over time in education attendance for 17 individual children and young people supported by the education inclusion work in 2019/20 does not actually show improved attendance rates (see Figure 16).⁵⁹ Instead, it shows a decline in average attendance rates from 70% in the academic year prior to input from the education inclusion work (2018/19) to 54% in year of referral (2019/20), which then slowed in the year following the referral (2020/21), when the average attendance rate was 51%. This suggests that the education inclusion work may have slowed the rate of declining attendance for the children and young people it supported. However, due to small sample size, this finding must be treated with caution.

Figure 16: Average attendance rates for academic years 2018/19, 2019/20, and 2020/21 for individuals referred to Bristol education inclusion project in Academic Year 2019/20 (n=17)



5.2.3 Improved engagement with education

There were no indicators within the monitoring data available to the evaluation which related to engagement with education. As with improved attendance, however, there was some evidence from consultation that the education inclusion work is contributing to improved engagement with education by some children and young people who receive input.

⁵⁹ Attendance rate data was received for 212 individual children and young people, for academic years 2018/19, 2019/20 and 2020/21. Of these, 17 individuals were referred to the programme in the 2019/20 academic year, allowing opportunity for the potential impact of the programme to be shown in attendance rates for the following academic year (2020/21). Therefore, only these children and young people were included in the analysis. City-wide attendance rates are discussed in section 3.4.4.

For instance, professionals with insight into beneficiaries provided examples of some specific children and young people who had demonstrated an improved motivation to learn and participation in classes after receiving support from a YJSW. They reported that this was due to positive relationships being built between children/young people and teachers by YJSWs and EIMs. For example, one professional with insight into beneficiaries reported:

“The children were often considered too high risk, but EIMs working with settings got them to understand the needs of the children, support them and manage risk... It helps the children build positive relationships with their teachers... having that support means that they can start to believe that people are going to stick with them.”

YOT Senior Practitioner

Four out of five respondents to the e-survey also agreed or strongly agreed that the input had improved children and young people’s engagement with education.

5.2.4 Increased awareness of risks and consequences

There is also evidence from qualitative consultation that the direct work with children and young people as part of the education inclusion work, and specifically as part of the WiS pathway, has increased children and young people’s awareness of the risks and consequences of carrying a weapon. This was corroborated by responses to the e-survey.

EIMs and YJSWs reported that the children and young people they had worked with as part of the WiS pathway had a better awareness of the risks and consequences of carrying a weapon, and this is reflected by the fact there have been no known repeat incidents. They suggested this has been a result of direct work around understanding risks and consequences that the YJSWs undertake with the children and young people. The five education professionals who responded to the e-survey also agreed or strongly agreed that the education inclusion work had increased children and young people’s understanding of the impact, risks and consequences of weapon possession and knife crime.

The EIMs and YJSWs suggested that the education inclusion work is more effective in achieving this outcome for younger children in primary schools, as they are less likely to have any existing awareness of the risks and consequences of carrying a weapon. In contrast, they reported that it is more difficult to engage secondary school-aged children and young people with risks and consequence work. They suggested that this is especially the case for those with more contextual risk factors present in their lives, as these children and young people maybe already aware of the risks but their behaviour is influenced by pressure or danger posed from other external influences, such as peers or family members who carry weapons themselves.

This is an example of an outcome area about which Bristol colleagues may wish to consider methods and measures to systematically capture data. For example, self-reported measures of awareness and understanding completed by children and young people at the beginning and end of intervention might be a more

effective measure of this outcome and would provide a more robust evidence source by which to judge the impact of the work.

5.2.5 Reduced involvement in serious violence or the criminal justice system

A key source of data to understand involvement in serious youth violence or the criminal justice system is police-recorded offence or incident data. This type of data was not available as part of the evaluation and as a result we cannot make any firm judgements about the impact of the education inclusion work on these outcome areas. Key stakeholders recognised the limitations in not having systematic access to this data in order to monitor the impact of the work and may wish to consider options to access and collate this data in the future.

Nevertheless, responses in both qualitative consultation and the e-survey indicate that stakeholders believe that the work is having a positive impact on the involvement or likelihood of involvement in serious youth violence and the criminal justice system for those children and young people who receive input via the WiS pathway specifically.

For example, stakeholders reported that none of the children and young people supported by the YJSWs were found to bring in a weapon back into school a second time, suggesting that there is a low rate of recidivism following support via the WiS pathway. The five education professionals who responded to the e-survey agreed; they also all reported that the WiS pathway and work of the EIMs helps reduced children and young people's involvement in serious violence and the criminal justice system.

Most stakeholders interviewed also suggested that the WiS pathway has reduced criminalisation of children and young people it has supported. This is because it typically results in a NFA (No Further Action) decision at the OOC panel. This means children and young people are not recorded as having committed a criminal offence. Stakeholders highlighted that this is especially important for children and young people whose motivations for carrying a weapon were not associated with criminal intent, for example those who carried a weapon to impress their peers, or for mental health reasons, such as self-harm.



Case study: Criminalisation prior to the WiS pathway

A YOT Area Manager discussed an incident prior to the inception of the WiS pathway, which demonstrated why the pathway, and the reduced criminalisation of children and young people was needed.

They shared that a child or young person brought in a bladed article to school, with the aim of self-harming due to their home situation. This information was not originally incorporated in the assessment of the child or young person's situation, and they received a Youth Conditional Caution from the OOC panel. The YOT Area Manager explained that if the WiS pathway has been in place at the time it would have allowed for a more detailed and

holistic assessment, which may have resulted in a different decision at the OOC panel.

“It was absolutely not right that they were criminalised. The WiS programme brings in the young person’s needs and the needs of their family during the assessment. It is a useful example of what assessments are showing when you go to school.”

YOT Area Manager

Stakeholders reported that this reduced criminalisation may have positive long-term effects on children and young peoples’ relationships with the police and also on improved outcomes in other key areas of their lives (such as better education and employment prospects). However, data on these longer-term outcomes is not currently captured by the VRU. OPCC and Bristol colleagues may wish to consider what wider and/or longitudinal outcomes might be achieved by the education inclusion work and explore ways to measure this to fully capture the impact of the project.

5.2.6 Improved health, safety, wellbeing, and relationships

There was evidence from both qualitative consultation and the e-survey that stakeholders believe that the education inclusion work is impacting positively on the health, safety, wellbeing and/or relationships of some of the children and young people who receive support. However, these outcomes were generally less commonly-referenced or well-substantiated in interviews than those related to education inclusion and involvement in violence or the criminal justice system.

Some stakeholders offered examples of children and young people who had received support from the WiS pathway experiencing improved health, safety, wellbeing and/or relationships, especially with regards to recognising their own behaviours and choices. They highlighted skills and techniques that children and young people were supported to develop, such as:

- **Improved skills in navigating and avoiding conflict.** Stakeholders suggested that this has resulted in improved safety and relationships. They suggested that the YJSWs supporting children and young people to think critically about their day-to-day behaviours and their agency and sharing conflict resolution strategies were important in improving these skills.
- **Improved regulation of emotions.** Stakeholders suggested that this has improved children and young people’s wellbeing and relationships. They suggested that work with YJSWs giving children and young people an increased awareness of their mental health and an enhanced understanding of the contextual risk factors that surround them has been important in achieving this change. They also reported that this improved awareness of mental health has resulted in children and young people talking more freely about their mental health and needs, resulting in improved health, safety, wellbeing, and relationships.

Other stakeholders suggested that they would expect the work to have a positive impact on these outcomes indirectly through reducing the risk of exclusion or managed moves, which can be traumatising and negatively impact on children and young people's mental health.

The five education professionals who responded to the e-survey agreed or strongly agreed that the education inclusion work had increased the safety of the children and young people it had worked with. Four out of five respondents also agreed or strongly agreed that the input had improved children and young people's social and emotional wellbeing and health, and their relationships with parents, carers and peers.

Broadly, stakeholders suggested that increased stability of education placements has been the key mechanism of change for achieving these improvements, particularly those relating to mental health and safety. This is because placement stability prevents children and young people experiencing trauma that can be associated with moving education settings and avoids their exposure to risks that might be present in ALPs. For example, one DSL reported that:

“If they're [children and young people] in school, they have less of a chance to be out of school and involved in gangs etc. They used to end up in alternative learning provisions. If you put everyone involved in knife crime in the same place, all that is going to do is increase the risk.”

DSL

In addition, stakeholders suggested that referrals and signposting to other services from EIMs and YJSWs have provided children and young people with more opportunities for specific input around their wellbeing.

5.3 Outcomes for education providers

5.3.1 Improved understanding of support services and referral pathways

Evidence relating to this outcome area comes from evaluation consultation, via interviews and the e-survey. Overall, there was evidence from both those closely involved in project delivery and the small sample of educational professionals consulted during the evaluation that the education inclusion work is having a positive impact in improving education providers' understanding of support services and referral pathways for children and young people at risk of exclusion and/or involvement in serious violence.

Key stakeholders drew on feedback from education professionals with whom they have worked (mostly DSLs and pastoral staff) to suggest that education professionals who have received direct input from the education inclusion work have experienced improvements in their understanding of support services and referral pathways. Education professionals with insight into beneficiaries' experiences also reported that they personally had a better understanding of available support services and how to access these, as did the five respondents to the education e-survey.

Stakeholders suggested that this improved understanding of pathways has been reflected in:

- The increased reporting of WiS, especially in primary schools. Four out of five education professionals who responded to the e-survey also strongly agreed that they were more likely than before to report incidents or concerns about involvement in serious violence and/or exploitation to the Safer Options team, and all five agreed or strongly agreed that they were more likely to report these incidents or concerns to the police. A police stakeholder noted that there has been an increase in reporting reflected in an increase in the number of incidents discussed in OOC panels.
- Higher levels of education providers consulting with EIMs for advice about students and risk outside of the WiS context, as Safer Options has become more embedded.

Stakeholders suggested this is due to the positive relationships EIMs have developed with education providers, specifically the DSLs. The EIMs act as single points of contact education providers can go to with specific queries, providing them with an accessible and responsive source of information.

Having said this, there was some confusion around referral pathways for Bristol VRU's education inclusion work; some stakeholders noted that some education providers are still confused about the difference between the formal and informal referral procedures for support. They reported that in some instances education providers are not using the appropriate referral forms but still expect support.

Recommendation: Consider offering more regular check-in sessions between education providers and EIMs.

More regular check-in sessions between education professionals and EIMs could help address some of the challenges associated with communication and information-sharing and help co-ordinate support for children and young people more effectively. Using these check-in sessions to clarify the referral criteria and referral pathways could also help reduce the number of inappropriate referrals and mitigate the risk of demand outweighing the capacity of delivery teams and of specialist support across the system to which children and young people may be referred on to.

Stakeholders also indicated that it could help the reach and sustainability of the education inclusion work if EIMs worked with a wider range of members of staff in education settings, as this would disseminate and de-centralise knowledge about support services and referral pathways and mitigate the chance of this knowledge being lost with staff turnover within DSL roles.

5.3.2 Increased confidence in holding and managing risk

Again, there was evidence from both those closely involved in project delivery and the small sample of educational professionals consulted during the evaluation that the education inclusion work is having a positive impact in

improving education providers' confidence in holding and managing risks that might relate to a child or young person's (risk of) involvement in serious violence. This is linked to providers' capacity and willingness to enable children and young people to remain in their settings and to support them more effectively, as discussed in section 5.2.1.

All of the stakeholders interviewed suggested that the WiS pathway and the wider work of the EIMs has helped improve the confidence of education providers' who have engaged with the education inclusion support offer. Some shared examples of cases where schools had been more confident in managing risk due to the support provided by the EIMs to the education provider. For example, one professional with insight into beneficiaries' experiences stated:

“Often [these young people are] considered too high risk, but EIMs are working with settings to get them to understand the need of that child, support them, and manage risk. That support has enabled both of [the young people I have experience with] to sustain educational placements as there were processes in place if there were any issues.”

Professional with insight into beneficiaries' experiences

The five education professionals who responded to the e-survey also agreed or strongly agreed that they felt more confident in their ability to take action to address serious violence, exploitation or risk of it.

Across the consultation, this improved confidence was linked to:

- Close relationships between EIMs and education providers.
- The ease and speed with which education providers can access support from EIMs and refer into the WiS pathway.
- EIMs and YJSWs undertaking robust risk assessments in education provision, supporting those who would not have the capacity to undertake these assessments themselves (see 5.5 for more detail).
- The upskilling of education providers in their understanding of the factors influencing children and young peoples' behaviour led by EIMs (see section 5.3.3).

Importantly, stakeholders suggested consulting with EIMs, and especially following the WiS pathway, provides a clear and defensible position for education providers to maintain places for children and young people who have brought a weapon into school. This is reinforced through the legitimacy provided to the WiS pathway by endorsement from the police and the YOTs. A DSL shared that:

“The key thing for us is that it provides a system that we could use if we needed it – so that we can tie that in with our policies and procedures, and our more general safeguarding.”

DSL

They also recognised the value of the education inclusion work in providing a publicly visible and accessible form or quality assurance to reassure education providers who already promote an inclusive culture, as well as the wider community involved with an education setting:

“Schools have so much to do that the EIMs’ resources need to be easily accessible and ready to use e.g., how to justify to the school community that they are putting support in place for the children and young people rather than excluding them.”

EIM

5.3.3 Improved understanding and confidence in addressing the risk factors for serious violence and exploitation

Responses to qualitative consultation suggest that there are two main ways in which the education inclusion work might contribute to improving education providers’ understanding and confidence in addressing the risk factors for serious violence and exploitation, which are:

- Working with education providers to increase awareness and understanding about the factors influencing the behaviour of individual children and young people receiving input from the education inclusion work.
- Providing wider training to upskill education providers in this area.

Overall, evidence from interviews indicates that education providers who have worked with EIMs or YJSWs in relation to specific children and young people are likely to have developed an improved understanding of the factors influencing the behaviour of these children and young people. This is substantiated by e-survey responses. However, the evidence as to whether the wider training has increased understanding and confidence is less conclusive; e-survey responses again suggest the training is effective, but interviews with education professionals suggest that it might mainly be reiterating existing knowledge.

Increasing awareness and understanding of the risks affecting individual children and young people

All stakeholders reported that information sharing from YJSWs to education providers about contextual risks affecting individual children and young people in the WiS pathway is helping to improve education providers’ understanding of the factors affecting children and young peoples’ behaviour. This includes an improved understanding of the factors that may be putting children and young people at risk of exploitation and serious youth violence, and which might have led to behaviour which has meant they are facing exclusion. The five education

professionals who responded to the e-survey also agreed or strongly agreed that they have a better understanding of these factors.

They suggested that the WiS pathway assessment and the child or young person's direct work with the YJSW are key in improving their understanding of the child or young person's contextual needs which are then shared with the school. Education providers can then use this information to put in place additional, or different, support to help mitigate these contextual risks.

Stakeholders who have worked directly with children and young people and education providers drew on feedback from education professionals and also their own examples of how this increased understanding has resulted in education professionals responding differently to children and young people's behaviour, recognising the underlying risk factors that may have led to the behaviour and supporting them rather than punishing them for it:

“From my interactions with the schools, they will be more in tune with what is going on with the children and young people. They can then support them better along the way and keep an eye out.”

YJSW

YJSW Training around vulnerabilities that may be present for children and young people at risk of exclusion and serious violence

EIMs have delivered a series of six training sessions for schools and the wider local authority on specific vulnerabilities and how they interrelate. Safer Options colleagues reported that this has been an important tool for developing awareness among partners of the risk factors that might affect children and young people's behaviour and put them at risk of exploitation and/or serious youth violence. They shared plans for a wider roll-out, with additional webinars to reach across different agencies in Bristol, such as the Virtual School on vulnerability of LAC to exploitation.

However, views among education professionals were mixed; some we spoke to in interviews suggested that these webinars did not provide them with new information and simply supported existing practice. But all four respondents to the education professionals e-survey who had received training strongly agreed that it was engaging and informative.

Further communication between the EIMs and the education providers could be useful to avoid the duplication of training, and to help provide targeted training on areas of lower awareness, confidence and skills.

Stakeholders, especially the EIMs and YJSWs, also suggested that more training for schools and education providers around social media as a factor influencing children and young people's behaviour would help them to recognise and respond to new and emerging risks.

5.4 System-level changes

5.4.1 Improved identification of children and young people at risk of serious violence, exploitation, and/or exclusion from education

Evidence from qualitative consultation and the education professionals e-survey indicates that the education inclusion work has improved identification of young people at risk of SYV, CCE, CSE, and/or exclusion, mainly through facilitating the sharing of advice, guidance and information across the system.

Some stakeholders felt that the EIM role especially has resulted in improved identification of children and young people at risk of serious violence, exploitation and/or exclusion from education across the system. They cited improved information provided by EIMs to OOCd panels and the piloting of multi-agency meetings with feeder primary and secondary schools as examples of this.

This is reflected in the findings of the e-survey of education professionals; four out of five respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they were better able to identify children and young people at risk of involvement in serious violence, exploitation and/or exclusion from education.

Stakeholders suggested that several key aspects of the work that have improved identification are:

- The **informal advice and guidance from EIMs to education providers**. This has improved education providers' understanding of risk factors to look out for (see 5.3.3).
- The **YJSW assessments**. This has improved understanding of the contextual risk factors present for children and young people (see 5.5 for more detail). However, some strategic stakeholders suggested that if YJSWs were to use the same assessment form as the OOCd panels in the WiS pathway, this might help them capture risks even more effectively, and could help improve joined up working between the different agencies when identifying children and young people at risk of SYV.
- **Information sharing, especially between education providers and the wider system, at the Safer Options meetings**. This allowed EIMs to flag up, and set in place preventative measures, to support children and young people before they are formally excluded (see 5.5 for more detail). One EIM shared that:

“Schools have a wealth of information about the risks of young people. We can therefore identify the young people in need of support a lot earlier than other services and offer harm reduction services around drugs and violence. This will hopefully reduce their risks of having to be open to social services or to youth justice.”

EIM

Stakeholders also suggested that improved information-sharing has been supported by EIMs acting as a key point of contact for education providers on exclusion issues, and the links between the WiS pathway and YOTs/police.

However, some stakeholders in managerial roles within Bristol City Council shared that there are still some issues remaining surrounding the identification of young people, especially with regards to information sharing and the data provided by education providers (please see the evaluation report of the Education Inclusion: Teachable Moments Project for more detail on the challenges and enablers to implementing education inclusion work across Bristol and Avon & Somerset more widely – available in Appendix 1 in 7.1).



Recommendation: Consider updating the way Safer Options identify young people at risk of exclusion, SYV, CCE and/or CSE, for example by standardising data collection and recording across Safer Options and its partners, and including education providers in Safer Options meetings.

Data is not always shared systematically or consistently across Safer Options, especially with regards to data from education providers and police. This makes it harder to successfully identify young people at risk of SYV, CCE, CSE, and/or exclusion. A lack of information-sharing from police also limits the ability of education providers to put in place robust risk assessments. Standardising data collection and sharing processes (including the use of digital platforms) and including education providers in the Safer options meetings (as opposed to the EIM acting in lieu of education providers) might help improve information sharing and identification of young people at risk. More consistent and systematic data collection might also reduce reliance on more subjective, qualitative measures of risk and therefore reduce the risk of disproportionality. It could also be used to inform and clarify eligibility criteria for education inclusion work.

5.4.2 Understanding of disproportionality

There was limited evidence on how the education inclusion work in Bristol has impacted on disproportionality of exclusion, but a general recognition among key stakeholders that it remains an issue for some groups of children and young people, particularly those from Black, Asian and Ethnic Minority backgrounds (some stakeholders spoke about this group broadly, others specified that children and young people from Somali, Black African, and Black Caribbean backgrounds are disproportionately at risk of exclusion), those with SEND needs, and males.

Most stakeholders did not comment on the impact that the education inclusion work in Bristol has had on the understanding of disproportionality of exclusion which might affect certain groups of children and young people. However, key stakeholders, particularly those located in the Safer Options team, reported that disproportionality exists in terms of:

- **Black, Asian and Ethnic Minority children and young people being overrepresented in the education inclusion cohort in East and North Bristol.** Some stakeholders suggested that this may be because these pupils are disproportionately identified by education providers as being at risk, and some suggested it is because they are disproportionately affected by the risk factors that might lead to exclusion, SYV, or exploitation, particularly poverty. One stakeholder also suggested that this disproportionality of exclusion may be because of a lack of representation from diverse ethnic and socio-economic background in the BIP panel (see 5.5 for more detail). However, the data study suggests that although a large proportion of referrals are for Black, Asian and Ethnic Minority children and young people (33%), this may actually be similar to the proportion of the wider population who are from Black, Asian and Ethnic Minority backgrounds.
- **Children and young people with SEND being overrepresented in the education inclusion cohort.** Some key stakeholders suggested this is because there is often a lack of support in schools for children and young people with undiagnosed SEND needs which leads to them being at risk of exclusion, as well as limited appropriate education placements, especially for children and young people with Education, Health and Care plans (EHCPs) and those under the age of 14.
- **Males are more likely to be identified as at risk of exclusion than females.** This is supported by the data study, which showed that 75% of all referrals across Bristol were for young males. Stakeholders reported that in South Bristol in particular, whose population is mostly White, lower-income White males are twice as likely to be excluded than their peers. Key stakeholders were unsure whether this is because females are less likely to be at risk of exclusion, SYV, and exploitation, or because it is more challenging to identify those who are at risk. For example, one key stakeholder suggested that young girls are more likely to hide issue or present differently to their male peers with similar issues.

These findings suggest that disproportionality of Black, Asian and Ethnic Minority children and young people, children and young people with SEND, and males being identified as at risk of exclusion is beginning to be identified and discussed by a few key stakeholders, but this has not yet translated to an improvement in understanding of disproportionality across wider partners, particularly education professionals. Moreover, the extent to which the scale and detail of this disproportionality is understood is currently limited. For example, it is not clear whether this is because these children and young people are more likely to be at risk of exclusion, or whether it is because they are more likely to be **identified** as at risk of exclusion.

The evaluation report for the Education Inclusion: Teachable Moments project includes a more detailed discussion on the issue the disproportionality of exclusions for these groups of children and young people. Please see Appendix 1 in section 7.1 for more detail.



Recommendation: Offer training across Avon and Somerset on trauma-informed practice, contextual safeguarding approaches and support for SEND pupils across the system.

More training on trauma-informed methods, supporting SEND needs in school, and contextual safeguarding and contextual risk factors might help co-ordinate inclusion support, improve education providers' confidence in holding and managing risk, and increase the sustainability of the project. Consulting education colleagues on their training needs could help inform this training. SEND training could include training to destigmatise certain presentations of SEND, which might help to reduce exclusions for these children and young people.

Referral criteria and disproportionality

Area leads in Bristol reported that by including SYV as a criterion for support in the Weapons in School pathway, it is possible that the education inclusion work is not reaching racially marginalised cohorts. They suggested that these cohorts are historically PEXed, policed and criminalised much earlier, and so may have already been excluded prior to incidents of SYV, therefore not receiving support under through the Weapons in School pathway. One area lead in Bristol reported:

“The demographics of young people coming through Weapons in School young people are disproportionately white compared to overall cohort of young people in Bristol and those we’re concerned about in related to SYV. I guess I wonder given structural differences, culturally informed behaviour, young people’s relationships with education, how we assess and identify risk as low level and whether there are racial biases of assessments in school.”

They suggested further research into this, to determine what alternative ‘teachable moments’ need to be included to help target support for this cohort. As part of this research, it would be helpful to monitor the personal characteristics and outcomes of the young people supported in Bristol through the additional Education Inclusion Project to ascertain whether widening the referral criteria helps combat disproportionality, through using a more inclusive ‘teachable moment’. For further discussion about adapting referral criteria for education inclusion work, please see the separate evaluation report for the Education Inclusion: Teachable Moments Project (Appendix 1 in 7.1).

Further exploration of the needs and risk factors of different groups of children and young people across Bristol may support partners to gain a better understanding of disproportionality of exclusion, the reasons behind this, and how this can be addressed.

Recommendation: Establish agreed referral criteria which balance widening reach with managing demand and targeting resource to those with greatest risk and need.

Overall, there was a consensus among stakeholders in Bristol and across Avon and Somerset that stability of educational placement is a protective factor against SYV, and as such targeting anyone at risk of exclusion, regardless of whether SYV was a specific concern at the point of referral, was the most suitable approach to tackle both exclusion and SYV in the long-term. Future education inclusion work may therefore wish to consider removing SYV as a referral criterion. This could also help address the disproportionate risk of exclusion faced by children and young people with SEND, who may not necessarily be at risk of SYV or exploitation.

Having said this, for future projects that focus on 'teachable moments' for young people at risk of SYV, CCE or CSE, stakeholders may wish to consider removing exclusion as a referral criterion. This is because some children and young people are at risk of SYV and exploitation but not exclusion (young women and girls, for example).

Broadening the referral criteria to other groups in Bristol specifically, for example by opening it to children and young people who attend out-of-county education provision, or do not attend school, would help widen the reach of the education inclusion work. In particular, early intervention with children and young people in primary schools may reduce the risk of serious youth violence later on.

However, more open referral criteria risk generating very high levels of demand which outstrip the delivery resource. This might result in inability to meet demand, or the need to triage referrals based on severity of need.

5.4.3 Culture change

Findings from the qualitative consultation suggest that the education inclusion work may have resulted in a cultural shift in some organisations towards adopting a trauma-informed, joined-up response to exclusion.

Some key stakeholders, particularly those involved in direct delivery of the education inclusion work, shared that as a result of the WiS pathway, and the wider work of the EIMs, there has been a cultural shift particularly in education settings, YOTs and the police towards recognising the underlying vulnerabilities that might be present for children and young people involved in certain incidents (such as weapon or drug possession) and providing support accordingly, rather than adopting zero-tolerance policies. They shared examples of how this has been seen in conversations with partners which focus more on supporting the child or young person, and in a more joined up approach with multiple agencies working together to support the child or young person in a more trauma-informed way.

They suggested that this shift is linked to the training on trauma-informed policies and practices provided by EIMs, resulting in education providers feeling more confident maintaining a child or young person's education placement (see section 5.3.2 for more).

Professionals with insight into beneficiaries corroborated this, adding that the EIMs work with education providers on trauma-informed practice is important both as part of early intervention work, but also when responding to instances of SYV, such as at the YOT Enhanced Case Management meetings.⁶⁰



Case study: EIMs and trauma-informed practice

Professionals with insight into beneficiaries shared two instances where EIMs participated in YOT Enhanced Case Management meetings.

Before the EIMs started participating, the two children and young people were not engaged in any education or training, but by the end, both children and young people had clear plans in place and were in post-16 educational placements. Both children and young people were often considered high risk, and previously had poor attendance, but the EIMs worked closely with education settings to help them understand the needs of the two children and young people, provide the education settings with tools to support the children and young people and manage the risk. The EIMs also set up processes to mitigate any future potential issues and remained on hand to respond to the education providers' queries and needs.

The EIMs' efforts resulted in positive outcomes for both the education providers and the children and young people. The education settings felt more confident providing a placement for the children and young people, as they felt reassured that they had a network of support in place in case anything happened. They also felt more confident supporting the children and young people, as they had a greater understanding of the contextual risks the children and young people were facing.

The professionals reported that children and young people in turn built positive relationships with the EIMs which may have the potential to build a foundation for a positive impact on their wellbeing, trust, and self-esteem, as well as maintaining education post-16.

⁶⁰ The Enhanced Case Management approach consists of a) the use of the trauma recovery model as the underpinning theory which matches intervention and support to presenting and underlying needs, b) training for practitioners and managers e.g., on attachment, child development and trauma, c) securing informed consent to participating in the approach from young people, d) a case formulation approach which draws on the skills of a clinical psychologist and e) provision of a clinical supervision for YOT practitioners (see Government for Social Research and Welsh Government (2017) *Evaluation of the Enhanced Case Management Approach: Summary*. Available at: [Evaluation of the Enhanced Case Management approach: Summary \(gov.wales\)](#) [Accessed 28 April 2022])

Having said this, many stakeholders and professionals with insight into beneficiaries reported that there are still discrepancies between different education provisions, with some education providers having more agency to change behavioural policies than others (notably the difficulty of changing behavioural policies in Multi-Academy Trusts) (please see the evaluation report of the Education Inclusion: Teachable Moments Project for more detail on the challenges and enablers to implementing education inclusion work across Bristol and Avon & Somerset more widely – see Appendix 1 in 7.1).

5.4.4 Measured use of resources

There is some evidence, mainly from interviews with stakeholders in managerial roles, that the WiS pathway and the work of the EIMs is resulting in more appropriate use of resource, as a result of Safer Options multi-agency working.

Examples of this included how schools are less likely to reply upon police responses to WiS incidents and are more willing to address it internally, how the work provides a more appropriate alternative to arrests, which can be traumatising for the child or young person, and how it has resulted in PCSOs working more closely with YJSWs to address risk.

Managerial stakeholders attributed this to the multi-agency working of Safer Options, and more specifically, the ability of EIMs to coordinate and work across/with a range of different services, ensuring that work is not duplicated, but that the risks and needs of the children and young people are mitigated with “*different agencies... able to tackle different areas in a coordinated approach*”. One stakeholder explained this:

“We have our core offers which are strengthened by information and intelligence and our relationships with the police, schools and resources identified by the YJSW. The EIM resource comes alongside all of this to coordinate. This is where the systems change is located.”

Key stakeholder

5.4.5 Improved partnership working

Findings from qualitative consultation with stakeholders suggest that the education inclusion work has helped to improve partnership working in Bristol, although there remain some challenges around working with police colleagues.

Stakeholders shared examples of joint working that suggest that partnership working and engagement on a systems-level has improved as result of the education inclusion work. For example, they shared examples of educational professionals and EIMs contacting the Police for advice and to sense-check responses around exclusion and WiS incidents.

This was a view held by stakeholders across different teams and organisations, suggesting that this change has been experienced widely across partner organisations in Bristol, for example across the YOS, police, education providers,

Early Help and Children's social care. This was also reflected in the findings from the e-survey; all five education professionals who responded strongly agreed that as a result of the education inclusion work they are better able to work in partnership with other services to support children and young people at risk of involvement in serious violence, exploitation and/or exclusion from education.

The stakeholders suggested that this is due to the creation of the EIM role, and it's being based in Early Help. This allows them to bridge the gap between different agencies who have historically had different approaches to similar issues, particularly between the local authority children's services and education providers.

They suggested partnership working has also been facilitated by:

- **Safer Options Meetings.** The EIMs also work with partners through the Safer Options multi-disciplinary meetings to tailor their responses to the needs of the children and young people, acting as representation for education providers (see 5.5 for more detail). Stakeholders suggested these meetings have provided a space that did not exist previously to identify children and young people at risk of exclusion and SYV and put in place support.
- **Online technologies.** The use of online technologies, such as Zoom, facilitated the education providers participation and communication during Covid-19. Stakeholders suggested that it could continue to be used in the future.

However, some stakeholders, primarily EIMs, YJSWs and YOT Area Managers, reported ongoing challenges in partnership working with the police, including slower police response times and the lack of provisions for children and young people whilst they are under police investigation and excluded from education providers.

They suggested this could result in some children and young people not receiving the support they need, and poorer outcomes for them overall. An EIM shared:

"I still worry more about incidents that go through the police system – ... exclusions are longer, and outcomes are usually that they are moved school and they may even go through the criminal justice system."

EIM

5.4.6 Community trust and engagement in the VRU and partners

There is limited evidence around whether the education inclusion project has increased community trust in and engagement with the VRU and partners, but a general consensus among stakeholders who were interviewed that it has the potential to achieve this in the longer-term.

For example, EIMs and strategic stakeholders reported that as a result of improved information sharing between the education providers and the wider system (see section 5.4.5) the police have more awareness of contextual risks. This allows them to prioritise safeguarding in their decision-making and reduces criminalisation of children and young people. This may also lead to improved relationships between the police and the community.

For example, an EIM reported that:

“The police now have information they would not have had before, so they can build up a wider picture, and focus on partnership work. This has a knock-on impact for community safety, but also community perceptions of police, schools and support.”

EIM

Some YOT Area Managers also suggested that because an increase in trauma-informed practice has reduced the criminalisation of children and young people, this has the potential to improve relationships between the Police and children and young people in the future). For example, one YOT manager reported:

“Arrest brings a lot of trauma. By reducing arrests and criminalisation, the WiS pathway is facilitating a better community relationship with the police, which will have a huge impact down the line.”

YOT Area Manager

5.5 Key Mechanisms of Change

The key features of effective education inclusion work demonstrated in Bristol which have led to improve outcomes for children and young people, education providers and system-level changes are outlined in more detail in the evaluation report for the Education Inclusion: Teachable Moments Project (see Appendix 1 in 7.1). However, stakeholders involved in the qualitative consultation for the evaluation of the Bristol Education Inclusion work also identified some key mechanisms of change which were important in achieving outcomes that are specific to Bristol and the Safer Options VRU.

These included:

- **Safer Options multi-agency meetings.** As part of Bristol’s Education Inclusion work, EIMs attend Safer Options Meetings in which they work with partners to tailor their responses to the needs of the children and young people, and act as a representative for education providers. They also use these meetings to share information received from education providers with the wider system. Where appropriate, they feedback any information from the meetings to education colleagues that might be useful in informing the support provided in education settings for children and young people. Stakeholders suggested that these meetings have improved information-sharing and partnership working across the system. They also reported that information-sharing at these meetings has improved risk assessments for specific

individuals, cohorts and the wider community, and reduced exclusions, because EIMs can flag up and set in place preventative measures to support children and young people before they are formally excluded.

- **Risk assessments.** When EIMs and YJSWs received a referral through the WiS pathway they conduct a risk assessment which involves assessing wider contextual risk factors present for children and young people and sharing them with key partners, including the school/education setting. These risk assessments are also supplemented by police information held on the CYP, which if appropriate can be fed back into the schools. Stakeholders suggested that this has improved education providers' understanding of the contextual risk factors present for children and young people and in turn informed and improved the support they offer to children and young people to address this. Some stakeholders also suggested that there have been fewer fixed term exclusions or these have been shorter because the assessments are conducted more swiftly than police and school-led investigations that were occurring previously. However, more information related to the length of fixed term exclusions would be needed to assess whether this is accurate in practice.
- **Bristol Inclusion Panel (BIP).** Stakeholders reported that the EIMs' presence at the Bristol Inclusion Panel and their ability to advocate for children and young people to maintain their current placements has reduced the number of managed moves in Bristol. However, more data around the number of managed moves in Bristol would be needed to assess whether this is accurate. One key stakeholder also suggested that EIMs' advocacy role at the panel has improved the panel members' understanding of disproportionality in exclusion rates in Bristol. EIMs have also delivered training to BIP panel member around the contextual risk factors for serious youth violence, CCE and CSE.

6 Conclusions and recommendations

6.1 Overview

This chapter presents conclusions from the evaluation of the Bristol VRU's core education inclusion work.

A note on recommendations

We have produced a series of recommendations to inform future education inclusion work across Avon and Somerset. These are based on the findings outlined in this report (i.e. those related to implementation of both Bristol's core education inclusion work) and also those related to the expanded Education Inclusion: Teachable Moments Project. (see Appendix 1 in .). Figure 17 indicates which recommendations relate to which report.

We are in the process of developing a more extensive Theory of Change and specific recommendations about future outcomes monitoring which have been informed by the evaluation of the Bristol education inclusion work and the Education Inclusion: Teachable Moments Project. This is being generated in collaboration with colleagues from the OPCC and the five local areas implementing education inclusion interventions. It will be available as a separate report.

6.2 Conclusions

6.2.1 Evidence base for introducing education inclusion interventions

The introduction of the education inclusion work in Bristol coincides with increasing interest in this type of intervention by central government and local areas. This stems from well-established evidence of the correlation between school exclusion, involvement in the criminal justice system and wider adverse life experiences.

The need for education inclusion work in Bristol specifically is also supported by exclusion and absence data. Maintaining low numbers of exclusions and reducing the number of FTEs and managed moves therefore remains a priority for decision-makers across the local authority

There is evidence in wider literature for the efficacy of education inclusion interventions in reducing exclusion from education. At this stage, however, there is limited evidence about whether reducing exclusion reduces involvement in serious violence.

6.2.2 Referral numbers indicate demand for and potential reach of the work

Between 08/01/2020 and 23/02/2022 403 children and young people were referred for education inclusion support in Bristol.⁶¹ Of these:

- 337 were referred for support from an EIM only.
- 55 were referred for the WiS pathway, and 12 were referred for the DiS pathway.

Overall, there is some qualitative evidence to suggest that Bristol's education inclusion work, particularly that undertaken by EIMs and YJSWs as part of the WiS pathway, has had positive outcomes for many of the children and young people it has worked with. This includes improved stability of educational placement, wellbeing, relationships, safety, and mental health.

More systematic collection of outcomes data for the EIM and WiS cohort would help further demonstrate any impact that the education inclusion work is having and improve the evidence base of 'what works' in reducing serious youth violence and exclusions .

6.2.3 Qualitative evidence of benefits and impact of the education inclusion work for education providers

Findings from the consultation also indicated that education inclusion work in Bristol has improved the confidence of education providers who have worked with EIMs or YJSWs in holding and managing risk. This may be linked to:

- Positive relationships being built between education providers and EIMs.
- The support EIMs have provided with risk assessments.
- The education inclusion work has filling in a gap in the system by acting as a clear point of contact for EIMs to receive advice, guidance and training around exclusion and serious youth violence.
- The WiS pathway has given education providers a tried and tested process for managing incidents of weapons in schools.
- The project has facilitated information sharing between other agencies and education providers about wider contextual factors affecting young people's

⁶¹ This likely under-estimates the total number of children and young people referred to the education inclusion work because data was not available first four months in which the programme was operating (September 2019 to early January 2020). Data provided to the evaluation also related to the number of children and young people referred rather than the number of young people who engaged or directly benefited from direct interventions or support to schools. As such, it is not possible to establish the total number of children and young people reached by the work.

behaviour. This has enabled education professionals to put appropriate support in place for young people that perhaps was not there previously.

Importantly the WiS pathway also provides a clear and defensible position for education providers to maintain places for children and young people who have brought a weapon into school. This is reinforced through the legitimacy provided to the WiS pathway by endorsement from the police and the YOTs.

6.2.4 Challenges in conclusively commenting on the impact of Bristol's education inclusion work

Having said this, it is not possible at this stage to confidently assess the impact of Bristol's education inclusion work, or to attribute any impact that has been seen for those it has worked with firmly to the work of the education inclusion team. This is due to several reasons:

- **There is not currently a co-developed and formally agreed Theory of Change** for the education inclusion model which clearly articulates the theory and assumptions underpinning the education inclusion work and illustrates how specific activities will lead to specific outcomes and impacts. Developing this may help in further defining and communicating the purpose of the work. The process of development may also help to identify outcomes and impacts which are less firmly the model's sphere of influence. The final agreed outcomes and impacts for inclusion in any Theory of Change or logic model could also be used as a basis for identifying and agreeing outcome measures for the future monitoring of the work.
- **A limited amount of data is currently collected in a shareable format as part of monitoring the education inclusion work** in Bristol. Systematic data collection on a broader range of outcomes for young people receiving support from the Education Inclusion team might help Safer Options to measure the wider impact of the education inclusion work and would help build up the evidence base of "what works" in violence reduction. We would be happy to support Safer Options with reviewing and updating data collection mechanisms in the future.
- **Data around managed moves is not currently collected at a national, regional or local level.** This makes it difficult to demonstrate any impact the education inclusion work has had on reducing the number of managed moves for children and young people it has worked with, and across Bristol more widely. This is particularly challenging considering that a reduction in managed moves is a key intended impact of the work.

6.3 Recommendations

Based on findings from this evaluation and that of the Education Inclusion: Teachable Moments Project, we have identified several recommendations and considerations for the future implementation of education inclusion work across Avon and Somerset. These include recommendations for consideration by the OPCC, Bristol VRU, and stakeholders involved in the Education Inclusion:

Teachable Moments Project. Figure 17 presents these recommendations and considerations. These include recommendations for consideration by funding bodies, the OPCC, Safer Options, local authorities across Avon and Somerset, and the Bristol education inclusion team.

Those recommendations and considerations which are more specific to the Education Inclusion: Teachable Moments Project are outlined in more detail in the separate evaluation report for this project (see Appendix 1 in 7.1).

Figure 17: Recommendations for future Safer Options' education inclusion work

Recommendation	Evidence base	Bristol Education Inclusion work Report section:	Education Inclusion Project Report section:	For consideration by:
1. Increase the length of funding cycles for education inclusion work.	The short funding cycle and uncertainty about future funding decisions in the Education Inclusion Project made it difficult to recruit staff who would prefer longer contracts. It also meant there was not sufficient time to reflect on specific skill sets needed. In some areas, workers had to be seconded from elsewhere in the local authority to ensure people were in post in the necessary timescales, but this has resulted in under-capacity in other teams. Short funding cycles can also make it challenging to build positive working relationships with multi-agency partners.	n/a	3.2.5 4.4 5.4.1 8.2.1	Funders and commissioners
2. Conduct a robust needs assessment of young people at risk of exclusions and SYV/CCE/CSE	There is limited understanding of disproportionality of exclusions in Avon and Somerset, and around the intersectionality of SYV, exploitation, exclusion, gender, age SEND, and ethnicity. Nevertheless, there is some evidence from qualitative consultation to suggest that young males and children and young people with SEND are disproportionality	4.3.5	4.3 8.2.4 8.3.4	OPCC stakeholders

Recommendation	Evidence base	Bristol Education Inclusion work Report section:	Education Inclusion Project Report section:	For consideration by:
in Avon and Somerset.	<p>identified as at risk of exclusion. Avon and Somerset colleagues may wish to consider conducting a robust needs assessment in the future to help fully these needs so that support can be better targeted to local need.</p> <p>This aligns with Recommendations 16 and 18 in Avon and Somerset Criminal Justice Board's recently published review of disproportionality, which suggest that that Local Authorities and YOTs need to address current issues with collecting high-quality data and analyse linked school exclusion (including managed moves, internal exclusions, "off-rolling" and informal exclusions) and offending data to understanding whether children and young people from Black, Asian and Ethnic Minority backgrounds are more likely to be excluded</p>			

Recommendation	Evidence base	Bristol Education Inclusion work Report section:	Education Inclusion Project Report section:	For consideration by:
	from school, and whether that exclusion increases the likelihood of them entering the criminal justice system. ⁶²			
3. Establish agreed referral criteria which balance widening reach with managing demand and targeting resource to those with greatest risk and need.	Overall, there was a consensus among stakeholders across all areas that stability of educational placement is a protective factor against SYV, and as such targeting anyone at risk of exclusion, regardless of whether SYV was a specific concern at the point of referral, was the most suitable approach to tackle both exclusion and SYV in the long-term. Future education inclusion work may therefore wish to consider removing SYV as a referral criterion. This could also help address the disproportionate risk of exclusion faced by	4.4	3.3.1 5.2 8.2.4 8.3.3	Local authority and OPCC stakeholders

⁶² Avon and Somerset Criminal Justice Board (2022) *Identifying Disproportionality in the Avon and Somerset Criminal Justice System* Available at: <https://www.avonandsomerset-pcc.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/Identifying-Disproportionality-Report.pdf> [Accessed 17 June 2022].

Recommendation	Evidence base	Bristol Education Inclusion work Report section:	Education Inclusion Project Report section:	For consideration by:
	<p>children and young people with SEND, who may not necessarily be at risk of SYV or exploitation.</p> <p>Having said this, for future projects that focus on ‘teachable moments’ for young people at risk of SYV, CCE or CSE, stakeholders may wish to consider removing exclusion as a referral criterion. This is because some children and young people are at risk of SYV and exploitation but not exclusion (young women and girls, for example).</p> <p>Broadening the referral criteria in Bristol specifically, for example by opening it to children and young people who attend out-of-county education provision, or do not attend school, would help widen the reach of the education inclusion work. In particular, early intervention with children and young people in primary schools may reduce the risk of serious youth violence later on.</p> <p>However, more open referral high levels of demand which criteria risk generating very outstrip the delivery resource.</p>			

Recommendation	Evidence base	Bristol Education Inclusion work Report section:	Education Inclusion Project Report section:	For consideration by:
	This might result in inability to meet demand, or the need to triage referrals based on severity of need.			
4. Revise the Theory of Change and develop outcomes measurement approaches in collaboration with the OPCC to support ongoing impact evaluation. (Resource has already been identified for Cordis Bright to support actioning this recommendation).	<p>A co-developed Theory of Change could help inform the design of future education inclusion work, as it may help clarify the key mechanisms of change and intended impacts and outcomes of work, which could help refine the target cohort and the referral criterion. This will help local areas offer more effective, evidence-based support that is specifically designed to achieve intended impacts and outcomes for the target cohort.</p> <p>Systematic collection of outcomes data is important to attribute impact of education inclusion work on any reduction in SYV or other aspect of children and young people's lives. This data is not currently available for Bristol VRU's core education inclusion offer and is under development for the Education Inclusion Project. Development of outcomes measurement frameworks might help capture the wider</p>	1.6	2.5.1	Local authority and OPCC stakeholders

Recommendation	Evidence base	Bristol Education Inclusion work Report section:	Education Inclusion Project Report section:	For consideration by:
	impact of the education inclusion work and build up the evidence base of “what works” in violence reduction.			
5. Collect more detailed, consistent and complete profile, intervention and outcomes monitoring data for the cohort.	Within the central data framework reported to the OPCC by the Education Inclusion Project, there is limited and inconsistent demographic data and data on the form and extent of support ⁶³ . In addition there was very little data available to the evaluation in relation to the outcomes of both the education inclusion work in Bristol and the wider Education Inclusion Project. This makes it difficult to understand impact and any differential impact for different groups, to unpick what constitutes a successful education inclusion intervention, and to compare progress across the different sites.	3.5.3 5.1	3.4.1 5.4.1	Local authority and OPCC stakeholders

⁶³ The precise nature and quality of the data provided varied across the local areas involved in the Education Inclusion Project.

Recommendation	Evidence base	Bristol Education Inclusion work Report section:	Education Inclusion Project Report section:	For consideration by:
	Safer Options and Bristol colleagues should consider how to capture data which could demonstrate longer-term outcomes and impacts. This could include, for example, self-reported measures (e.g. around wellbeing) at the beginning and end of intervention and at regular follow-up points, as well as individual-level data on education inclusion and engagement and involvement with the criminal justice system.			
6. Consider adopting a 'scoping phase' of implementation for future education inclusion work. This could include time to review best practice examples and guidance.	Local strategic stakeholders involved in the Education Inclusion Project shared that more central guidance from Avon and Somerset OPCC, especially sharing evidence about the impact of existing education exclusion and examples of best practice in education inclusion work, may have helped improved relationships with education providers, increase the efficacy of interventions, and refine referral criteria.	n/a	3.2.2 3.2.3 4.2 4.3.5 8.3.4	Local authority and OPCC stakeholders

Recommendation	Evidence base	Bristol Education Inclusion work Report section:	Education Inclusion Project Report section:	For consideration by:
	<p>This guidance could be reviewed as part of an extended scoping phase at the beginning of any future education inclusion work. For Bristol VRU's education inclusion work, EIMs had scoping time at the beginning of the implementation period which enabled them to design the role around local need, reduce duplication, and build positive relationships with education providers.</p>			
<p>7. Consider opportunities to share learning and resources across local delivery teams more widely.</p>	<p>In Bristol VRU there are three EIMs. The joint working between them has facilitated outcomes on a larger scale, because they each focus on specific issues and outcomes, reducing the duplication of work and increasing capacity.</p> <p>Increased sharing of learning and resources more widely across Bristol and Avon and Somerset might help to further improve the support the delivery teams provide going forwards. Colleagues at Avon and Somerset OPCC may consider creating and disseminating guidance on specific</p>	n/a	4.5 6.2	Local authority and OPCC stakeholders and local delivery teams

Recommendation	Evidence base	Bristol Education Inclusion work Report section:	Education Inclusion Project Report section:	For consideration by:
	interventions and creating more forums for members of local site delivery teams to share learning.			
8. Locate education inclusion delivery teams in organisations with strong links with other providers.	As part of Bristol VRU's education inclusion work, the team are based within Early Help. This was highlighted as a key enabler for successful implementation, because it supports engagement with children and young people and multi-agency partnership working. Across other areas, engagement and co-ordination of support with education providers, and partnership working was more successful in models based in organisations with strong pre-existing relationships with education providers and other agencies, and particularly those all or partly based in the YOS. This can also help with completing onward referrals as part of exit planning.	n/a	3.2.3 4.4.3 5.3.1 5.4.1 8.3.1	Local delivery teams
9. Carefully consider the skills of those recruited to delivery roles in	There was strong consensus across all areas that the skills and expertise of the EIMs and support workers are central in achieving positive outcomes for children and young people, education, and the wider system. In particular, stakeholders	n/a	4.4.1 6.2 8.3.2	Local delivery teams

Recommendation	Evidence base	Bristol Education Inclusion work Report section:	Education Inclusion Project Report section:	For consideration by:
future iterations of the Education Inclusion project or similar workstreams.	highlighted the importance of the EIMs and support workers having an education background, which can facilitate good relationships with education providers due to EIMs' ability to present complex information in ways suitable for and education providers to easily understand. Communication and rapport building skills with children and young people, being representative of the community, and diplomacy, proactiveness and adaptability were also highlighted as important skills to engage children and young people and provide effective support targeted to their needs.			
10. Consider the possibilities of delivering longer interventions.	All delivery stakeholders involved in the Education Inclusion Project (support workers and EIMs) agreed that although the project could be more effective with and benefit from a whole-family approach, the short-term nature of the intervention does not allow time for this wider approach. A longer intervention period could also result in a wider reach of the project, as it could support children and young people with	n/a	5.4.3 7.2.4 8.2.1	Local authority and OPCC stakeholders

Recommendation	Evidence base	Bristol Education Inclusion work Report section:	Education Inclusion Project Report section:	For consideration by:
	more complex needs that need consistent support over a longer period of time.			
11. Consider offering more regular check-in sessions between education providers and EIMs.	<p>There was some confusion around referral pathways for Bristol VRU's education inclusion work; some stakeholders noted that some education providers are still confused about the difference between the formal and informal referral procedures for support. They reported that in some instances education providers are not using the appropriate referral forms but still expect support.</p> <p>With regards to the Education Inclusion Project, several education professionals who we interviewed raised that communication and information-sharing is still a challenge, and that improvements in this area might help them coordinate support more effectively.</p> <p>Delivery teams also reported that education providers sometimes make inappropriate referrals, with particular</p>	5.3.1	5.2 5.3.3	Local delivery teams

Recommendation	Evidence base	Bristol Education Inclusion work Report section:	Education Inclusion Project Report section:	For consideration by:
	<p>education providers referring many pupils who do not meet the needs thresholds required for support. This was particularly the case in areas where referral criteria have been broadened. This has resulted in demand outweighing the capacity of delivery teams. This is further exacerbated by capacity and resource constraints across the system, which limits the number of onwards referrals to specialist support which can be made.</p>			
<p>12. Offer training across Avon and Somerset on trauma-informed practice, contextual safeguarding approaches and support for SEND</p>	<p>Children and young people with SEND are currently overrepresented in the education inclusion cohort across Avon and Somerset. Some key stakeholders suggested this is because there is often a lack of support in schools for children and young people with undiagnosed SEND needs which leads to them being at risk of exclusion.</p> <p>There was consensus among stakeholders consulted as part of the Education Inclusion Project evaluation, that more training on trauma-informed methods, supporting SEND</p>	<p>5.4.2</p>	<p>4.3.4 5.3.4 6.3 7.3 8.2.3 8.3.5</p>	<p>Local authority and OPCC stakeholders, and local delivery teams</p>

Recommendation	Evidence base	Bristol Education Inclusion work Report section:	Education Inclusion Project Report section:	For consideration by:
pupils across the system.	<p>needs in school, and contextual safeguarding and contextual risk factors could be useful for all teachers (i.e. not only those with wellbeing or SEN responsibilities) and wider partners. This might help co-ordinate inclusion support being offered to the children and young people by all partners, and in turn help sustain any impact achieved. Consulting education colleagues on their training needs could help inform this training.</p> <p>Stakeholders suggested that SEND training could include training to destigmatise certain presentations of SEND, which might help to reduce exclusions for these children and young people.</p>			
13. Further clarity for professionals in the YOT, Early Help and Safer Options	Although the YOT and police ratify decision-making around the WiS pathway through the OOCd panel, the EIMs and YJSWs sit within Early Help. This has the potential to create issues of accountability (i.e. if the EIMs and OOCd panel	3.4.1 5.3.1	n/a	Safer Options

Recommendation	Evidence base	Bristol Education Inclusion work Report section:	Education Inclusion Project Report section:	For consideration by:
about the responsibilities and aims of the YJSW, EIM and Families in Focus roles.	disagree on required support for a young person) and can result in some confusion around expectations of YJSWs, as they are expected to work across multiple agencies. Stakeholders suggested that greater clarity around roles and responsibilities of education inclusion professionals would help address these tensions and increase the reach of support (for example, by potentially reducing YJSW caseloads if expectations are managed more effectively). For future sites looking to implement this model, stakeholders also suggested that scoping time for YJSWs as well as EIMs prior to project launch might help to more clearly delineate the responsibilities of the project team and tailor support to identified need.			
14. Consider updating the way Safer Options identify young people at	Data is not always shared systematically or consistently across Safer Options, especially with regards to data from education providers and police. This makes it harder to successfully identify young people at risk of SYV, CCE, CSE,	5.4.1	n/a	Avon and Somerset OPCC

Recommendation	Evidence base	Bristol Education Inclusion work Report section:	Education Inclusion Project Report section:	For consideration by:
<p>risk of exclusion, SYV, CCE and/or CSE, for example by standardising data collection and recording across Safer Options and its partners, and including education providers in Safer Options meetings.</p>	<p>and/or exclusion. A lack of information-sharing from police also limits the ability of education providers to put in place robust risk assessments. Standardising data collection and sharing processes (including the use of digital platforms) and including education providers in the Safer options meetings (as opposed to the EIM acting in lieu of education providers) might help improve information sharing and identification of young people at risk.</p> <p>More consistent and systematic data collection might also reduce reliance on more subjective, qualitative measures of risk and therefore reduce the risk of disproportionality. It could also be used to inform and clarify eligibility criteria for the Education Inclusion work.</p>			Safer Options

7 Appendices

7.1 Appendix 1: Evaluation report of the Education Inclusion: Teachable Moments Project



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evaluation report fina

7.2 Appendix 2: Logic Model



A&S Phase 2 report
logic model appendix

7.3 Appendix 3: Local policy context



A&S Phase 2 report
local policy context ap

7.4 Appendix 4: Data study



A&S Phase 2 report
data study appendix fi



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