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London's VRU

MyEnds impact evaluation: Main report

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CordisBright

Table of contents

Glossary of key terms **4**

About this report **7**

Purpose 7

Structure 7

1 One-page summary **8**

2 Lessons and implications **9**

2.1 Key messages 9

2.2 Chapter overview 10

2.3 Strengths and supporting factors 10

2.4 Challenges and areas for development 13

2.5 Promising practices and approaches 17

3 Background **20**

3.1 About MyEnds 20

3.2 Evaluation questions 20

3.3 Evaluation methodology 21

4 Overview of programme and requirements **25**

4.1 Key messages 25

4.2 Chapter overview 25

4.3 Aims, intended outcomes and impacts 26

4.4 Rationale and principles 27

4.5 Geographical coverage 29

4.6 Programme structure and activities 29

4.7 Localising the programme in MyEnds sites 32

4.8 Extension of MyEnds programme 33

5 Progress with programme delivery in Year 2 ..... **34**

5.1 Key messages 34

5.2 Chapter overview 34

5.3 Programme management 35

5.4 Capacity building support to consortiums 35

5.5 Monitoring, learning and evaluation 37

5.6 Strategy, approach and governance in sites 40

6 Impact on developing and delivering interventions 42
6.1 Key messages 42
6.2 Chapter overview 43
6.3 Approaches to developing and delivering interventions 43
6.4 Intervention models 49
6.5 Awareness and participation in interventions to reduce violence 55
6.6 Benefits for participating young people and community members 58

7 Impact on community networks 62
7.1 Key messages 62
7.2 Chapter overview 63
7.3 Overarching approaches to network development 63
7.4 Broadening and strengthening local networks. 63
7.5 Building network and grassroots capacity 67
7.6 Community engagement 71
7.7 Collaboration, commitment, decision making and influence 76

8 Contribution to future violence reduction 86
8.1 Key messages 86
8.2 Chapter overview 87
8.3 Building stronger approaches to violence reduction 87
8.4 Sustainability and ability to contribute to violence reduction 91

9 Recommendations 95

10 Appendix 1: Bibliography 101

11 Appendix 2: Methodology 103
11.1 Overview 103
11.2 Impact evaluation methodology 103

Glossary of key terms

MyEnds programme: MyEnds is a programme being delivered by London's Violence Reduction Unit (VRU). It aims to provide support, capacity, and funding for locally-designed interventions in neighbourhoods affected by high and sustained levels of violence across London.

Violence reduction: MyEnds focuses on addressing violence at all levels, including reduction, stabilisation, and prevention. Throughout this report we have used the term violence reduction as an umbrella term for this interpretation.

Sites: Collectively, the eight local MyEnds programmes are labelled 'sites' to avoid confusion between the local programme and wider MyEnds programme.

Site: An individual local area's implementation of MyEnds (including consortium members, delivery partners, grassroots organisations, and stakeholders).

Consortium: The official partnership of organisations in a site who were awarded the MyEnds funding and are responsible for delivering the site-level programme.

Lead partner: In each consortium, there is a host organisation who directly employs key MyEnds staff. However, they take a facilitating role within the consortium rather than having any strategic or operational precedence.

Delivery partner: An organisation which has received funding from a local MyEnds programme to deliver its activities or interventions. Delivery partners are often also consortium partners.

Grassroots grantee: Grassroots organisations which have received grant funding from the local MyEnds programme.

Local network: Local MyEnds networks which are comprised of consortium partners, delivery partners, and wider local organisations with an awareness and some level of involvement in MyEnds activities. The boundaries of networks are dynamic. Awareness of local networks and their membership may vary between local organisations, including network partners, depending for instance on the level of branding of the network.

Local system: The wider systems in local target areas including organisations, stakeholders, and processes beyond the MyEnds network. 'Wider local system organisations' is used to refer to organisations not part of the local network.

Intervention: The structured delivery of support with the primary aim of improving outcomes for participants. In this report, 'intervention' refers to support for community members such as parents and young people, rather than for professionals/volunteers (which is described as a capacity building activity).

Activity: An umbrella term for other initiatives delivered/funded by sites which are not interventions, for example community engagement, capacity building, or network-building activities. These activities may, in part, involve delivering some

support and improving outcomes for groups who participate but, unlike interventions, directly improving community members' outcomes is not their primary purpose.

Primary, secondary, and tertiary interventions: These terms relate to different tiers of intervention intended to correlate to need level. Their application to violence reduction has been described by the Home Office in interim guidance to VRUs (Home Office, 2020). The VRU shared slightly different definitions with sites involved with MyEnds[1]. Both interpretations have been included here:

- Primary services provided for a whole population. Home Office description: in violence reduction these refer to preventing violence from happening in the first place. VRU description to MyEnds sites: this is expected to typically be universal interventions.

- Secondary services for those 'at risk'. Home Office description: in violence reduction the focus is on preventing violence from escalating to serious criminality. VRU description to MyEnds sites: this is expected to typically be interventions for those at risk of problem behaviours.

- Tertiary services for those who have experienced or caused injury. Home Office description: in violence reduction these relate to preventing violent offenders from reoffending. VRU description to MyEnds sites: this is expected to typically be interventions for those with problem behaviours.

Theory of change: This explains why and by what mechanism a proposed intervention or programme is intended to result in a change in targeted outcomes. It is a key tool in understanding what is proposed and whether it is feasible to link changes in outcomes to the interventions.

Logic model: This explains in detail what the inputs, activities, outputs, and outcomes of a proposed intervention are. It is a next step after a theory of change, to make the mechanisms underpinning the intervention explicit.

Listen Up: A capacity building partner involved MyEnds delivery from April 2021 to March 2023, whose role was to provide capacity building support to the sites.

Programme stakeholder: A stakeholder with expertise in the whole MyEnds programme across all eight sites. Typically, these are people working with or for the VRU (including Listen Up) who either engage with the whole programme at a strategic level or support activities across all sites.

Core local stakeholder: A site-level stakeholder who has a core role in the local programme, for example programme leads and other consortium partners who are most centrally involved in decision making and/or delivery.

[1] These definitions for sites were included in the MyEnds Y1Q3 quarterly monitoring return form.

Wider local stakeholder: Other site-level stakeholders with insight into the local MyEnds programme and/or the local context, including grassroots grantees, delivery partners who are not centrally involved in consortium decision making, and other stakeholders from the wider system including statutory or voluntary and community sector (VCS) organisations or community leaders.

Local stakeholder: An umbrella term for core and wider local stakeholders.

Stakeholder: An umbrella term for programme and local stakeholders.

About this report

Purpose

MyEnds is being independently evaluated by Cordis Bright. This is the main report for the impact evaluation, which is the second of three evaluation phases. It is one of three outputs for the impact phase:

1. Short summary report.
2. Main report (this report).
3. Eight short site-level summaries.
4. Eight site-level impact case studies.

Context: Evaluation timing and evolving activities of MyEnds

MyEnds is an evolving programme. It continues to adapt in response to action learning and the dynamic contexts in which it operates. This evaluation represents our best understanding of the activities and impact of the programme as at March 2023. Delivery has since continued and aspects of the programme or its impact may have changed.

Structure

This report first presents key takeaways in Chapters 1 (One-page summary) and 2 (Lessons and implications), followed by background information in Chapter 3, and the remaining findings in subsequent chapters. After this, Appendices contain a bibliography and the evaluation methodology in detail.

1 One-page summary

MyEnds has become more embedded in Year 2, and stakeholders are positive about the progress made and emerging impacts in a range of areas.

There is evidence of MyEnds contributing to stronger local networks, including those within the VCS and between the VCS and statutory organisations. These provide a foundation for violence reduction efforts and have enabled more joined-up working and collective approaches. Equally, it is promoting stronger grassroots organisations which are supporting local communities.

Primary and secondary interventions delivered via MyEnds are contributing to a range of benefits for young people and community members who have been supported. Examples include improved mental health, wellbeing, confidence, aspirations, ETE outcomes and support networks. There is also emerging evidence of some of the small number of tertiary interventions funded supporting improved skills in staying safe and reduced involvement in violence.

Although some of the intended outcomes and impacts of MyEnds would not be expected within the timeframe of the programme, particularly violence reduction, the progress made so far is encouraging and has allowed local systems to strengthen their capacity for continuing to work towards these impacts.

Stakeholders in a wide range of roles were enthusiastic about the MyEnds approach and key principles that have been involved, particularly working with and for the community, strengthening the grassroots sector, partnership working, and empowering VCS organisations to lead locally-developed initiatives. Via this approach, MyEnds has led to eight distinct local programmes across the sites, which vary in terms of their approaches, assets, and areas for development.

Through working in this way there has been a range of useful learning at the local and programme levels, including identifying strengths and supporting factors, challenges and areas for development, and promising and effective practices and approaches. This learning is valuable for future similar initiatives but also for continuing to evolve and improve MyEnds throughout the remainder of the programme. Stakeholders are optimistic about continuing to deliver and embed MyEnds, build on emerging impacts, and create a legacy in the local area.

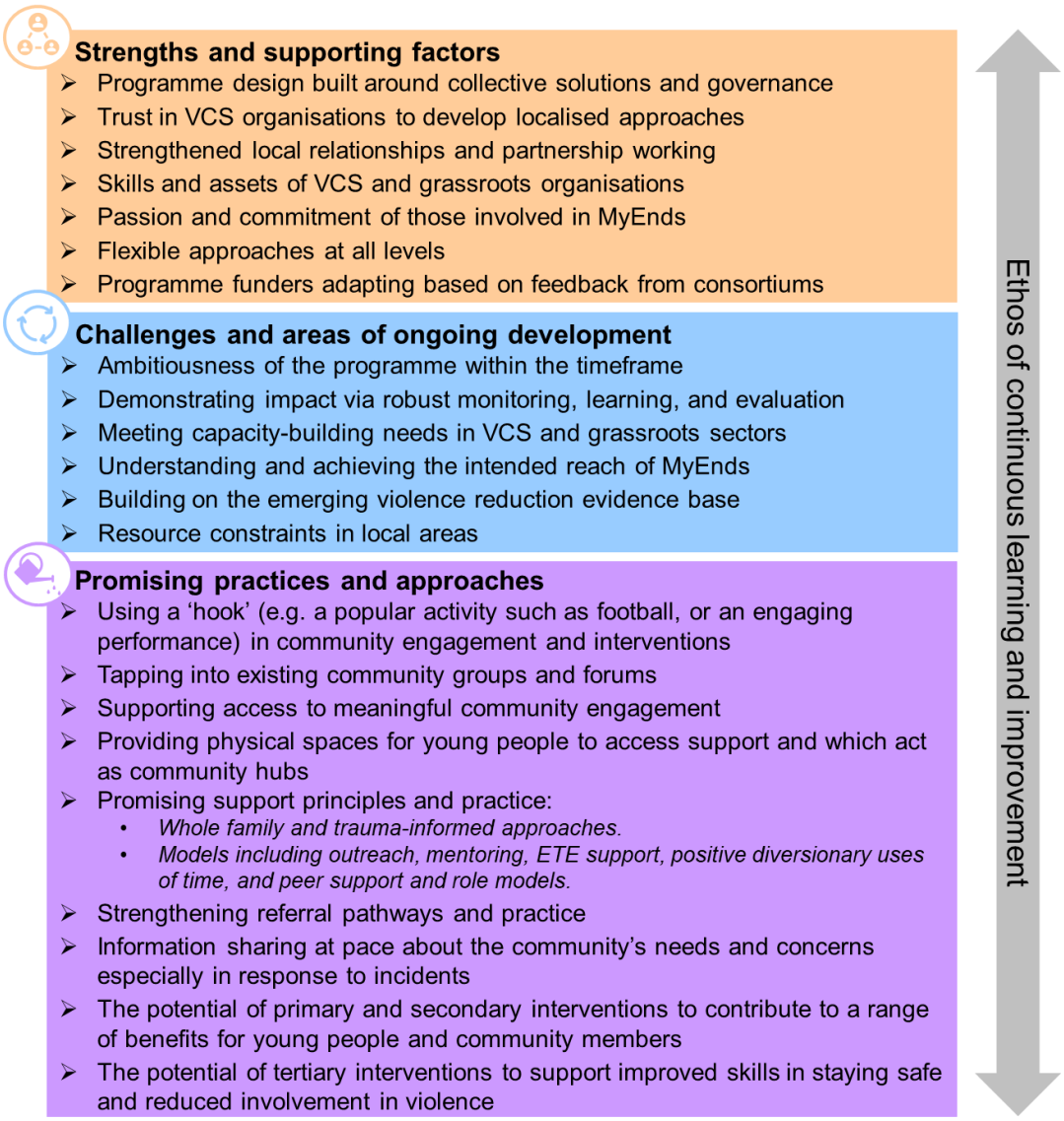
This report makes eight key recommendations for MyEnds and future similar programmes based on learning from the impact evaluation. You can read more about these recommendations and their rationale in Section 9 below.

2 Lessons and implications

2.1 Key messages

- Stakeholders agreed that MyEnds has provided a rich learning experience so far. Opportunities to come together and reflect, pool learning, and adapt based on this have been valued by both programme and local stakeholders.
- Whilst sites' approaches vary, the key strengths, supporting factors, challenges, and areas for development have been common across sites. Stakeholders also highlighted a range of promising practices and approaches.
- Key lessons were:

Figure 1: Summary of key lessons



2.2 Chapter overview

This chapter explores the learning so far from MyEnds at the programme level, including strengths and supporting factors; challenges and areas for development; and promising practices and approaches.

2.3 Strengths and supporting factors

There was a strong sense of the key strengths and supporting factors for MyEnds amongst programme and local stakeholders. They highlighted:

The trust in VCS organisations to develop programmes in response to their local contexts and needs

> *"The approach at the beginning of the contract that gave [consortium partners] room to innovate and be creative was crucial."*
>
> *- Local stakeholder*

For stakeholders, the programme design is a key strength in how it devolves leadership and decision making to local VCS-led consortiums and communities. Programme stakeholders in particular emphasised that this principle is important in the commitment it shows to developing collective solutions and sharing power.

It has also brought benefits for delivery and problem solving, enabling sites to develop locally-specific approaches and adapt this based on local knowledge about needs and promising approaches.

It has also supported 'learning through doing', meaning sites can progress with delivery without needing to first fit within an inflexible programme structure.

Strengthened local relationships and partnership working

The strengthening of relationships has been an important success of MyEnds. Building on this, partnership working was highlighted as a strength in the main, although for a minority of sites this remains an area for ongoing improvement.

These stronger relationships and partnerships have fostered progress in a variety of other areas such as capacity building, interventions, incident response, and the development of collectively-led approaches.

They have also brought together a wide range of expertise and resources from across the local system, including access to different community networks, with networks 'mixing-and-matching skills' where needed. Stakeholders agreed that this collective action is underpinned by strong awareness and relationships between organisations.

For many of the organisations involved, this represents a new way of working. Key ingredients which helped were:

- **Proactive approach**. In network building, stakeholders highlighted the importance of taking a proactive approach to securing engagement of wider organisations; spending time to build relationships, keep partners updated, and foster a sense of inclusivity; and the skills in selling the benefits of partnership working. This linked to the passion and commitment of partners (see strength below).

- **Strong leadership**. The leadership of some consortiums via their lead organisations and programme managers was also highlighted as a strength. This enabled consortiums to articulate the value and focus of MyEnds clearly for wider local organisations, bring together diverse organisations, facilitate collective decision making, maintain buy-in and enthusiasm, and make use of existing local resources and networks.

- **Building links with the local authority**. While some sites have experienced some challenges in getting buy-in from the local authority, being persistent and patient is useful, local stakeholders reported. They also noted that demonstrating early progress is a helpful way to gain buy-in and that local authority involvement might increase subsequently in response to this.

- **Branding**. Sites have varied in their emphasis on branding, but where this has happened most (through using a logo, a website, and social media presence), it may have helped to build awareness which helps make connections.

- **Consortium structure and partnership**. Although MyEnds emphasises localised approaches, stakeholders reflected on some common characteristics that help with building a strong wider local network:

    - Previous working relationships between core partners such as consortium partners and key delivery partners.
    - A lead provider that is well-embedded in the local area.
    - A range of organisation types delivering different kinds of services.
    - Existing relationships or links to statutory organisations (for example, via sitting on a board or forum with statutory partners).
    - Strong governance, particularly sub-groups and effective communication.

The skills and assets of VCS organisations

The skills and assets of VCS organisations were pivotal across all delivery strands, stakeholders agreed. They highlighted:

- **Ability to build connections** with wider organisations to develop stronger local networks.

- **Ability to mobilise and adapt approaches at pace**. Sites have progressed from ideas to delivery at pace within a limited timeframe and made adaptations to their activities in response to learning while doing. This agility has been an asset.

- **Links to communities** and the ability to strengthen these relationships**.** Although sites haven't reached all target communities, they have built from existing networks and deepened engagement, bringing benefits for community members and the site's approach.

- **Cultural competence**, which positioned VCS and grassroots organisations well to implement effective activities and support. Supporting factors included knowledge and experience of working with the local community, and the lived experience brought by some practitioners.

- **Local knowledge** of the area, community, and needs and opportunities.

- **Making use of existing strengths and experiences** in the network, for example drawing on partners' skills in particular activities, interventions, or resources.

The passion and commitment of those involved in delivering MyEnds

Stakeholders agreed that at both the programme and site level, there was a strong commitment and drive to deliver MyEnds, recognise and overcome challenges, and adapt in response to ongoing learning through doing. Indeed, having people involved in initiatives who are committed and passionate about supporting people was identified as one of the main strengths via the systems change survey.

> *"It's a case of [the lead partner] door-knocking, making themselves known, talking about who's connected with who and joining up the dots."*
>
> *- Local stakeholder*

This helped with delivery but also with gaining wider buy-in and support for the programme and its ethos. The role of programme managers in doing this was particularly strong for some sites. The increasing involvement of community members in some sites was also a supporting factor recognised by stakeholders.

Flexible approaches

Stakeholders agreed that taking a flexible attitude and approach to delivering MyEnds has been an important strength at both the programme and site levels. This has supported stakeholders to adapt based on new information, tackle challenges, and respond to local contexts.

> *"There have been shifts in the learning thanks to the meetings where partners come together."*
>
> *- Local stakeholder*

Spotlight: Adapting community engagement approaches

Sites have been flexible in their community engagement approaches. They have adapted over time as they learn about the local community's needs and how best to meet them, which involves some trial and error. For example, they have experimented with changing the locations and timing of forums, engaging different networks such as faith groups, and pitching community engagement activities in different ways to encourage engagement.

2.4 Challenges and areas for development

Similarly to the strengths the most significant challenges and areas for development were fairly consistent across sites, although there were also some locally-specific challenges relating to local needs and resources.

Programme stakeholders already have a strong sense of these and have initiated plans to tackle them where possible in the remainder of the programme. It is unlikely that sufficient adaptation will happen within this timeframe to fully overcome the challenges. Nevertheless, stakeholders are committed to continually improving and learning from this process. They recognise this will bring benefits to future work beyond MyEnds, locally and for the VRU.

The main challenges and areas for development were:

The ambitiousness of the programme within the timeframe

Stakeholders agreed that the programme aims are relevant and were enthusiastic about having the remit to tackle these through MyEnds. At the same time, they noted that the complexity of the programme was sometimes a challenge. The broad range of required activities and the ambitious aims of MyEnds were difficult to balance within the timeframe.

This has been softened to some degree by the ability to be flexible in prioritising different strands and activities, and by sites having some leeway in terms of strict fidelity to the original programme requirements and timescales.

Nevertheless, programme and local stakeholders agreed that this remains a challenge, especially in terms of the capacity required locally and at a programme level. One consequence is that progress in some areas has been slower than originally envisaged, for example:

- **Programme mobilisation**, particularly developing local governance, forming wider networks and solidifying their structure, and planning for delivery strands (see process evaluation report for more detailed analysis).

- **Community engagement**, which is time-intensive to carry out meaningfully and can therefore be challenging to balance alongside other activities. As a result, this activity has sometimes waxed and waned and been less

continuously intensive than originally envisaged, for example in the level of involvement of Youth Steering Groups.

- **Grassroots grant funds**, which sites have typically begun delivering later in the programme than originally anticipated.

Slower implementation of these activities has limited the extent to which some of the more ambitious outcomes can be expected within the programme timeframe.

In response to this learning, the VRU has introduced more proactive and targeted capacity building support to tackle key challenges. For example, during the extension period sites will receive guidance on grant-giving minimum standards; guidance on best practice in engaging youth voice; the VRU outcomes framework to support with developing interventions; and support with developing EQIAs.

Demonstrating the impact of MyEnds, embedding robust monitoring, learning and evaluation processes, and using the wider evidence base

Embedding robust monitoring processes to understand the approaches, delivery, reach, and impact of MyEnds activities has been an ongoing area of development. As discussed in more detail in Section 5.5, at the site level the capacity, skills, and buy-in for this activity has been a challenge. At programme level, requirements and guidance have evolved over time as stakeholders have sought to (1) balance robust monitoring requirements with local capacity, and (2) align with the VRU's emerging approach alongside MyEnds delivery.

Over time, the monitoring and learning component of MyEnds has improved. Sites have developed in capacity and confidence, particularly within consortiums, and programme stakeholders have provided more intensive steer and support to help with this. Stakeholders are hopeful that these improvements will continue and will help with:

- Demonstrating the difference made by MyEnds.
- Making evidence-based adjustments to the activities delivered where needed.
- Improving access to success stories and approaches to avoid.
- Potentially better enabling sites to demonstrate the value of their approaches and secure further funding.

For programme stakeholders, this has been a useful learning process especially for informing future programme design and building in this learning on monitoring from the outset.

Another key factor at play is the emerging wider evidence base about 'what works' to reduce violence. Whilst one aim of MyEnds is to contribute to this learning, tackling this topic and embedding this thinking within sites' approaches has been a challenge. Stakeholders reflected that more guidance and support may have been useful in understanding, using, and adding to the existing evidence base, particularly since this evidence base is still emerging and not yet

consolidated. Indeed, sites may have struggled to know 'where to start' in tackling the long-term aim of violence reduction, particularly within the short timeframe of the programme.

In response to this learning, the VRU has introduced some more steer and guidance for the sites from Year 2 and into the extension period. It has introduced the VRU's outcomes framework which lays out intermediate outcomes and provides key themes of focus for VRU-funded programmes (see Section 5.5). It may be challenging for sites to recalibrate their approaches and see the payoff from this during the extension period itself. However, they may subsequently be better set up to work from the evidence base in their future work on violence reduction.

Meeting the capacity needs of VCS and grassroots organisations

Improved understanding the strengths and areas for development of VCS and grassroots organisations has been a useful product of MyEnds for both local and programme stakeholders.

While these organisations bring a range of strengths (see Section 2.3), some kinds of skills, knowledge, and confidence that are relevant for delivering MyEnds were highlighted as areas for improvement.

> *"Workforce skillset and capacity is a challenge."*
>
> *- Local stakeholder*

Aside from capacity for monitoring, learning and evaluation activity (see above and Section 5.5), these typically related to new kinds of activities for local organisations and consortium partners such as:

- Developing engagement and support models for new cohorts and those with specific needs, as opposed to more universal approaches to provision. This was particularly true in reaching who are closer to violence.
- Co-developing approaches with community members.
- Clearly articulating plans and strategies for violence reduction initiatives.
- For some sites, leading partnership working across organisations.

Programme stakeholders anticipated that MyEnds would be a learning experience for many VCS organisations, however some capacity building needs were greater than expected. In response, they have sought to make support more targeted and intensive. For instance, they plan to develop training for sites in developing interventions with a focus on violence against women and girls (VAWG). However, they have found that local organisations have varied in their ability and openness to engage with and implement new learning.

Understanding and achieving the intended reach of MyEnds

The reach of MyEnds in terms of community engagement and intervention delivery has been an area for improvement. This view was mostly but not exclusively held by programme stakeholders. They highlighted that so far, sites had not generally reached:

- Groups with higher levels of need or who are closer to being involved in violence.
- Those who are less commonly engaged in support or community engagement activities in the area, particularly those who are not already known to a network partner.
- Those from demographic groups who may have been historically underrepresented in support participation in the area, or who network partners have struggled otherwise to engage.
- In some instances, parents and carers.

One contributing factor that programme stakeholders highlighted is the skills, knowledge, and confidence of local network organisations in developing approaches to reach these groups, particularly as this is not their expertise. For example:

- **In intervention delivery** sites have used outreach to reach groups with higher needs, although there may be a lack of suitable support to then refer them into, programme stakeholders suggested. Some sites have developed tertiary interventions for these groups (see Section 6.3.4), but in the main sites have adapted their existing primary or secondary models, for example by increasing the intensity of support and applying a trauma-informed lens. Whilst programme stakeholders praised the adaptability, they noted that this approach is insufficient on its own.
- **In community engagement**, sites have built on existing networks, which may favour groups who are easier to engage (for example, those who already participate in residents' groups or community engagement forums with statutory partners). In broadening their reach, they have mainly used outreach and snowballing from existing community networks, which stakeholders agreed are useful but limited in their efficacy.

A key challenge is that the wider evidence base that sites might draw on of 'what works' for reaching and supporting these groups for violence reduction is still emerging.

Another factor is potentially differing expectations between sites and programme stakeholders about the groups that MyEnds would aim to support. Local stakeholders typically emphasised their delivery of primary and secondary interventions, which they felt adhered to the public health ethos of the programme and London's VRU. However, in their slightly organic and opportunistic approaches to developing interventions and community engagement (see

Sections 6.3 and 7.3), sites typically did not clearly articulate their target groups. As such, differing expectations may not have been identified.

Programme stakeholders have begun taking steps to redress this in Year 2 and looking to the extension period, providing more steer on key target groups that sites should consider and the spread of need groups that their intervention profiles should reflect.

Resource constraints in local areas

Stakeholders reported that limited resources are a barrier in some local networks, even though MyEnds has injected useful resource for delivering activities and strengthening the system.

The main example was limited access to physical spaces to deliver activities within the target area. Local stakeholders highlighted their importance for community engagement, intervention delivery, and building awareness of the support available. Some sites (for example Act as One and THICN) have focused on increasing access to these spaces via funding youth services and liaising with wider partners to gain access, but where these have been lacking or harder to access this has been a barrier.

> *"When you're place-based, you need anchor locations that are available for people to go into."*
>
> *- Local stakeholder*

Funding constraints were also highlighted as a key challenge in the wider local system including statutory organisations, which can limit relevant organisations' capacity to engage with and contribute to the local MyEnds programme.

2.5 Promising practices and approaches

As well as cross-cutting strengths and supporting factors, a range of promising practices and approaches were highlighted by stakeholders:

Using a 'hook' in interventions and community engagement

Stakeholders agree that building initial engagement with target groups can be one of the main challenges, and that providing hooks or incentives to encourage this can be helpful for building community engagement. This was also true of and participation in interventions, discussed in Section 6.5.1. In community engagement key ways of doing this were:

- **Exploring ways to support community members with concerns in the more immediate term, to help build trusting relationships.** For example, Ecosystem Coldharbour established an estate-based steering group and initially gained buy-in by focusing on addressing residents' concerns about their housing. They then transitioned this into a wider community engagement space to discuss issues such as knife crime in the area. The Parents Leadership Group delivered by Gamechangers provides a similar example –

see case study for more details. This can work as both as a 'hook' but also to help address potential barriers to participation.

- **Delivering interesting or creative activities to begin wider conversations**, such as music or drama performances.

Spotlight: Using a film to engage the community in Home Cooked's themes of focus

Consortium partners Father 2 Father and Mind in Haringey have worked together to develop the film 'Me, My Father, and Mental Health', which explores the impact of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) on adult mental health. The film speaks to two of Home Cooked's themes of focus: mental health, and healthy relationships. It has been used to engage the community in these topics, through screenings and follow-up discussions with parents at a local primary school, students at a local sixth form college, and community members at the Home Cooked community forum.

Tapping into existing community groups and forums

Local stakeholders agreed that this has been a useful approach for progressing community engagement within the programme timeframe, but also for avoiding duplication, building on existing momentum, and increasing the visibility of the local MyEnds programme.

Supporting access to meaningful community engagement

Stakeholders reflected that meeting community members where they are in terms of skills, confidence, and knowledge has been critical to enabling meaningful community engagement. For local stakeholders, this means not expecting them to be equipped with the skills and insight, or trust, to co-develop plans and ideas 'off the bat'. To build this, they have found it useful to:

- Go at the community's pace. It has been important to spend time to build trust and understand the needs and concerns of the community, particularly in newer community engagement forums.

- Consider delivering training and support to develop the skills, knowledge and confidence to meaningfully participate. This has often applied to Youth Steering Groups but also more widely. For example, some sites have offered training in trauma-informed approaches or have delivered performances covering the issue of ACEs and inter-generational trauma.

- Consider providing incentives and enablers, such as vouchers (particularly for more intensive engagement such as youth peer research), refreshments, and childcare support (such as a crèche to enable parents or carers to take part).

Providing physical spaces to access support and act as community hubs

For both the intervention and community engagement strands, physical spaces within the target area, such as youth clubs or community buildings, were highlighted as key enablers. They have been important for young people being able to access support and spend time positively in their local area, and also for hosting community engagement activities and building the community's awareness and trust in local services.

Promising support models and principles

Although the evidence base is still emerging, local stakeholders across sites agreed that trauma-informed and whole-family approaches show promise in supporting positive outcomes for those supported by interventions, which have the potential to contribute to violence reduction longer-term.

They also highlighted several intervention models which show promise and are locally regarded as 'tried and tested', including:

- Outreach and detached youth work.
- Mentoring.
- Positive diversionary activities.
- ETE support as a key factor in avoiding further involvement in violence.
- The use of role models and peer-to-peer approaches.

Strengthening referral pathways and practice

For local stakeholders, increasing the number of referrals and the range of partners referring to one another has been an important success of MyEnds. This has also been an enabler to strengthening trust between partners, and may support positive perceptions amongst the community that support is available.

To help achieve this, sites have found it useful to build awareness throughout the local system of available services and their inclusion criteria, including through a service directory; and to focus on increasing referrals between VCS and statutory sectors which may historically have been lower.

Information sharing at pace

Sharing information about needs and opportunities more quickly has been a key enabler of positive outcomes for local networks and communities, local stakeholders agreed. This included sharing information gathered via community engagement, network activities, and interventions. This has been particularly important for improving joined-up incident response.

3 Background

3.1 About MyEnds

MyEnds is a complex and ambitious programme funded by London's Violence Reduction Unit (VRU). It aims to contribute to the VRU's strategic aims to (GLA, 2023):

- Stabilise and reduce violence across London.
- Find the major causes of violence and coordinate action across London to tackle them at scale, delivering a long-term reduction in crime and associated harms.
- Involve communities in the work of the VRU and build their capacity to deliver the best long-term solutions to reduce it.

The community-led approach also links to key objectives in the Mayor of London's Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Strategy (2022):

- Remove the barriers preventing children and young Londoners from realising their potential now and in later life.
- To ensure London's diverse communities have the knowledge, networks, and volunteering opportunities they need to thrive.
- That Londoners from all walks of life feel heard, and see themselves reflected in the public realm.

The programme will run from April 2021 until 31 June 2024[2]. It promotes highly-local, place-based approaches to reducing violence. It is targeted at eight neighbourhoods across London which have experienced high and sustained levels of violence (referred to as "sites" throughout this report). It is non-prescriptive and intends to empower voluntary and community sector (VCS) providers to develop locally-tailored approaches that meet the needs of the local community and tackle the causes of young people becoming involved in violence.

3.2 Evaluation questions

The impact evaluation questions were agreed with VRU colleagues and are:

1. To what extent have local network areas developed a strong community response to violence?
    a. To what extent have local networks been strengthened?

[2] Delivery is expected to continue until March 2024 followed by a three-month period of either closing down operations or mobilising for any further iteration of MyEnds.

   b. Have networks developed a shared commitment to, understanding of, and vision for reducing violence?
   c. Do local networks have the key enablers required to drive change in the community, such as skills, influence, and access to networks within the community?
   d. Are networks empowered? Are they composed of individuals who are closest to issues and able to play a central role in leading solutions?
   e. adapt to emerging needs, and to respond to incidents?

2. To what extent are local stakeholders, statutory organisations, and local communities connected and making decisions inclusively and equally? Are these groups collectively leading programmes to reduce violence?

3. Are the community and young people involved in shaping ideas and plans, and to what extent do they feel empowered to do so?

   a. Do young people participate more, and have more of a voice, in local initiatives to reduce violence?

4. Are the community and young people involved and participating in programmes to reduce violence?

   a. To what extent are local communities and young people aware of local network initiatives, and to what extent do they support and engage in local network initiatives?

5. What are the benefits for young people and/or other community members of participating in activities provided by the programme?

3.3 Evaluation methodology

3.3.1 Overview

Error! Reference source not found. provides an overview of the impact evaluation methodology. Appendix 2 provides a more detailed account.

The impact evaluation fieldwork was carried out from December 2022 to March 2023 in Year 2 of MyEnds. Figure 3 outlines where evaluation reporting fits into the overall timeline of MyEnds.

Figure 2: Impact evaluation methodology

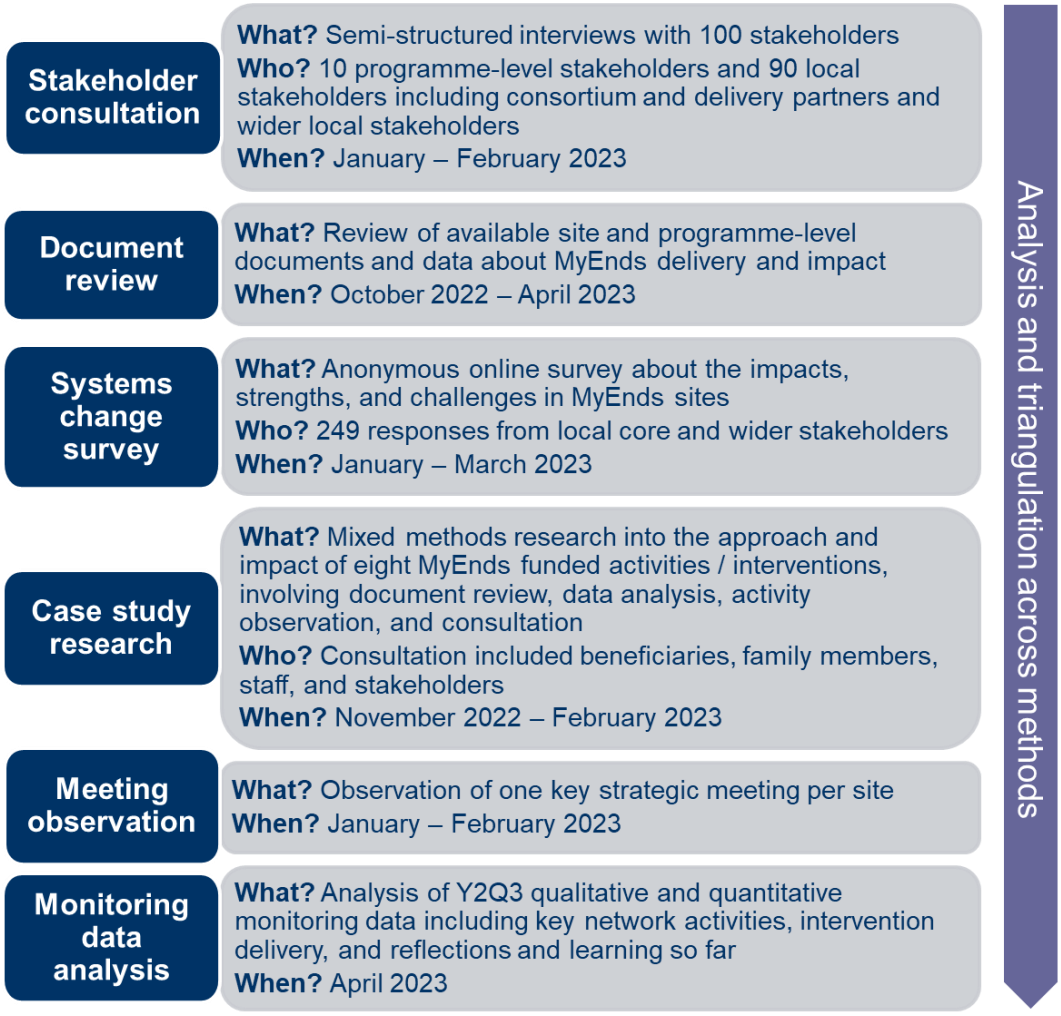
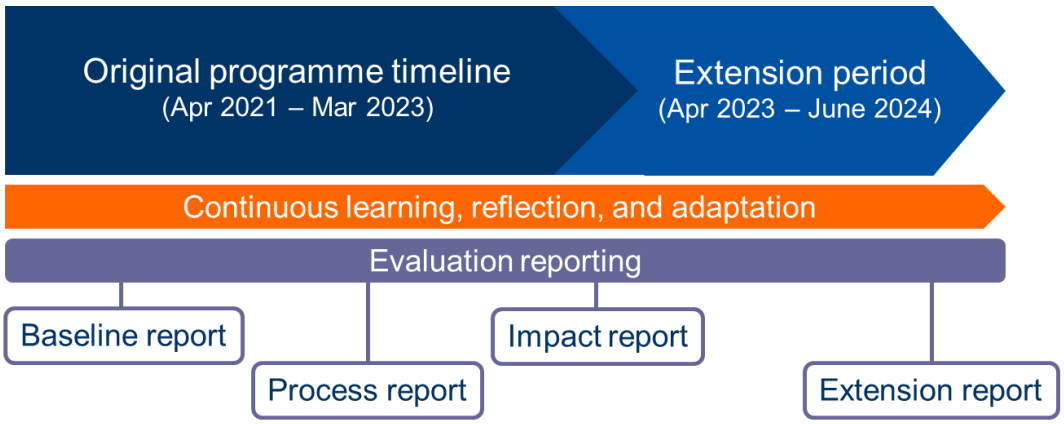


Figure 3: MyEnds programme and evaluation timeline



3.3.2 Limitations and challenges

When interpreting the findings in this report, there are several limitations to bear in mind. These are partly consequences of the scope, ambition, and complexity of MyEnds relative to its timeframe. They also reflect ongoing areas for development that programme stakeholders are already working to address. A key aspect of this has been enhancing the capacity-building and support offer to sites to support them in developing theories of change and continuing to further improve monitoring data.

Theories of change and models are under development

At both the programme and site level, there is information about the overarching aims of MyEnds, the principles and approaches informing it, and some shorter-term intended outcomes. However, developing clear models and theories of change for how activities and interim outcomes link to the longer-term impact of violence reduction is an area of ongoing development. At the level of interventions funded by sites, this also includes a lack of clearly identified intended outcomes or mechanisms of change.

Developing this information is a key area of focus for the extension period. At this stage, this means that it is challenging to:

- Comment on the ways in which funded activities are linked to violence reduction and their likely contribution to this longer-term goal.
- Link MyEnds activities and interventions to the wider evidence base.
- Comment on progress made in supporting target groups and delivering intended activities, and especially on the extent to which the programme would reach those closer to involvement in violence.
- Articulate a replicable model for activities or interventions identified by stakeholders as effective.
- Be confident that all sites and delivery partners are working to the same definitions of key principles or promising practice.

Monitoring still being implemented and strengthened

Sites' completion of monitoring data has improved in Year 2, but some gaps and inconsistencies remain. This makes it challenging to represent the spread and scale of delivery with precision, or to use monitoring data to comment on the outcomes of activities and interventions. In particular, the descriptions of activities are not always detailed enough to identify their focus, and the categorisation of activities and interventions is inconsistent across sites. For example, some community engagement or wider network activities are represented as interventions in some monitoring data returns.

Timescales and attribution for intended outcomes and systems changes

Many of MyEnds' intended outcomes and impacts relate to and are interdependent with the wider systems in which MyEnds programmes are working. These systems are complex and adaptive, subject to ongoing change which is influenced by many factors (Bicket et al., 2020; Egan et al., 2019). As such, it is challenging to isolate the contribution of MyEnds from other factors and local efforts to effect change.

In addition, there is an inherent tension in conceptualising changes of this nature as outcomes that become embedded or sustainable in a constantly changing system (Egan et al., 2019). Therefore, it is perhaps more useful to think of changing systems as a trajectory or continuum of work.

This means that it would be challenging to fully "achieve" the intended outcomes or impacts of MyEnds for local systems and communities within the three-year period covered by the MyEnds programme. It is therefore important to recognise the contribution of MyEnds funding and activities to progress towards the desired changes to community networks and local capacity. Throughout this report we have sought to highlight aspects of positive progress in this way.

Sampling of wider local stakeholders

Consultation with local stakeholders from within and beyond consortiums has provided useful insight for the evaluation. These stakeholders were identified with the support of sites based on their knowledge of who the key individuals are with insight into MyEnds, the wider local systems, and issues relevant to violence reduction. As a result, some local stakeholders who are not contacts or partners of local networks may not have been included in consultation potentially due to time/resource constraints to participate but may have had valuable insights to share. Their views are not represented in findings about impact on local systems, such as trust and collaboration, connectedness, and inclusive decision making.

4 Overview of programme and requirements

4.1 Key messages

- MyEnds is an ambitious programme aiming to reduce violence in local areas affected by high and sustained levels of violence. Each local programme is led by a consortium of VCS organisations, working with wider partner organisations and the community.

- It is deliberately non-prescriptive and intends to empower VCS providers to develop locally-tailored approaches to meet the needs of the community and to tackle the causes of young people becoming involved in violence. There is no set programme delivery "model" or central delivery plan for sites to follow.

- Sites are expected to:

  - Deliver core programme mobilisation and governance and reporting.
  - Design locally co-produced strategic plans and intervention models.
  - Develop and deliver local activities in four strands: community engagement; strengthening community networks; capacity building; and developing and delivering interventions to tackle local violence.

- MyEnds emphasises:

  - Public health approaches, focussing on prevention and early intervention.
  - Approaches that: are placed-based, neighbourhood-level and work with communities; promote multi-agency working; reach those most in need and address risk factors for involvement in violence; are evidence-led; and allow for innovation and iterative learning.
  - Key practices: contextual safeguarding; cultural competence; trauma-informed working, whole-family approaches; and peer-to-peer support.

- London's VRU provides programme management and oversight, and coordinate capacity building support.

- Sites have not generally emphasised a core theory of violence reduction. Their visions for their programmes have usually included: improved partnership working; better use of the VCS, especially to support the aims and functions of statutory organisations; providing routes for community members to get involved; and delivering positive and diversionary activities for young people.

4.2 Chapter overview

This chapter presents a summary of the rationale, structure, activities, and intended outcomes and impacts of MyEnds. It also explores how violence reduction has been approached and understood within the programme, as well as how sites have localised the programme for their neighbourhoods.

4.3 Aims, intended outcomes and impacts

The aim of MyEnds is to reduce violence in local areas affected by high and sustained levels of violence, via approaches that: are local and community-led; are appropriate to the needs of the local area; and reach those in most in need.

Context: Interpretation of violence reduction

The aims and activities of MyEnds focus on addressing violence at a range of levels, including reduction, stabilisation, and prevention. Prevention has been a predominant focus so far. Throughout this report we have used the term violence reduction as an umbrella term for this interpretation.

To achieve this longer-term impact of violence reduction, MyEnds sites work towards a series of outcomes (see Figure 4). These focus mainly on the make-up, connectedness, behaviour and capacity of local networks and communities.

Figure 4: Intended outcomes of MyEnds in sites

Intended outcomes
Shorter-term
• Communities are empowered to get involved in local violence reduction initiatives. • Consortium partners and wider network organisations are equipped with the skills, knowledge and access to resources and information they need.
Longer-term
• Stronger community networks that have a shared commitment to, understanding of, and vision for reducing violence. • More inclusive decision making between local stakeholders, statutory organisations, and communities and young people, who are connected and are collectively leading programmes that are reducing violence. • Stronger trust and collaboration between local community and agencies. • Greater capacity within community-led networks. Networks are better equipped to monitor and adapt to emerging needs and to respond to incidents. Through these networks, people know that help is available, how to access it, and it is appropriate. • Increased sustainability of community networks.

At a programme level, MyEnds also aims to contribute to learning about what works to reduce violence.

The timeframes and sequencing for achieving these different outcomes are not specified within the MyEnds approach. For the purposes of this impact evaluation we have grouped them into shorter and longer-term intended outcomes and

discussed them in this order within the report. In some cases, we have agreed with VRU colleagues to explore additional interim or sub-outcomes that might fall within these more overarching outcome areas. We have done this where relevant in Chapters 6 to 8.

Context: MyEnds intended outcomes and London VRU's outcomes framework

The intended outcomes of MyEnds are similar to the high-level "communities and place" outcomes in the outcomes framework for VRU delivery partners, developed by the VRU during 2022[3]. They are not identical, however. This is because the framework was developed after the MyEnds programme itself, drawing on the most recent evidence and learning available to VRU colleagues, and covers all VRU-funded programmes and delivery partners, not just MyEnds.

The framework also captures a range of programme-level outcomes which might contribute to the high-level communities and place outcomes. Equally, it outlines high-level and programme outcomes in other key areas of relevance to MyEnds, including reducing harm and exploitation of children and young people, and increasing positive opportunities for them.

Over the course of the MyEnds extension period and any further iterations of MyEnds, the intention is for programme and local stakeholders to more closely map the framework outcomes onto the MyEnds programme. For example, the framework may be used to guide sites' understanding of the priority areas and outcomes for the VRU in funding MyEnds or as a starting point in designing interventions and any underpinning theories of change. The framework will also provide a structure for the ongoing monitoring and evaluation of the impact of MyEnds.

Timescales and attribution for intended outcomes and systems changes

Please see Section 3.3.2 for a discussion of the challenges in achieving, measuring and attributing some of the ambitious intended outcomes of MyEnds within the timescales for the evaluation.

4.4 Rationale and principles

4.4.1 Prior evidence and approaches

London's VRU's strategy and delivery is rooted in prevention and early intervention at all ages and stages (London's VRU, 2020). The strategy to 2025

[3] The framework has not been published but has been shared with the MyEnds sites. The framework development was informed by consultation across key stakeholders in violence reduction (including health, education, local authority, YEF, the Home Office, GLA, other VRUs, and within MOPAC), and with young people.

highlights five strategic pillars, which are: early years, education, positive opportunities, youth work, and communities and place. MyEnds relates most obviously to the communities and place pillar, but it also generates activities and interventions connected to the other pillars.

The development of MyEnds was informed by the public health approaches to violence reduction, such as those implemented by the Scottish VRU (Scottish Violence Reduction Unit, 2022). It was also developed in response to the findings of a strategic needs assessment for tackling violence in London, undertaken by the Behavioural Insights Team (Wieshmann et al., 2020). These emphasise:

- Place-based approaches that work with communities.
- Addressing vulnerabilities and risk factors for involvement in violence.
- Evidence-based approaches.
- Iterative learning through continuous testing of what works to reduce violence.

The strategic needs assessment also highlights the importance of neighbourhood-level approaches, reaching those most in need, multi-agency working, and providing resources/incentives/connections to enable innovation.

4.4.2 MyEnds approach and principles

In response to this, MyEnds focuses on place-based approaches to addressing violence at a neighbourhood level via working with local VCS organisations and local people. It promotes multi-agency collaboration by funding consortiums of VCS organisations to develop and deliver MyEnds locally.

It highlights seven approaches which sites should consider when developing and delivering the programme at local level. These are:

1. Public health.
2. Contextual safeguarding.
3. Collective impact.
4. Whole family.
5. Trauma-informed.
6. Peer-to-peer approaches.
7. Culturally competent approaches.

4.4.3 Non-prescriptive approach

The programme is deliberately non-prescriptive, building in flexibility for sites to interpret and implement it in ways which best suit their local context. There is no set programme delivery "model" or central delivery plan for sites to follow.

In one sense, this flexibility to tailor the programme locally is a strength and arguably a necessary feature of this type of place-based programme. On the other hand, it has presented challenges for sites in determining and articulating the most appropriate starting points, sequencing, and activities to develop and deliver their local programmes. It also positions the role of the VRU in relation to sites as supporting performance improvement across the key strategic areas rather than emphasising a 'top-down' approach; one consequence is that it is

more difficult to frame expectations to sites and track sites' delivery against these. These challenging aspects are discussed in Section 2.4.

4.5 Geographical coverage

Eight local sites were selected to participate in the MyEnds programme, each covering a specific target area within one of eight London boroughs. These are:

1. Act as One (Newham).
2. Ecosystem Coldharbour (Lambeth).
3. Gamechangers (Southwark).
4. Home Cooked (Haringey).
5. One Flow One Brent (OFOB) (Brent).
6. Rise Up East (Hackney).
7. Tower Hamlets Island Community Network (THICN) (Tower Hamlets).
8. MyEnds West Croydon (Croydon).

4.6 Programme structure and activities

4.6.1 Funding

Sites each originally received £750,000 funding to develop and deliver MyEnds in their local area between April 2021 and March 2023. They then each received a further £375,000 to cover an extension to the original programme delivery period, from April 2023 to June 2024[4].

4.6.2 Central programme management, oversight, and support

London's VRU provides programme management, oversight, and support. The specific VRU-based roles and resourcing have evolved over time, based on learning from the early stages of programme implementation. Roles as at March 2023 were: a full-time programme manager and two full-time community engagement officers. MyEnds also draws on London's VRU's RMEL team for steer and support with monitoring, learning, and evaluation.

Functions have included:

- Supporting sites with local programme management and capacity building.
- Promoting the programme and the visibility of the VRU in local communities.
- Facilitating the sharing of learning across sites via learning events.
- Facilitating relationships and progress in specific areas by enabling sites to tap into forums and activities run by the VRU. Examples include:

[4] Delivery is expected to continue until March 2024 followed by a three-month period of either closing down operations or mobilising for any further iteration of MyEnds.

- A lived experience panel.
- Young People's Action Group (YPAG) events.
- The Designated Safeguarding Leads network, which can help to broker relationships between education settings and MyEnds interventions.

The programme has also included a partner, Listen Up, whose role was to provide bespoke capacity building support to the sites, tailored in response to their needs. This included a focus on supporting the sites to develop theories of change, outcomes frameworks, and robust monitoring and outcomes data.

4.6.3 Local delivery mechanisms and activities

Each local MyEnds programme is led by a consortium of VCS providers. The consortiums build a wider network of local organisations and key individuals. These partners collaborate to plan and deliver the local MyEnds programme.

Local programmes are expected to:

- Deliver core programme mobilisation and governance and reporting.
- Design locally co-produced strategic plans and intervention models.
- Develop and deliver local activities in four strands: community engagement; strengthening community networks; capacity building; and developing and delivering interventions to tackle local violence. These are outlined in Figure 5.

Figure 5: Activity strands for sites

Strand	Description
Community engagement	Local MyEnds programmes should be led together with the local community so that there is collective buy-in, input, and ownership. Sites should also ensure that local communities and young people are aware of local initiatives, support them, and know how to get involved. Core activities include co-designing a local delivery plan which includes outcomes and a theory of change; developing governance arrangements which focus on inclusive decision making; and producing a community engagement strategy which focuses on (1) reaching the widest part of the local community and (2) amplifying the voices of young people.
Strengthening local networks	Sites should develop wider local networks beyond their consortium to support and strengthen the area's approach to violence reduction. This can involve a range of activities including relationship building between local organisations and stakeholders; developing shared processes to coordinate approaches at strategic and operational levels; and addressing the capacity building needs of the local system, for example through training. The focus of this activity strand is on developing buy-in, input, and momentum for the site's locally-developed approach beyond the consortium and, via this shared approach, tackling challenges in the local system in order to achieve the intended programme outcomes and impacts.
Capacity building	Core activities include identifying the capacity building needs of the grassroots sector in the neighbourhood and developing and delivering a grassroots fund.
Developing and delivering interventions to tackle local violence	Interventions should be community led, appropriate to the needs of the local area, apply a contextual safeguarding model, and include (but not be limited to) developing referral pathways and more holistic approaches. Beyond these criteria, the programme is deliberately not prescriptive about approaches taken, or levels of need in young people, although sites are encouraged to consider incorporating the approaches and principles outlined in Section 4.4.2.

4.7 Localising the programme in MyEnds sites

As discussed in Section 4.4, the VRU has deliberately taken a non-prescriptive approach in MyEnds. The core activity strands of the programme are specified, as are a range of principles which sites could apply when developing and delivering activities and interventions under their local MyEnds programmes. Beyond this, sites have had a relatively free rein to approach the development and implementation of the programme in the way that suits their area.

Therefore, the specific nature and focus of activities varies across the sites, as do the ways in which sites have approached violence reduction, and the mechanisms of change and outcomes through which they will achieve this.

Sites use different terminology and emphases to describe their approaches, meaning that it can be difficult to systematically categorise and compare them. That said, the most significant commonalities in sites' approaches are:

- They typically have not emphasised a core theory of violence reduction and have not outlined their intended balance between universal, early intervention and targeted support to those already closer to violence. The focus of their planning and activities has tended towards prevention and early intervention.

- Their visions for their MyEnds programmes have generally included: more and better joined up working; making better use of the VCS, especially in supporting the aims and functions of statutory organisations; providing routes for community members to get involved, share insight and input into plans for the area; and delivering positive and diversionary activities for young people.

- They have tapped into the strengths and expertise of consortium and wider local partners and to existing local assets. In many cases, this has meant expanding existing activities and interventions alongside the development of newer partnerships and initiatives.

- In order to mobilise quickly and work towards systems changes that will be feasible in the timeframe of the programme, they have been pragmatic and opportunistic in considering where to focus their energies and resources.

Sites have differed in the amount of emphasis they have placed on the different activity strands – i.e.: community engagement, strengthening the local network, capacity building, and developing and delivering interventions.

There has also not been a common entry point into the programme activities, or common sequencing of the activity strands. For example, sites have typically not taken a linear approach starting with community engagement and network development and then moving on to intervention planning. Instead, activities within the different strands have run simultaneously, with learning and information gathered through one strand then being applied to others where this is relevant.

Further detail on how the programme has been interpreted and developed in individual sites is included in the site-level summaries accompanying this main

report. Chapter 6 provides detail on similarities and differences in the ways which sites have approached intervention development and delivery. Chapter 7 provides similar detail about their approaches to network development, community engagement and capacity building.

4.8 Extension of MyEnds programme

In early 2023, the VRU decided to extend the MyEnds programme for a third year until June 2024[5], informed by their observation of site-level activity and positive feedback from a range of stakeholders. The purpose of this extension is to allow a longer implementation period in order to embed ongoing improvements, gather further learning and understand more about the impact of the programme. VRU stakeholders also emphasised the importance of supporting sustainability where possible within commissioning, as a key rationale.

In particular, the aim is for sites to:

- Strengthen their programme theory through developing intervention-level theories of change mapped against the VRU outcomes framework, with a view to also moving towards site-level theories of change.
- Undertake Equality Impact Assessments (EQIAs) to ensure that their approaches are fair and do not disadvantage any groups.
- Improve the quality and consistency of activity, output, and outcomes measurement in order to gather more robust monitoring data about the reach and impact of the programme and test the mechanisms of change.
- Increase focus on monitoring the delivery of the onwards grants programme to grassroots grantees.

Programme management, monitoring and evaluation, and capacity building support will be provided by the VRU. Cordis Bright will continue in their role as independent evaluation partner. Listen Up is no longer involved as a capacity building partner for the extension period.

[5] Delivery is expected to continue until March 2024 followed by a three-month period of either closing down operations or mobilising for any further iteration of MyEnds.

5 Progress with programme delivery in Year 2

5.1 Key messages

- In Year 2, programme management and capacity building has focused on strengthening foundations: monitoring, learning, and evaluation; and fleshing out intended outcomes and theories of change for the local programmes and interventions.
- These areas were chosen in response to challenges with data consistency and quality in Year 1, and a greater understanding of the capacity building needs of local stakeholders in relation to these elements.
- There is increased capacity in VRU teams supporting My End, bringing:
    - Continued support to sites to develop and refine their strategies and approaches, problem-solve on aspects of implementation and focus on implementing improved monitoring.
    - Introduction of the new VRU-wide outcomes framework and encouraging sites to begin mapping their programmes and interventions onto this.
- In the second half of Year 2, resource particularly at the VRU level has been spent on planning for the extension period, preparing the ground with sites and developing tools to support ongoing programme management, capacity building and monitoring.
- Sites' uptake of capacity building support – including support with theory development, monitoring and evaluation – increased in Year 2. However, there remain challenges in consistently engaging all sites. This reflects sites' limited ability to engage with programme-level activities alongside their local work, and potentially that local stakeholders are less bought into some aspects of monitoring and evaluation than programme stakeholders.
- Sites have made some development suggestions for future capacity building and programme support, which may further improve engagement and efficacy.
- Sites' governance, oversight and implementation structures have been streamlined and adapted based on learning from early implementation.

5.2 Chapter overview

This chapter summarises progress with programme delivery in Year 2 of MyEnds. It focuses on programme-level support for and oversight of sites, and on sites' own progress with strategy, governance and developing their approaches.

5.3 Programme management

5.3.1 Increase in programme management roles and resources

A key development in Year 2 has been in increasing the capacity of the VRU teams involved in programme management and oversight. This has included building in more administrative support and expanding the RMEL input.

5.3.2 Focus of programme management activity

Programme management and central VRU support to sites in Year 2 has focused on solidifying the foundations for the programme, developing minimum standards and guidance, and supporting sites to begin to align themselves with these. The VRU team has continued to provide sites with support to develop and refine their strategies and approaches, problem-solve on aspects of implementation, and focus on setting up and implementing improved monitoring.

In the second half of Year 2, a substantial amount of resource has been spent on planning for the extension period, in terms of both preparing the ground with sites and developing tools to support ongoing programme management, capacity building and monitoring. For instance, in addition to developing the VRU outcomes framework (which relates to all VRU funded programmes and not just to MyEnds), programme stakeholders have:

- Developed guidance and standards for EQIAs to be undertaken by sites in Year 3, and for onward grants mapping.
- Begun to develop the central programme offer to sites for next year, including training on multi-agency response to critical incidents, serious violence affecting young people and child criminal exploitation.

5.3.3 Delivery mechanisms to sites

Routine programme management meetings with each site have continued, taking place every two months and promoting reflection on delivery to-date alongside discussions about learning and future priorities.

Network events between sites have increased in Year 2 and have typically taken place in person. These have concentrated on capacity building (see Section 5.4), on sites sharing their progress and learning on particular activity strands (e.g., the grassroots grants funding), and on the MyEnds extension period.

5.4 Capacity building support to consortiums

5.4.1 Nature of support

In Year 2, capacity building support to sites was delivered by the VRU team and by Listen Up, an external capacity building partner. In Year 2 this moved away from bespoke approaches for each site and towards support to all sites with common areas in which programme stakeholders had identified support needs.

Important aspects of capacity building support have been supporting sites to implement the VRU's monitoring data framework, and helping them to continue to reflect on and develop their own site-level theories of change and outcomes frameworks (see Section 5.5 for further discussion of this topic). These have replaced the earlier intention to focus on support with specific activity strands, such as community engagement.

Listen Up offered practice surgeries to sites every six weeks. In general, these took the form of thematic workshops or training, offered partly in response to a survey to understand networks' support needs. Examples of topics include: data collection and monitoring; community-led work; social leadership; adultification, racism and oppressive practices. The surgeries included information and practical support shared by Listen Up, but also a focus on peer-to-peer learning.

Listen Up stakeholders reported that they also provided ad hoc support in response to needs identified by sites, like support for grassroots grantees. They also attended consortium meetings in some sites. This enabled them to input into planning and problem-solving conversations between consortium partners and also give feedback to the VRU on continuing areas for support and improvement.

In addition, the VRU has delivered some safeguarding training to sites as part of the steer and support for sites to expand their delivery of tertiary interventions.

5.4.2 Uptake of support

In Year 1 of the programme, sites' engagement with capacity building support was lower than envisaged. Improving this was an area of focus for the VRU and Listen Up. Programme stakeholders noted that sites' engagement with Listen Up did improve during Year 2, continuing the increase towards the end of Year 1.

However, they also reported that sites varied in the extent to which they saw the support as valuable and considered programme theory and monitoring to be a priority. Alongside ongoing challenges with sites' capacity to engage with programme-level activities, this has continued to limit the uptake and impact of the capacity building support.

For instance, practice surgeries were designed to be attended by consortium partners and wider network partners in the sites, including grassroots grantees. Attendance data for the sessions was not available to the evaluation team, but programme stakeholders reported that this varied across sites and tended to include mainly one or two core local stakeholders with less frequent attendance by wider network members and grantees, than hoped.

5.4.3 Sites' experiences of support

When reflecting on the capacity building support, sites suggested that it has been helpful overall and has improved as the programme has progressed. They appreciated the collaborative, developmental and approachable stance of VRU stakeholders and the access to training.

Several sites also highlighted the positive, relatable and culturally-competent nature of Listen Up's support, and indicated that Listen Up understood the contexts in which they were operating. However, there was also some less positive feedback about Listen Up's input by some sites. These sites tended to perceive Listen Up as over-stretched and therefore less able to dedicate time to understanding their local approach. They also indicated that Listen Up was not always responsive to their requests for site-specific input and support.

5.4.4 Development suggestions for future support

Sites provided some development suggestions for future capacity building and central programme support including:

- Sites would appreciate additional opportunities to come together in groups to share ideas and learning. They suggested that this could be in geographical sub-groups rather than needing to be all eight sites together.
- In some instances, guidance and expectations could be clearer and more categorical. For example, some local stakeholders indicated that they would benefit from further support to understand definitions of terms like intervention.
- Sometimes training or support might be pitched at the wrong level. For instance, there were some cases where site stakeholders suggested that training was too complex. However, this was raised in only a minority of interviews and therefore it is difficult to know whether it is a common or widespread concern.
- Some sites would like the VRU's engagement in their local areas to extend beyond the consortium partners. For example, some sites indicated that they would benefit from further support from the VRU to broker conversations and relationships with statutory organisations, and/or that they would like the VRU to interact more directly with local communities.

5.5 Monitoring, learning and evaluation

5.5.1 Theory development and programme monitoring as priority focus in Year 2

In Year 2, working with sites to improve the quality and consistency of programme and intervention theory and monitoring has been a priority for the VRU. This was in response to challenges with developing theories of change and relatively low-quality data returns in Year 1. These issues highlighted the need to support sites with monitoring, learning and evaluation. They also made it hard to use the monitoring data to comment on the types/models, reach and impact of the programmes and interventions.

More intensive work in this area in Year 2 was made possible by the increase in the size and therefore capacity of the VRU RMEL team, and by the programme having had longer to embed more established monitoring resource at local level.

Key areas of focus have been on improving sites' ability to articulate intervention models including their intended outcomes and mechanisms of change; increase the robustness of sites' quarterly monitoring returns to the VRU; and developing an overall theory of change for local MyEnds programmes.

5.5.2 Activities to improve theory development and monitoring

VRU RMEL colleagues have adapted quarterly monitoring forms with the aim of:

- Making them easier to complete.
- Increasing consistency of completion across sites.
- Enabling activities, interventions and outcomes to be mapped to existing categories (e.g. those used by the Youth Endowment Fund) and to the VRU outcomes framework.
- Ensuring the forms capture data which is of use to the VRU in understanding the delivery, reach and impact of the programmes.

VRU RMEL colleagues and Listen Up have also coordinated to deliver support to sites to help them to map their interventions to the new VRU outcomes framework. They have reviewed sites' monitoring data returns and given them advice and support to make improvements following review.

5.5.3 Impact of activity on improving quality of monitoring

Programme stakeholders noted that there has been an overall improvement in the data included in the quarterly monitoring returns but that these improvements will take time to embed to a point that the coverage, quality, and longitude of data supports analysis of models, reach and impact. Our review of the Y2Q3 monitoring data returns to inform this impact evaluation report confirms that this is the case. It remains challenging to use the data included to build a consistent and comparable picture of activity, reach and impact across the sites.

There was minimal evidence so far of sites carrying out analysis on the data collected to inform or adjust their approaches, although some data has been collated and used to demonstrate outputs (such as numbers reached), and examples of positive outcomes and experiences of support (via testimonials, case studies, and participant feedback).

Some sites have begun to implement software to collect and collate data from delivery partners, for example Lamplight or Upshot, which may enable analysis more easily. These tools may also help ensure that data categories are standardised across partners (for example, demographic categories).

5.5.4 Intention to maintain focus on monitoring, learning and evaluation in extension period

Consultation with programme and core local stakeholders, as well as our own impact evaluation activity (such as when scoping and undertaking research for

the site-level case studies), indicates that improving monitoring, learning and evaluation activity by sites will be an ongoing area for development over the course of the MyEnds extension.

Indeed, VRU colleagues have already proposed further amendments to the monitoring data collection template for Year 3 with a view to simplifying it, have developed guidance to accompany it, and to use an online mechanisms for submission, FlexiGrant (as opposed to the use of Excel). They also indicated their plans to expand the outcomes framework to provide additional guidance on outcomes measurement approaches and tools.

During the extension period, programme stakeholders are aiming to strike a balance in practical support to sites to meet monitoring and evaluation requirements and encouraging sites to build their own capacity and skills for ongoing monitoring and evaluation, within and outside MyEnds.

5.5.5 Learning on challenges and development areas

One significant challenge to improving central and local-level monitoring and evaluation is local stakeholders' capacity to engage in monitoring activities. This includes having limited time and resource available to dedicate to monitoring and evaluation, and varying degrees of confidence and ability to conduct it. In fact, local stakeholders reported that learning about and carrying out monitoring activities has required more time and resource than they anticipated.

Smaller or less well-established consortium and delivery partners, and grassroots organisations in particular, might have limited prior experience of monitoring and evaluation. They may also have the most limited time to engage in capacity building support.

This has meant that core local stakeholders are attempting to work with a range of partners of varying skill levels in order to produce the monitoring data required by the VRU, and that site PMs and data leads need to be in a position to pass on their own learning across the wider networks involved in MyEnds delivery.

A further challenge is in gaining local stakeholders' buy-in to undertake monitoring and evaluation in ways which are considered adequately robust by the VRU as their funder and which would enhance the programme's ability to generate evidence to contribute to the wider evidence base.

Consultation with core local stakeholders suggests that sites do not always feel that the data reporting format enables them to convey key messages about their local programme or that the data collated is useful for them locally. Exploring why this is and then finding ways to make the data more meaningful for local stakeholders might be a way to build further buy-in during the extension period and beyond.

Programme stakeholders are aware of these challenges and are seeking to mitigate them within the extension period and in any future iterations of MyEnds.

They also highlighted that future similar programmes would benefit from building in more RMEL support at the outset to support central and local stakeholders to take a more evidence-based and evaluable approach to setting things up. The outcomes framework is likely to provide a tool to help with this, because it will encourage prospective delivery partners to frame their interventions in terms of how they might contribute to the VRU's priority outcomes.

Despite these challenges, programme stakeholders are confident that monitoring and evaluation will continue to improve over the course of the extension period.

5.6 Strategy, approach and governance in sites

5.6.1 Developments in strategy and approach

During Year 2, sites have continued to develop their strategies and approach. Often these are not formalised in documentation but are instead alluded to in strategic consortium meeting minutes or are implicit amongst core local stakeholders.

One of the most common shifts in approach has been for sites to refocus energy more evenly across the main activity strands of community engagement, strengthening the local network, capacity building, and developing and delivering interventions. Some sites have also honed their areas of focus based on information, insight and learning generated during earlier implementation.

There are also some emerging signs that sites are increasing emphasis on interventions targeted to those closer to violence, alongside their preventative and early intervention work. Further developing and tailoring the support offer for those with needs more suited to tertiary interventions is a VRU priority and will be an area of increased focus during the extension period.

5.6.2 Consortium partners

In most sites, consortium partners have remained stable. In a minority, partners have left or new partners have joined the consortium alongside existing members. In one site – Rise Up East – the lead consortium partner is due to change for the extension period.

5.6.3 Governance and implementation structures

Sites continue to operate through a mix of strategic groups, delivery groups and wider network groups, sometimes including community involvement. The lead consortium partner is generally represented in all of these forums, providing continuity across the programme structures.

Some sites have made changes to their local governance, oversight and implementation structures as they have developed a greater understanding of the level of involvement needed to run the programme effectively. The most common changes include:

- Reducing the attendance list at core meetings to streamline them.

- Introducing sub-groups or working groups to develop and oversee specific activity strands or focus in on particular themes or settings, such as reducing school exclusion or outreach. In a number of cases, these have centred on delivery areas which were less central to the sites' programme in Year 1.

Grassroots grants programmes have often been run separately to other activities, led by one or two people.

6 Impact on developing and delivering interventions

6.1 Key messages

- Interventions delivered as part of MyEnds to young people and other community members are intended to contribute to longer-term violence reduction by enabling local people to achieve individual-level outcomes which prevent, stabilise, or reduce their involvement in violence.

- Sites have developed locally-specific programmes of interventions. They have prioritised: mobilising quickly; delivering a range of activities; and seeking to respond to the needs and wants of the community and local opportunities.

- In developing their intervention profile, sites have drawn on:

    - Past delivery, continuing, expanding, and adapting existing interventions delivered by consortium and wider partners. Adaptations have been made to target groups, setting, location, plus by linking content more to violence.
    - Insight into the community's needs. Gathered via intervention delivery, information sharing between network organisations, or community engagement, this has informed the focus of new or adapted interventions.
    - Using funding to fill gaps in the local support landscape, in some cases.

- For sites, making these adaptations and exploring new interventions for the area has been an empowering way of working.

- Sites have mainly undertaken universal and early intervention work. Increasingly, some sites are developing interventions which are more closely targeted to those already involved in violence, or at greater risk of this.

- The most common types of interventions delivered by sites have been:

    - Outreach and detached youth work.
    - Mentoring.
    - Awareness-raising workshops and programmes.
    - Positive diversionary activities involving youth work, sport, or creative activities. These are sometimes combined with other light-touch support.

- For stakeholders, a major success is the number of young people and other community members who have been engaged.[6] It has, however, proved more

[6] Ongoing challenges with the quality and accuracy of quarterly monitoring data mean that it is difficult to provide a confident estimate of the number of interventions delivered (with shared definitions of what constitutes an intervention being an area of ongoing improvement) or the number young people and community members who have been engaged by interventions. As a result, estimates are not provided within these key findings but are presented in section 6.5.1

challenging to reach those experiencing higher levels of risk, who are closer to violence, and/or who are further from engagement with services.

- Those who have been supported have seen a range of benefits, stakeholders reported, particularly improvements in: confidence, mental health and wellbeing, aspirations, relationships with trusted adults, and access to safe spaces and positive activities. Case study research into eight interventions further showed this; participants also reported positive experiences of support.

- The monitoring, evaluation, and learning about interventions is in ongoing development. Stakeholders hope this will help show reach and outcomes.

- Sites are also working towards more clearly articulating their intervention models, mechanisms of change, and intended outcomes. As a result, it is challenging to link some interventions to a theory for violence reduction.

6.2 Chapter overview

This chapter explores the contribution MyEnds has made to the emergence of interventions which are community-led, appropriate to the needs of the areas, and reach those who need them most. It covers the approaches sites have taken to developing and delivering interventions; the awareness and participation of community members in interventions; and emerging evidence of their benefits for young people and community members.

6.3 Approaches to developing and delivering interventions

Developing and delivering interventions has been one of the main areas of focus for sites. Most sites have prioritised mobilising this strand as early as possible within the timeframe of the programme.

Y2Q3 quarterly monitoring data indicates that 119 interventions have been delivered across the programme, on average 15 per site.

There is some variation between how sites have delivered this strand, and particularly in how they developed their profile of interventions. Nevertheless, the key learning has been fairly consistent across sites, highlighting some useful lessons about the VCS more widely.

6.3.1 Overview of sites' approaches

In their approach to interventions, sites have typically prioritised mobilising quickly and drawing on their existing experience and strengths, whilst also seeking to deliver a range of activities and respond to the needs and challenges of the community.

In contrast, a minority of sites have taken a more structured approach, pre-defining their profile of interventions by identifying key themes of focus. These themes often relate to specific contexts or mechanisms of change. For example:

- OFOB aims to focus on: leadership training; arts and creative activities; community connectedness; mental health; employment; and mentoring.

- Home Cooked aims to focus on: safer communities; healthier family relationships; positive mental health; education and protection from exploitation and violence initiatives; employment and economic opportunity.

Other sites have identified broader focus themes for some of their activities, however these do not structure their overall approaches (such as outcomes for parents and families in Gamechangers or addressing school exclusions in Rise Up East).

Context: Iterative and opportunistic approaches to intervention development

Although sites vary slightly in the degree to which they had pre-defined areas of focus for their interventions, all sites have adapted their approach to interventions over the course of delivery. They have found it useful to be open to changing, adding, or removing interventions as they learn more via delivery about the local area's needs, support gaps, and assets.

This also allows interventions to respond to community steer and intelligence gathered via community engagement. Stakeholders recognised that this was not yet embedded at the outset of the programme – when interventions were first planned – as these relationships takes time to forge and mature. In some cases, interventions can also be a springboard to further community engagement and intelligence because they serve to engage a group who might otherwise be less involved in dialogue with decision-makers about local initiatives to reduce violence.

One consequence of this approach is that it can be challenging to link interventions to an overall theory for violence reduction. Sites are increasingly focusing on developing intervention-level theories of change for the extension period, using the VRU's outcomes framework as a tool to support this.

6.3.2 Developing intervention profiles

When developing their intervention profiles, sites have frequently continued, expanded and adapted existing local provision - building on interventions that have already been delivered locally or that can be adapted or introduced quickly. Typically, adaptations either expanded interventions or refocused their target groups (for example, towards young people from the target neighbourhoods) or content (for example, towards protective factors against violence).

This approach reflects the emphasis sites have placed on mobilising quickly and using existing expertise. Another reason for this approach may be to protect as much resource as possible for delivering support rather than planning delivery.

Where sites have added to the existing profile of local support, this has involved:

- **Addressing gaps in local provision**. Examples include: providing physical spaces in the target area for young people to spend time safely and on positive activities, particularly through youth club provision; and specific opportunities such as work experience.

- **Introducing interventions in response to steer from community members** gathered via community engagement activities (see Section 7.6). This has generally informed specific interventions, rather than sites' overall intervention profiles[7]. Examples include: introducing skills development courses for parents to support their return to work; and delivering diversionary support for young people in an aim to reduce antisocial behaviour on the local high street.

Sites have not developed needs-led profiles of interventions, for example by carrying out needs assessments for their target areas as a starting point. As a result, early on in the programme they did not clearly articulate the intended reach in terms of need and the target cohorts for specific interventions. This information remains high-level, on the whole.

Intervention profiles in the sites span a range of delivery settings, VCS providers, and intervention lengths (although typically shorter and medium-term). Most interventions are in-person rather than virtual.

6.3.3 Target groups

Sites' main target groups for intervention have been young people at potential risk of involvement in violence, ranging from primary school age children to young adults up to 25 years old. Slightly less commonly, they have also focused on parents of young people at potential risk of involvement in violence.

Where sites have Youth Steering Groups in place (see Section 7.6.1), these young people also typically receive training and support geared towards developing leadership skills and other positive outcomes relating to ETE, confidence, and mental health and wellbeing.

In Year 2, some sites have increasingly begun to explore potentially underserved groups for interventions; typically this has involved questioning whether women and girls are targeted with a similar level of consideration as boys and men within their intervention profiles and seeking to expand provision specifically for these groups.

Lastly, in some instances, sites with set themes of focus for their interventions also have some corresponding target groups for intervention, such as those at

[7] However, OFOB is an exception in which young people from the target area co-developed the site's key themes of focus.

risk of or experiencing school exclusion; those going through transition phases at school; or those who are NEET.

6.3.4 Intervention tiers

Overview

Sites have mainly focused on primary interventions (focusing on prevention and targeted universally), and secondary interventions (focusing on early intervention and targeted at those at potential risk or lower levels of risk).

For example, quarterly monitoring data indicates that across the programme interventions were categorised as follows (out of 119 interventions):

- 54% as primary and preventative.
- 9% as secondary.
- 8% as tertiary.
- 29% spanning more than one category.

Qualitative consultation suggests that this latter category mainly involved combinations of primary and secondary interventions.

This is also reflected in the spread of intervention types listed in quarterly monitoring data, which shows that that almost two thirds of interventions were categorised as 'supporting positive behaviours' – see Figure 6[8].

[8] For this data, sites were asked to categorise their interventions according to those used in the Youth Endowment Fund's Evidence and Gap Map (Youth Endowment Fund, 2021b).

Figure 6: Main intervention types for interventions, based on Y2Q3 quarterly monitoring data

Site → Information about interventions ↓	Total for all sites	Act as One	Eco-system Cold-harbour	Game-changers	Home Cooked	OFOB	Rise Up East	THICN	West Croydon
No. interventions	**120**	14	17	6	11	11	20	19	22
% of interventions categorised as the following intervention types:									
Supporting positive behaviours	**62%**	86%	77%	100%	55%	45%	68%	42%	50%
Addressing problem behaviours	**20%**	7%	8%	0%	9%	9%	32%	42%	23%
System approaches	**9%**	0%	8%	0%	27%	36%	0%	11%	0%
Family and carer interventions	**6%**	0%	0%	0%	9%	0%	0%	0%	27%
Justice and opportunity-based crime prevention	**3%**	7%	8%	0%	0%	9%	0%	5%	0%
No intervention category listed	**4%**	0%	24%	0%	0%	0%	5%	0%	0%

Explanation

Sites have focused on primary and secondary interventions for several reasons.

First, the specialisms of consortium partners and wider VCS delivery organisations involved in MyEnds tend to be universal or early intervention focused activities such as youth work.

Second, sites have focused on a public health approach to violence reduction. Some local stakeholders suggested that prioritising primary interventions is in line with this approach, in that it seeks mainly to prevent involvement in violence in the first instance. See Section 8.4.2 for a more detailed discussion.

Third, sites have tried to maximise reach by making support available to as many young people and community members from the target area as possible. Primary and secondary interventions often have wide inclusion criteria.

Within the intervention tiers, sites have normally taken quite a flexible approach to inclusion criteria, meaning that many interventions have been delivered to groups with varied levels of need.

Some interventions build in mechanisms for supporting people who enter primary or secondary interventions but have higher need levels. For example, Act as One delivers universal youth safety workshops in primary school. In cases where practitioners identify young people who have higher need levels, they can then provide more intensive one-to-one support, such as mentoring.

Increasingly, sites are developing more tertiary interventions targeting those closer to violence and further from engagement with services. This is partly in response to steer from the VRU to increase emphasis on interventions in this tier. So far this has happened in a minority of sites, but it is an increasing area of focus for sites during the extension period.

Spotlight: Reparations project (THICN)

The reparations project developed by THICN targets young people with community orders. It offers them the opportunity to learn trade-specific skills, such as decorating, under the supervision of youth workers. Referrals come from statutory partners such as probation and the Youth Offending Service.

The project is showing promise and potential positive impact. For instance, some young people who have taken part have either found employment or set up a business doing the trade they learnt while part of the reparations project. The project indicates the consortium shifting towards more tertiary interventions, and in doing so, developing something new in the area.

6.4 Intervention models

6.4.1 Intended outcomes of interventions

Sites have worked towards more clearly articulating the models and intended outcomes of interventions as MyEnds has progressed (see Section 5.5).

The most common intended outcomes of interventions partly reflect the broad aims of the existing provision which has been continued, expanded, or adapted as part of MyEnds. Increasingly, sites are being encouraged to explore how intended outcomes relate to the targeting and mechanisms of change of individual interventions, and how these link to violence reduction.

The most common types of intended outcomes for interventions are improved:

- Engagement with support.
- Confidence.
- Mental health and wellbeing.
- Aspirations and outcomes in ETE.
- Relationships, including with trusted adults, family, and peers.
- Access to safe spaces.
- Positive uses of time to act as diversion from potential risks.
- Understanding of risks and where to find support.

Figure 7 provides more detail about the spread of intended outcomes across interventions, based on sites' Y2Q3 quarterly monitoring data. When completing this data, sites are asked to list three intended outcomes per intervention.

Please note that this data represents a snapshot in time. Since its collection, sites are being supported to more clearly articulate intended outcomes using the VRU's outcomes framework as a tool. See Section 5.5 for detail on data quality.

Figure 7: Intended participant outcomes for interventions, based on Y2Q3 quarterly monitoring data (sites are asked to list three intended outcomes per intervention)

Site → Information about interventions ↓	Total for all sites	Act as One	Ecosystem Coldharbour	Game-changers	Home Cooked	OFOB	Rise Up East	THICN	West Croydon
No. interventions listed in monitoring data	**120**	14	17	6	11	11	20	19	22
% of interventions with the following intended outcomes listed:									
Improved relationships	**57%**	50%	53%	83%	36%	55%	70%	42%	68%
Increased engagement	**52%**	86%	41%	83%	9%	45%	35%	63%	59%
Improved mental health and wellbeing	**40%**	43%	47%	50%	36%	27%	30%	37%	50%
Better knowledge/ awareness of crime/ violence	**25%**	57%	12%	33%	9%	27%	10%	42%	18%
Improved behaviour (Education)	**17%**	7%	35%	0%	9%	0%	35%	5%	18%
Increased employability	**17%**	14%	35%	0%	27%	36%	15%	11%	0%
Improved physical health	**10%**	7%	6%	17%	0%	0%	20%	16%	9%
Reduced gang involvement	**10%**	0%	6%	17%	0%	0%	0%	37%	14%
Improved expertise / practice in training subject	**7%**	7%	0%	17%	0%	27%	5%	11%	0%
Reduced offending	**5%**	0%	6%	0%	27%	0%	0%	11%	0%
Reduced risk of harm to self	**5%**	14%	12%	0%	0%	0%	0%	5%	5%
Improved attainment (Education)	**4%**	7%	18%	0%	0%	9%	0%	0%	0%
Improved attendance (Education)	**4%**	7%	0%	0%	0%	0%	10%	5%	5%
Reduced involvement with statutory services	**4%**	0%	12%	0%	18%	0%	5%	0%	0%
Reduced risk of harm to others	**3%**	0%	12%	0%	0%	0%	0%	5%	5%
Reduced victimisation	**3%**	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	5%	0%	9%
Reduced violent offending	**3%**	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	11%	5%
Reduced violent victimisation	**2%**	0%	6%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	5%
No intended outcomes listed	**3%**	0%	0%	0%	27%	9%	0%	0%	0%

6.4.2 Relationship to existing evidence base

Interventions do not yet typically have clearly articulated evidence bases or mechanisms of change, and drawing on existing evidence is an area of potential development for sites and for the programme as whole (see Section 2.4).

The majority of interventions funded so far are viewed as 'tried and tested' locally; Y2Q3 monitoring data indicates that this was the case for 56% of interventions across the programme (out of 119 interventions). However, stakeholders agreed that the evidence base has not yet been established robustly.

One consequence is that at this stage it can be challenging to identify innovative approaches, because their relationship to existing models and evidence is not known. Some core local stakeholders suggested that the more innovative interventions have generally been developed and delivered by grassroots grantees, rather than consortium or delivery partners. However, data about grantees' delivery is not yet substantive enough to explore this in further detail.

6.4.3 Key principles

Stakeholders agreed that the key principles underpinning the interventions delivered are clearer to identify. Most commonly, they cited trauma-informed, holistic, and culturally competent approaches. Whole-family, contextual safeguarding, and personalised and flexible approaches were also often reported or implied. These reflect some of the intended key principles for interventions highlighted in the programme design.

Trauma-informed approaches were highlighted in particular when discussing secondary and tertiary interventions working with people with higher need levels. Trauma-informed approaches were also a key focus of capacity building support that sites have delivered to local partners (see Section 7.5.1).

Whilst place-based and public health approaches are identified as key in the design of MyEnds, local stakeholders' understanding and working definitions of these tended to vary more than those of other key principles. It is thus challenging to say how often they underpin individual interventions. In fact, stakeholders tended identify these principles in the overall MyEnds programme design rather than in individual interventions.

6.4.4 Intervention types

Each site has delivered a range of interventions so far. The most common types of interventions are largely consistent across sites. These are:

Outreach and detached youth work

The majority of sites fund routine outreach and detached youth work. They typically target hotspots within the local area where young people spend time and/or where risky behaviour may take place. They also often increase activity following an incident. This targeting is informed by the collective intelligence of

consortium and wider network partners (including in some instances community safety teams), as well as insight gathered through community engagement.

Some sites fund multiple delivery partners to provide outreach and detached youth work, focusing on different geographical patches and/or days of the week.

Outreach and detached youth work often aims to build young people's engagement and awareness of available support, as well as their awareness of risks. Outreach is often used as a route for signposting or referring young people into other interventions. It is also a mechanism for consortiums to gather intelligence about the needs of target groups as well as the risks they face and what they would like to get out of support.

Positive diversionary activities including youth work, sports, creative activities

Typically, sites are delivering several types of intervention in this category. These activities are sometimes combined with early intervention support for those with higher levels of potential risk identified by practitioners, including pastoral support, light-touch mentoring or ETE support, and signposting/referring to other appropriate support.

Positive diversionary activities are sometimes targeted at particular times of the week or year where there is an identified need, for example during school holidays or on Friday evenings.

Sports provision and youth work are particularly common across sites, with several sites providing football and martial arts activities. For some providers, an additional intended outcome of martial arts or boxing is to build confidence in self-defence and in not needing to carry a knife. Creative activities often involve drama or music.

Spotlight: Focusing on reducing tensions between the three target estates (OFOB)

OFOB is highly aware of inter-estate tensions and has resolved to address these. Bringing housing partners together, each of whom represents one of the three estates, enables a joined-up approach to tackling inter-estate challenges as well as information sharing about emerging areas of concern.

Facilitating events and activities such as tri-estate football events and a residential aiming to build relationships between young people from the three different estates creates environments for positive and non-violent inter-estate interactions. Moreover, when these events are visible to wider community members and stakeholders, they demonstrate that safe and positive interactions between members of the three estates are possible.

Stakeholders with insight into this work reported emerging evidence of increased movement between these areas with historical territorial conflict.

Awareness-raising workshops and programmes

Sites typically deliver these in school settings to whole year groups, and they often focus on raising awareness of risks such as knife crime or exploitation, how to stay safe, and where to go for support.

Mentoring

Many sites fund mentoring of some kind, which varies in its level of intensity. Most often, it is delivered alongside other activities as part of a multi-faceted intervention. For example, it may be delivered alongside awareness-raising workshops (see Home Cooked's case study) or employment support, (see West Croydon's case study). In fewer cases, it is more intensive (see Act as One's case study).

Local stakeholders suggested that even when interventions do not explicitly involve mentoring, they often use its principles as part of lighter-touch support. Less commonly, some sites also deliver peer mentoring between young people.

Spotlight: Peer mentoring within a local primary school

Ecosystem Coldharbour's peer mentoring programme is delivered by Young Leaders: young people from the area who have been involved in MyEnds as community leaders and who have received training to input into activities.

The peer support involves school-based sessions twice a week for three months. It is offered to students about to transition from primary to secondary school, giving them the opportunity to engage with Young Leaders to discuss this crucial time. Young Leaders act as role models and talk to students about important topics like bullying and how to stay away from gangs. The local police also attend some sessions alongside the Young Leaders.

Students are referred by the school. There is a deliberate mix of those viewed of at risk of violence and those not at risk, to limit risk of stigmatisation.

The programme is showing promise and potential positive impact. For example, Young Leaders are able to apply and further hone the leadership skills they have been developing through workshops and training in a real-world direct delivery setting (see Ecosystem Coldharbour case study for more details).

Stakeholders also agreed that the intervention has shown signs of influencing students towards a positive trajectory post-primary school. They are looking to expand the programme to other schools.

ETE support

Sites also often deliver ETE support, although this is slightly less common than the above intervention types. Often ETE support is delivered in a light-touch way as part of other interventions. This may involve: discussing and identifying aspirations and barriers; guidance and advice; and signposting towards further support and opportunities. Some sites also fund more traditional ETE support such as work experience, support with CVs and job applications, and job fairs.

Excursions and trips

Slightly less commonly, sites fund residential trips for young people who are typically already participating in another intervention, to offer new experiences and learning, and to build confidence and skills such as team building.

Interventions with parents and carers

Many sites also deliver interventions with parents and carers, focused on:

- Upskilling parents and carers and supporting their confidence and skills to achieve positive outcomes for themselves and their children.
- Developing their awareness of risks their children may face, how to spot the signs, and where to get help.
- Providing a supportive network of other parents with shared experiences.

Spotlight: Parents' Leadership Group (Gamechangers)

The Bradfield Parents' Group involves engagement with a group of mothers in the Peckham area in order to understand more about their experiences, needs and interests and then provide support and activities in response. It is delivered by Millwall Community Trust with funding from Gamechangers. It provides an example of a MyEnds Consortium successfully tapping into existing community networks and groups as part of its community engagement approach. This has enabled Gamechangers to open and maintain a relationship with a group of mothers in the Peckham area.

Group members have taken part in regular talk sessions with one another and with Millwall Community Trust, sharing experiences and ideas about the types of activities and support they would like to be involved in. The group has then received support and signposting in response, as well as opportunities for daytrips and fun activities. Mothers who attend especially value the safe and supportive environment, which has contributed to them developing a peer support network. They also shared examples of how being involved in the group or specific activities has increased their skills, knowledge of available resources, confidence, and sense of empowerment.

6.5 Awareness and participation in interventions to reduce violence

6.5.1 Increase in participation in interventions

Local and programme stakeholders agreed that **engaging large numbers of young people and community members is a key success of the programme**.

Stakeholders felt encouraged that **participation levels have increased in the second year of the programme**, as interventions and referral mechanisms have embedded and the relationships which support them have begun to mature.

It is difficult to comment on whether those supported through MyEnds would otherwise have received similar support. However, there was some suggestion from local stakeholders that the interventions have filled a gap in beginning to redress the decline in availability of youth services in the past decade.

Context: Quantitative data about participants supported

Y2Q3 monitoring data indicated that 20,931 people had been supported by MyEnds interventions so far, 19,566 of whom were children and young people. Other categories were parents and carers, youth practitioners, teachers, other professionals, and any other groups.

We cannot be entirely confident in these numbers because the completion and quality of monitoring data remains an area of ongoing improvement. Therefore, they may include those participating in activities which have been incorrectly listed as interventions, and also include estimates rather than actual participation numbers.

Five interventions accounted for 69% of the children and young people who were reportedly supported. These were mainly school-based interventions or outreach and detached youth work.

Supporting factors that have helped to promote participation in interventions are:

Stronger awareness and relationships across the wider local network

This has resulted in more joined-up working, new referral pathways, and more shared intelligence (see Section 7.7.1 for more detail). **A key mechanism for increasing participation in funded interventions has been consortium and wider local network partners to referring and signposting to one another**.

Outreach and detached youth work

For many sites, this is a key mechanism for reaching young people who are not already engaged in support from one of the consortium or wider local network partners. Funding outreach as a consortium rather than an individual organisation means outreach workers are then well-equipped with knowledge of the service offers of consortium and wider local network partners.

Using a 'hook' to engage people

Across sites, **local stakeholders agreed that it is important to earn the trust and buy-in of communities to encourage them to participate in both interventions and community engagement** (see Section 7.6).

Although it is not enough on its own, stakeholders found it beneficial to use a hook to get people interested in an intervention and to deliver some form of payoff early on. Stakeholders did also recognise a drawback that hooks do not have universal appeal and therefore would ideally be varied.

Examples include: providing a popular activity such as football or gaming; providing refreshments and practical support (for example, a crèche alongside interventions for parents); and introducing or adapting interventions based on participants' steer. For example, THICN introduced football provision via Blackwall FC (see case study) in response to requests from local young people.

Filling gaps in provision in target areas

Some sites have focused on filling gaps in the local support landscape, such as THICN and Act as One who have funded youth club provision which they identified as a gap in the target areas. There was some suggestion that this approach has helped to increase participation and may have increased reach to those who were not previously engaged with services.

Closer to the tertiary end, local stakeholders also suggested that the intensive mentoring for at-risk young people funded by Act as One helped to address a gap in intensive support for young people with higher needs (see case study).

Other emerging promising approaches

Stakeholders also suggested that the following approaches show promise in increasing participation:

- **Peer-to-peer approaches**. These may improve engagement, although delivery is not generally embedded enough to comment at this stage.
- **Drawing on the insight of teachers** when delivering in schools to identify those best suited to support.

6.5.2 Working towards broadening reach of interventions

Stakeholders agreed that **some headway is being made in supporting target groups**, but they are still hopeful for further progress.

Context: Key considerations in measuring progress towards intended reach

One challenge is that sites' intervention profiles were not designed with needs assessment as a basis but instead built on existing local provision and

strengths of delivery partners (see Section 6.3.2). As such, the intended reach in terms of need level has not been clearly articulated.

Coupled with the fact that sites have not typically used individual-level needs assessment tools when determining eligibility for participation in interventions, this makes it difficult to appraise the progress made towards meeting needs as intended.

Reach based on need level

Overall, **stakeholders noted that it has been more challenging to engage young people who are closer to violence and further from engagement with support** services than other target groups.

Programme stakeholders reflected that one potential challenge in reaching these groups is the skills and experience of consortium and wider local network partners, who generally have a background in more primary and secondary interventions. For example, some core local stakeholders noted that while outreach has the potential to reach new groups, in some sites this has been limited by the capacity of outreach workers to engage them and the confidence of delivery organisations in then supporting them within interventions.

There was some suggestion that grassroots grantees may bring skillsets, networks, and lived experience which may help with reaching these groups. A grassroots grant funded outreach team, To Be Heard As One (funded by Act as One and led by a practitioner with lived experience of violence and the criminal justice system), was highlighted as one promising example.

Local stakeholders also recognised that **adapting and developing interventions for higher need levels has been a learning process**. As a result, it has been useful to first build engagement with people through outreach or community engagement, and then explore their needs and how to respond.

A broader challenge may be the lack of wider proven models for how to engage those closer to violence, on which consortiums can draw. Given that the risk and responsibility for supporting these groups largely sits with statutory organisations, there may be scope for these partners to work more closely with the VCS to help to develop capacity and approaches in this area.

Demographic reach

Local stakeholders reported that interventions targeting specific groups – such as young people from minoritised backgrounds or parents – have generally being successful at reaching them. However, **the demographic reach of overall profiles of interventions was highlighted as a potential area for improvement**. Sites and programme stakeholders are increasingly exploring how to address this, and sites will carry out EQIAs as part of the extension period.

Potentially underserved groups suggested by stakeholders were:

- **Women and girls**. In response, some sites have developed more interventions for this group, often with a focus on creating spaces for discussion and peer support. OFOB has also held a 'She Is Summit', which brought together consortium partners and some statutory organisations to discuss the issues young women face and potential collectively-led solutions.

- **Young adults, particularly those over 20 years old**. There was some suggestion that slightly different approaches to engaging this age group may be needed, and that their interest in existing approaches such as positive diversionary activities and popular hooks such as football may be lower than with younger groups. ETE opportunities were suggested as a possible draw for these older groups. One example of an intervention using opportunities in the music industry as a hook for engaging young adults is West Croydon's music business course and mentoring intervention (see case study).

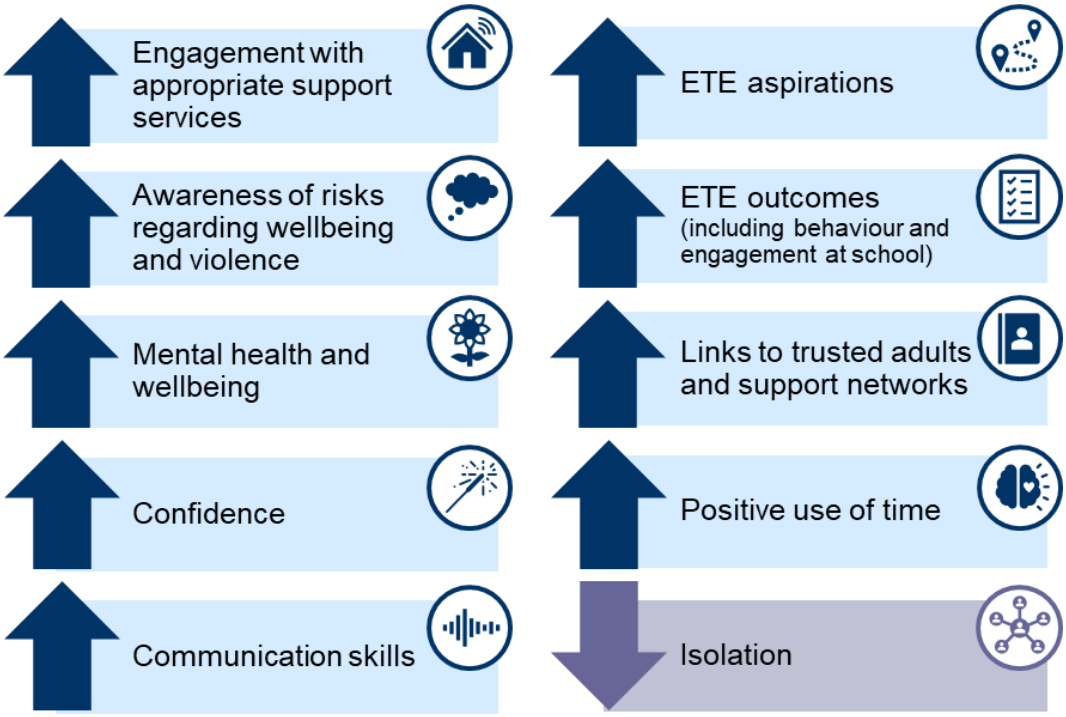
6.6 Benefits for participating young people and community members

There is emerging evidence that interventions delivered through MyEnds are bringing a range of benefits to participants. Evidence sources include the observations of core local stakeholders and delivery partners, and case study research into eight interventions carried out as part of the impact evaluation. At the point of analysis and reporting, outcomes measurement and reporting was not yet embedded across interventions or sites widely enough for us to explore impact through analysis of sites' quarterly monitoring returns.

6.6.1 Emerging positive outcomes for young people participating in interventions

The main outcomes reported for children and young people so far were:

Figure 8: Emerging outcomes for children and young people participating in interventions



Local stakeholders emphasised both **the inherent importance of these outcomes in their own right** and their **longer-term potential to act as protective factors against involvement in violence**. They suggested that positive diversionary interventions have been especially useful for supporting these changes for children and young people: they provide the opportunity to learn and practice positive skills and behaviours, can increase overall motivation, and decrease the windows of opportunity for engaging in risky behaviours.

> *"I feel [the intervention delivered in schools] has changed their perception on knife crime and carrying a knife. […] When it comes to primary schools, […] so many have been traumatised by knife crime."*
>
> *- Local stakeholder*

It is more challenging to comment on the benefits to participants of tertiary interventions. This is in part because they make up fewer of the overall interventions (and there are therefore fewer stakeholders involved who have the insight to comment). It is also because they have generally started later in the programme and they typically require a longer timeframe of support to see outcomes. That said, case study research did identify emerging evidence of positive outcomes associated with intensive mentoring funded by Act as One.

Spotlight: Intensive mentoring for at-risk young people (Act as One)

Exit Foundation provides intensive bespoke one-to-one mentoring to young people in Newham, funded by Act as One. The intensive mentoring provides holistic and tailored support to young people via a range of activities including coaching, wellbeing support, advocacy and signposting. It focuses on addressing individual needs with a view to improving ETE outcomes and reducing risk of involvement with the criminal justice system or violence.

The emerging positive qualitative evidence shared by mentees and wider professionals as part of case study research demonstrates the service's potential to achieve these outcomes. The mentor built positive relationships, trust, and ongoing engagement with mentees who have previously struggled to engage with other services. Mentees and wider professionals agreed that the mentor's approach helps them seem different to other services, and genuinely invested in the young person.

This contributed to participants developing skills to identify and avoid risky situations to and manage emotions and behaviour, and also working towards other aspirations in their hobbies or in ETE. Mentees reported that this led to improved feelings of safety and mentees and professionals also noted reduced involvement in violence.

The sub-set of **young people who were consulted as part of the impact case study research also generally agreed that their experience of support had been positive**. They particularly appreciated the skills and approach of practitioners, the engaging nature of the interventions, and often feeling that the support could be somewhat personalised to their needs.

6.6.2 Benefits of participation in Youth Steering Groups and leadership roles

Core local stakeholders also highlighted **some specific benefits to participation for Youth Steering Group members who have received interventions** as part of their support and development. These were improved:

- **Confidence and skills** in leadership and peer support.
- **Awareness** of the needs, challenges, and opportunities experienced by the local community.
- **Networks** with other young people interested in community leadership and local organisations and stakeholders.
- **ETE** aspirations and outcomes.

There was some suggestion that those members who presented with higher needs in terms of risk of involvement in problematic behaviour have also benefited from having a positive diversionary use of time.

6.6.3 Early evidence of benefits for participating parents, carers and families

As interventions for parents, carers, and families make up a minority of the overall profile of interventions delivered, it is more challenging to comment on their impact so far. However, local stakeholders were generally positive about the benefits of these interventions. One of the most common reported benefits has been **facilitating opportunities for families to spend time together in ways that otherwise may not have been as easily accessible**, for example on excursions.

Across all participant groups, stakeholders suggested that a common benefit has been **receiving resources to help alleviate immediate needs**, for example vouchers, equipment such as laptops, and food.

7 Impact on community networks

7.1 Key messages

- The strategic outcome of stronger community networks is ambitious; it aims for greater collaboration, shared commitment, inclusive and equal decision making and collective action to reduce violence.
- To achieve this, consortiums are given a high degree of freedom to develop and prioritise their activities in locally-specific ways, for example through the key partners, settings, or issues they emphasise. In contrast to interventions, there has been a higher degree of innovation in these activities as sites seek new and effective ways of engaging communities and working in partnership.
- This likely makes activity and change more feasible and potentially more locally-relevant. However one consequence of this approach to changes within local systems, is that it may be harder to anticipate expected changes in advance, and to articulate how they might contribute to violence reduction.
- For stakeholders, building stronger partnerships within and outside of the consortiums has been a key success of the programme. It has led to greater interconnectedness across the network, especially at an operational level, and stronger relationships – particularly between VCS and statutory organisations. The structure and maturity of these local networks varies by site.
- Building network and grassroots capacity has chiefly involved administering local grassroots funds, which has made more funding and resource available to grassroots organisations. To a lesser extent training and capacity building support has also been provided to local organisations. Evidence of the impact of these activities is as yet less well established.
- Community engagement has taken place via open and ad hoc events, existing and new community forums and Youth Steering Groups, promotion of the programme and research. This has been a learning process, and challenging at times to keep up alongside other strands. Yet, there are examples of more community involvement in shaping plans and activities. Particularly, grassroots grants funds have often built in community members as decision makers.
- Collectively this activity has begun to bear fruit, contributing to improved partnership working and collaboration in local areas and a greater shared understanding of local needs, hotspots and assets.
- Areas of ongoing focus for sites include increasing community trust in local networks and organisations, promoting further inclusive and equal decision making, and building on the strengthened foundations for collective action.

7.2 Chapter overview

This chapter explores the impact of MyEnds on community networks. It covers the approaches sites have taken to developing wider local networks, community engagement and strengthening the grassroots sector; and the emerging impacts in each of these areas.

7.3 Overarching approaches to network development

Sites have delivered a wide range of activities to develop their local networks, across the areas of: broadening and strengthening the local network by engaging partners outside of the consortium; community engagement to inform the local MyEnds programme and longer-term more inclusive decision making in the area; and capacity building in the local network and grassroots sector.

The MyEnds programme deliberately does not prescribe specific approaches and activities to the sites. Sites have therefore had a large degree of freedom to determine their priorities and activities locally. As such a range of different approaches can be seen across the sites.

This results in part from the different consortium structures and members. It also reflects the local contexts in which they are operating, which bring site-specific assets, challenges, opportunities, and needs. Even more so than the interventions strand, sites have developed the community networks strand of their work organically and have been opportunistic in their approaches, partly because this type of activity relies on building buy-in and engagement from wider local system partners as a first step to further activities.

This approach also reflects the need to interact with and add to the existing resources and initiatives in the local system, and to mobilise at pace within the timeframe of the programme. Stakeholders suggested that this may also allow more responsiveness to changing needs and new insight. In practice this has often involved developing and adapting community networks-focused activities in response to learning through doing (including via intervention delivery).

One consequence of this approach to changes within local systems is that it may be harder to anticipate expected changes in advance, and to articulate how they might contribute to violence reduction.

7.4 Broadening and strengthening local networks.

7.4.1 Common approaches

Sites have typically broadened and strengthened their local networks via the following activities:

Developing links to wider local organisations and stakeholders

Sites have developed relationships and ongoing connections with wider local VCS and statutory organisations with a role to play in supporting the aims of

MyEnds. A key focus of this activity has been building awareness and trust between organisations. According to monitoring data, all sites partnered with:

- VCS organisations.
- The police.
- The local authority. According to qualitative consultation, this typically includes Community Safety, children and adults' services, Gangs units where in place, and Youth Offending Services.

Sites also often partnered with health and mental health organisations, and multi-agency forums. There are some examples of links with schools, although this has been less common than links with other statutory partners.

Network-building activities have mainly sat with consortium partners, especially in earlier on in the programme. They have established and maintained these links mainly via coming together in new and existing forums. Some links have been developed and maintained outside of forums, through ad-hoc or regular meetings and discussions between core and wider local stakeholders.

New forums include the strategic and operational forums set up to run the local MyEnds programme (i.e., these 'consortium' meetings often include wider local network organisations) and, less often, some new strategic and operational wider local network forums established by sites. For example, Act as One has established monthly strategic 'Roundtable' meetings attended by professionals from Newham's VCS and statutory sectors who work with those young people most impacted by violence and exploitation. Their purpose is to pool existing knowledge of promising practice, and to explore partnership working and options for sustainable funding.

Most often, consortium partners have joined existing forums in the local system, such as community engagement forums (for example, ward meetings), statutory-run forums (such as housing, community safety, youth justice, and gangs units), and existing VCS forums.

Developing shared ambitions

Once relationships have been established, consortiums have shared the ambitions and aims of MyEnds with the wider local organisations and stakeholders to build awareness and buy-in. They have also discussed opportunities for network organisations' activities and interventions to support one another and to align towards a broad set of shared aims for the local network and – to some extent – the local system more broadly.

As discussed in Section 7.3, this process of developing the aims of the wider local network has typically been organic, iterative, and opportunistic rather than linear. At times, sites have held summits or events with a focus on progressing a collective strategy on a particular issue, for example a Reducing School Exclusions Summit held by Rise Up East.

Developing and delivering collective approaches to activities

Building on the above steps, consortiums have worked with wider local network partners to increase joined up working, share intelligence and insight, develop referral pathways, and develop and deliver joint activities. Changes in ways of working in these areas themselves constitute positive changes to the breadth and strength of the local network, and they are therefore discussed within section 7.7.

> *"[There is] greater collaboration, less duplication of lines of communication. Rather than doing several events, for example, we are [collectively] using resources better and being more efficient."*
>
> *- Local stakeholder*

7.4.2 Impact on interconnectedness of local network partners

Greater interconnectedness at an operational level

Stakeholders agreed that **MyEnds has improved the interconnectedness of local network organisations, in particular across the VCS and statutory sectors**. They identified this as one of the key successes of the programme which has brought a range of benefits to local systems. This was also identified as one of the main strengths via the systems change survey, which collected views anonymously from 249 local core and wider stakeholders (on average 31 per site).

In general, **these improvements to interconnectedness are taking place at an operational level**, changing the way organisations work with each other on a day-to-day basis. Shifts in strategic alignment and connectedness are discussed in section 7.7.2.

Better awareness among local organisations of the wider local system

Stakeholders agreed that through MyEnds, there is better awareness amongst local organisations of the wider local system. For example, **local organisations are more aware or other organisations providing support in the area, particularly VCS and grassroots organisations, and how to refer into them**. Equally, VCS organisations' understanding of the operation of statutory organisations has improved.

Stronger relationships between organisations, including greater engagement between VCS and statutory organisations

> *"[A positive] has been building the relationships and opening doors. It was difficult to get into schools and now it has opened a lot of doors. The relationships we have in the borough - we're able to venture out, get people to work with different organisations. [It's about] knowing who is who and who we can lean on for support and guidance."*
>
> *- Local stakeholder*

Relationships between local organisations have also strengthened and a wider range of organisations have bought into the local MyEnds programme in their area. Stakeholders emphasised that **this is important progress because relationship building takes time, especially between sectors and organisations who may be used to operating separately or competing for funding**.

Engaging statutory organisations (such as Community Safety, children and adults' services, Gangs Units, Youth Offending Services, police, and education) was highlighted as especially significant in enabling network activities and adding weight to the local MyEnds programme.

> *'We work side-by-side [with the local authority, including Community Safety, the Gangs Team, Housing, Children and Adults Services] and we are invited to be part of forums to give our input on youth violence.'*
>
> *- Y3Q2 monitoring data (open-text response from site)*

Spotlight: Supporting and effectively using continued police engagement (West Croydon)

Stakeholders in West Croydon reported that police presence at Friday meetings (see Section 7.6.2) has been consistent and strongly encouraged. This has contributed to several positive outcomes for the MyEnds West Croydon programme, police, and the local community:

- Providing opportunities for the police to listen to advice and intelligence from the local community, and to demonstrate increased transparency and accountability to the local community.
- Raising police engagement with communities they previously considered 'hard to reach', including Black communities, migrant communities, and religious groups. Through relationships the police have developed with community leaders and grassroots organisations involved in these communities, they are able to better understand and communicate with them, contributing to increased trust in the police.

At the same time, stakeholders agreed that gaining engagement from all relevant partners sometimes remains a challenge in some sites. This was mainly true of statutory partners, although local stakeholders in sites experiencing this challenge often noted that statutory partners' engagement in MyEnds has generally begun to improve over time.

7.5 Building network and grassroots capacity

7.5.1 Common approaches

Sites have typically delivered less activity on building network and grassroots capacity than they have on broadening and strengthening the network or community engagement. The capacity building activity that has been delivered has tended to focus mostly on the grassroots sector.

Grassroots grants fund

Each MyEnds site is expected to use a portion of their funding to deliver a small grants programme to the local grassroots sector. These are intended to support individuals or small organisations with good ideas about how to support young people and prevent violence, but who may lack the capacity to access funding from other sources. The majority of sites had administered grants as at the end of Y2Q3, although the maturity of their grants funds varied with some having begun in Year 1 of the programme.

This activity strand has also required core local stakeholders to develop their own skills, for example in reaching potential grantees, grant giving, and delivering support. For example, sites have typically delivered less non-financial support than programme stakeholders anticipated, which they reflected may indicate lower confidence and skills in this area. However, a minority of sites bring previous experience in this area which has been an asset. To support sites during the extension period and for the benefit of future similar programmes, the VRU have begun developing best practice guidance and minimum standards in grant giving.

Training and guidance to network partners

Outside of the grassroots grant funding, capacity building delivered to other local network organisations has involved training in key principles, approaches, and models. At times this training has been delivered to all consortium partners, and at times to particular consortium or wider organisations.

The most common training topics have related to trauma-informed approaches, and cultural competence in stop and search practice. In some instances, training has been co-delivered with Youth Steering Group members, for example youth-led training to police officers in West Croydon in the importance of cultural competence when conducting stop and searches. Less common topics have included mental health first aid, safeguarding, restorative justice, and particular intervention models such as mentoring.

Some stakeholders suggested that delivery partners have also informally received guidance and support in monitoring, learning, and evaluation via by core local stakeholders supporting them to complete monitoring requirements.

Lastly, some capacity building activities delivered by Listen Up have been open to wider local network organisations, although take-up has generally been low (see Section 5.4).

7.5.2 Overview of grassroots grant fund delivery

Context: Emerging evidence on the delivery and impact of grassroots capacity building

Please note, during the period covered by the impact evaluation, limited information has been gathered by sites on the delivery and impact of grassroots capacity building support, meaning it is hard to explore this in detail. The findings in this Section represent a snapshot from a point in time and are based mainly on qualitative consultation with programme and core local stakeholders.

At the time of the impact evaluation fieldwork and analysis, sites were preparing to implement more detailed monitoring of grassroots capacity building support and its impact, with support from the VRU. This is expected to be a key area of learning for the extension period and will be explored in more detail by the evaluation.

Sites' criteria for recipients of small grants

Sites have sought to fund grassroots organisations whose priorities align with those of their local programme: they are focused on the needs of the local community, in particular young people, and some already target the same hyper-local areas or estates. Sites assess applications to their small grants funds according to the extent to which the applicants and their proposed activities meet these priorities, as well as the quality of their delivery plans.

A minority of sites have taken a more targeted approach to funding grassroots grantees, in line with the key themes of focus for their MyEnds programme as a whole. This is true for OFOB and Home Cooked (see Section 4.7).

Some sites have additional criteria by which they assess applicants, such as their legal constitution and capacity to receive and administer funds (for example, whether they have a bank account). In some cases, where applicants do not meet these criteria, sites provide support to allow them to qualify, for example by helping them set up as a Community Interest Company (CIC) or matching them with more established local organisations that can receive and administer the grant on their behalf.

Building awareness and engagement with small grants programmes

Sites have taken a varied approach to building awareness and engagement with their small grants funds. Approaches have included: promotion on websites and social media; sharing information at multi-agency and Youth Steering Group meetings; engagement events with community members and young people; providing open information/Q&A sessions; and pre-application support sessions for potential grantees, including support with application forms and run throughs of project ideas. Ecosystem Coldharbour has taken a different approach to identifying applicants, with consortium partners nominating potential grantees.

Applying for and assessing applications for small grants

Typically, application forms have been made available online, in some cases accompanied by guidelines and Q&A documents. Once applications have been received, most MyEnds sites have created community and youth panels to assess applications and decide, or support decisions, on the appointment of grantees (see Section 7.6.2 for further discussion).

Once application decisions have been shared with applicants, some sites offer support to unsuccessful applicants, such as one-to-one feedback, capacity building, and encouragement to apply in future rounds.

Delivery of activities funded by small grants programmes

All sites with a small grants programme offer a range of grant sizes, which across sites ranges from £1,000-£15,000. Gamechangers has also identified matched funding from local funders for some of their grants. In some cases, grants are time-bound, for example some sites expect their grantees to have spent their grants within three or six months.

The activities delivered as part of sites' small grants programmes vary. They are typically as wide-ranging as those delivered as part of their associated local MyEnds programmes, and similar in focus, although on a smaller scale.

Most sites request a level of monitoring information from grantees, including: project summaries; number of young people reached; key successes and challenges; and learning from the funding process. Some sites upload this to their programme's data systems, and some require grantees to participate in programme operational meetings. However, monitoring requirements of grantees vary by site and in some cases are very light touch.

Support for successful grantees

All sites with a small grants programme offer support to successful applicants to support them to administer their grants effectively. This includes support with project planning and implementation; connecting with and receiving referrals from the local community; advertising and social media; and monitoring and evaluation. Support can be via discussions with those running the grants programme focused on problem solving and building capacity, or via training which is typically offered to all grantees in a site.

In addition to training and support for the administration of MyEnds grants, some sites also provide wider capacity building support to grantees, including organisational health checks; governance and policy writing; support to set up as a CIC; budgeting and invoicing; and fundraising and bid writing skills to support ongoing sustainability.

Some sites have taken additional efforts to support the sustainability of grantees and small grants funds beyond the MyEnds programme, for example through building networks with local statutory organisations and other funders to raise

awareness of how grantees may be able to help them respond to local issues, and lobbying funders to create future funding pots for similar programmes.

Grantees are also sometimes offered the same training as other consortium delivery partners (see Section 7.5.3). In some sites, grantees are linked to a dedicated consortium partner to support them through the process.

Spotlight: Grassroots grants programme (Gamechangers)

Gamechangers has made significant progress in their grants giving programme, which has been a key focus in terms of their energy and resource.

Stakeholders agree that the lead partner, Active Communities Network, builds and maintains very strong relationships with the leaders of small organisations. The quality of relationships has supported the lead partner to obtain a strong understanding of the support needs of small grassroots organisations, and subsequently to offer valuable support, such as bespoke workshops in grant writing and legal structures.

Gamechangers has also taken a proactive approach to securing external funding for these groups, such as working with local funders who have match funded their grants and supporting organisations to access Sport England's 'Together Fund' or funding streams from Southwark Council.

7.5.3 Impact on grassroots and wider partner skills, resources and involvement in network activity

More funding and resource available to grassroots organisations

Local and programme stakeholders agreed that **it has been valuable to be able to fund small local grassroots organisations** who may otherwise have struggled to receive funding and who are unlikely to have received VRU funding directly. Programme stakeholders were enthusiastic about the ways in which this diverts from traditional commissioning approaches and seeks to reduce barriers to accessing funding.

Overall **stakeholders are enthusiastic about the grassroots activities funded and their potential** to benefit the local community and contribute to violence reduction in the longer-term. Core local stakeholders are also hopeful that, over time, stronger local grassroots organisations will be an asset to wider local networks, for example providing services that can be referred into on a greater scale.

Ongoing need for accessible capacity building support and future funding

Supporting the grassroots sector has been a **learning experience about the extent of grantees' capacity building needs and limited time to engage with**

network activities. For instance, in some sites, grantees have lacked enough capacity to attend the events and training delivered by sites. Whilst it has been positive to identify small and emerging grassroots organisations, their capacity building needs have been greater than anticipated (particularly at the pre-application stage relating to policies, procedures, and safeguarding) and **delivering this support has required more time and resource than originally envisaged**.

Local stakeholders therefore expect that many grantees may continue to face immediate-term funding needs after the MyEnds programme finishes, even though their capacity will have continued to develop. However, some exceptions were highlighted, particularly grantees funded by Gamechangers where this strand has been a main focus and its delivery began earlier on in the programme.

As a result of the capacity building needs of grantees and the time taken by sites to develop and deliver this support, sites have generally achieved fewer overall outputs than originally envisaged in this strand, and in some cases have needed to adapt their approach. For example, some sites have delivered fewer rounds of funding than envisaged, instead delivering support to the same grantees over a longer period. In other cases, sites have reduced the application and assessment requirements and processes to make them less time-intensive and more accessible.

Looking forward to this activity strand in the remainder of the programme, sites recognise that this might entail more in-depth and longer-term funding to fewer organisations rather than repeat call for new grantees, given the needs and capacity shortage amongst grassroots.

Changes to capacity of other local network organisations not well understood at this stage

Reflecting on the capacity building support delivered to other local network organisations, stakeholders were hopeful that this will have strengthened skills. However, it was challenging to explore this due to minimal evidence being collected, and the take-up of capacity building support being slightly lower than originally envisaged. This may be because (1) participation in training is often self-selecting, with limited capacity being one potential factor and (2) delivery is somewhat ad hoc, at times in response to requests and other times initiated by consortiums in response to identified needs.

7.6 Community engagement

7.6.1 Common approaches

Sites' community engagement seeks to fulfil multiple purposes:

- Raising awareness of local network initiatives and opportunities for community members to get involved,
- Informing and shaping the local MyEnds programme, and

- Working towards developing more inclusive decision making between communities and local services in the longer-term.

Community involvement was also highlighted by programme stakeholders as an important principle in and of itself and one of the strengths of the MyEnds programme design. They recognised that community members may not have all the answers but reflected that creating spaces and opportunities to share power and decision making is a valuable approach. Involving and seeking community voice was also identified as one of the main common strengths of local MyEnds programmes via the systems change survey.

At the same time, stakeholders agreed that community engagement has been a learning process for many sites. It has required core local stakeholders to develop new skills, capacities, and links with community members. Stakeholders reflected that it has also been important to go at the pace of community members and spend time to build trusting relationships, and to support their skills and capacity to input into plans and ideas in a meaningful way.

To deliver meaningful engagement of this kind plus other activity strands within the timeframe of the programme, sites have found it useful to carry out community engagement iteratively alongside delivery, rather than taking a linear approach wherein intervention delivery follows community engagement. In this way community members have been able to provide feedback on ideas and plans rather than 'starting from a blank page'. One exception is OFOB.

Spotlight: Community engagement to inform approach to network and intervention development (OFOB)

In contrast to a more iterative style of community engagement used by most sites, OFOB has taken a more linear approach. It has sought to ensure young people shape its strategy and direction of travel. It therefore engaged young people via steering groups to co-design a delivery plan and future interventions. This led to the identification of its six areas of focus for its interventions, underpinning the needs young people have identified: leadership training, arts and creative activities, community connectedness, mental health, employment, and mentoring.

OFOB has taken this approach to developing its interventions because it aims to amplify young people's voices in the local area and to demonstrate a response to issues identified as being particularly important to young people, such as the support offer for young women.

This approach is more linear rather than cyclical in its use of community input and steer. Whilst is has brought the benefit of a co-developed approach from the outset, it may also bring challenges with mobilising at pace within the timeframe of the programme.

To create multiple 'entry points' for community members, sites have delivered a range of community engagement activities, ranging from ones with wider reach that are less intensive (such as community fun days) to more intensive and narrowly-targeted activities (such as Youth Steering Groups).

Sites have also advertised MyEnds to the community via flyers, websites, and local newspapers. Besides this, the main community engagement activities delivered by sites are:

Open community events

These are typically delivered multiple times a year, and focus on providing fun activities, music, and food for community members; raising awareness of the local MyEnds programme; and providing opportunities for community members to ask questions, share their views, and find out about locally-available support.

Community engagement forums

Sites have adopted a mixture of developing new community engagement forums and 'piggybacking' onto or adapting existing forums in collaboration with the local organisations involved in these forums. Examples include police-run ward meetings, estate-based Tenants and Residents Associations and parents' groups.

In these forums, sites typically gather views from community members about their needs and concerns, share information about the local MyEnds programme, and explore opportunities for better meeting the community's needs. These forums are generally open access but often targeted to specific areas, for example specific estates. Consortiums often run these forums in collaboration with other key local network partners who sometimes rotate, such as VCS organisations, police, and local authority representatives.

Youth Steering Groups

The majority of sites have either established Youth Steering Groups or, less commonly, linked into existing youth voice groups to help inform the local MyEnds programme. Rather than providing consistent steer to consortiums at the strategic level, these groups are most often involved in more discrete ways in co-designing or co-delivering a range of activities as part of the site's approach. Examples include:

- Training to wider organisations as part of capacity building.
- Designing and presenting at community engagement events.
- Participating in grassroots grants panels.
- Supporting with some intervention delivery to other young people in a peer-to-peer approach such as outreach or mentoring.
- Carrying out youth research.

An aim for Youth Steering Groups is that the young people who are members can develop their skills, knowledge, confidence, and networks to become community leaders in the area, and to help inspire other young people and community members to get involved.

Informal engagement to gather views as part of intervention delivery

Local stakeholders reflected that delivery organisations gain useful insight into community members' needs, challenges and preferences when talking to them during intervention delivery. Delivery organisations can then feed this back up to consortiums to inform the local MyEnds programme.

Research

A minority of sites have funded or carried out research about the community's experiences, views, and needs. For example, THICN carried out an online survey from all community members in the target area to share their views and concerns regarding violence. Both Rise Up East and Home Cooked has carried out youth peer research via their Youth Steering Group or equivalent structure – please see the 'Spotlight example' overleaf for more detail.

7.6.2 Impact on community involvement in shaping plans for violence reduction

Emerging increase in community involvement in shaping plans

Community members including young people have begun to be involved in shaping activities and some plans. This has been slightly slower to progress than other network building, as community engagement activities have tended to pick up pace later in the programme as sites have learned through doing and honed their approaches. However, **stakeholders are positive about the momentum and confidence that is building in this area, and agreed on the value that community input brings**.

Community involvement in planning has mostly been at the level of individual activities rather than sites' overall strategies or approach. Their input typically led to new activities or adaptations to existing ones, for example how they are targeted or the focus of their content.

Spotlight: Friday meeting (West Croydon)

West Croydon's Friday meetings are an example of a more regular and well-attended community engagement forum, taking place weekly. These meetings are hosted at the Croydon Voluntary Action centre and chaired by a consortium partner. The meetings are open and attended by VCS and grassroots organisations; community members; local business owners; and representatives from the council, police, schools, and other statutory organisations.

A range of activities have taken place in these meetings, including:

- Awareness raising, networking, relationship building, and sharing of effective practice between local VCS organisations, grassroots organisations, and statutory organisations.
- Providing a forum for the community to liaise with the police in response to incidents, and for support to be offered to grieving family and friends by local organisations and community members.
- Discussing potential interventions, including joint interventions between different organisations.

One of the bigger areas of community members' input has been through sharing or gathering information about their needs, concerns, and experiences which core local programme stakeholders have then considered as part of the design of the site's activities. The main mechanisms for this have been via community engagement forums or, less commonly, research into the community's views which has either been led by consortiums or local young peer researchers. For example, research into young people's views about violence carried out by Rise Up East, identified poor lighting as a key concern for safety in the local area.

Spotlight: Youth-led Youth Employment Research Project (Home Cooked)

Home Cooked funded a local youth voice and leadership organisation, the Youth Advisory Board (YAB), to carry out peer research with young people in the Tottenham Hale area into their experiences, views, and needs in terms of ETE. This project built on YAB previous experience in carrying out youth-led research. It emphasised opening up decision making and empowering the young peer researchers to lead the project, which included designating a young peer researcher to lead the project and recruit a team of youth peer researchers.

The team carried out mixed methods research via a survey and focus groups with young people from the target area, partnering with a local school to reach participants, then carried out analysis and reporting.

Those involved reported that this approach was effective in sharing power; avoiding duplicating existing youth engagement efforts in the area; and making sure that participation was accessible by renumerating young peer researchers and allocating sufficient resource and capacity from Home Cooked partner NLPC for their training and support.

As well as gathering views from local young people, the research project also developed the skills and experience of the young peer researchers, supporting their individual ETE journeys but also helping to raise the profile of the YAB and potentially enable similar opportunities in future.

Grassroots grants decision making as key vehicle for community involvement

One of the main ways in which **communities have inputted into plans and activities has been via grassroots grants panels** (see Section 7.5.2). This process varies slightly by site but typically community members including young people are involved in grassroots grant panels. These panellists generally receive training to support them in their role, including to assess and score applications. In some cases, they are drawn from existing community engagement forums, or Youth Steering Groups, involved in the local MyEnds programme.

Spotlight: Neighbourhood Wallet (Act as One)

Act as One's grassroots grant fund operates via monthly 'coffee morning' events wherein community members can raise issues and pitch ideas, request funding, and a community panel will then collectively agree on how to award small grants of up to £5,000 for these ideas. The approach emphasises community ownership, and the panel involves local Youth Steering Group members. Local stakeholders agreed that the accessibility of the funds is a key strength of the Neighbourhood Wallet approach. The coffee mornings also provide the space for sharing progress update on grant-funded activities, which can work as an informal oversight process.

As at February 2023, 11 organisations had received funding via the Neighbourhood Wallet, delivering a range of activities. A VCS support organisation, Compost, supports Act as One to deliver the fund and accompanying capacity building support to grantees, such as fundraising workshops, getting registered as charities, and developing high-level theories of change.

7.7 Collaboration, commitment, decision making and influence

The **improvements in interconnectedness within local networks have positioned them well to transition towards operating in a collective way longer-term**, stakeholders suggested. They are hopeful that through MyEnds, each site's local VCS can move towards operating with a more collective voice to influence local decision making, identify and respond to system challenges, and contribute to responses to local issues; and that local organisations can align their resources and agendas to support this.

Local stakeholders suggested **that there is emerging evidence of networks maturing in this way, for instance with wider system organisations seeing them as a 'go-to' for connections** across sectors within the local area.

7.7.1 Impact on partnership working

Improvements in multiple aspects of partnership working

Stakeholders agreed that **stronger relationships between local partners have been a key foundation for the other positive progress made in terms of developing local networks which operate collectively**. The main areas of improvement highlighted by stakeholders were:

- **Improved joined-up working**. Local organisations and stakeholders have increased join-up across the local system in a range of ways, including: increasing referring and signposting to appropriate services; developing shared resources such as service directories; and collaborating more closely in the planning of existing activities to avoid gaps and duplication (for example, planning outreach to collectively cover all patches) and to include a wider range of relevant organisations (for example, in incident response).

- **Improved sharing of information and insight**. Partners have come together to share intelligence and insight via new and existing forums and links. This relates to information about needs, challenges, opportunities, incidents, and hotspots. It is used to inform collective approaches but also the work of individual organisations. In some cases, developing information sharing arrangements has supported this, for example between different services' outreach teams. Improved and more timely sharing of information gathered through links to the community was also flagged as a key advantage of stronger local networks, particularly between the VCS and statutory sectors. Indeed, stakeholders suggested that statutory organisations had benefited from the community engagement and insight of VCS organisations, something statutory organisations may have struggled with. See Section 7.7.2 for a more detailed discussion of the relationship between statutory and VCS sectors within MyEnds networks.

- **Newly-developed referral pathways**. The main change to referrals has been increasing the use of existing referral routes due to stronger awareness and trust. However, sites have also introduced new referral routes into MyEnds funded interventions between local network partners. Local stakeholders highlighted a range of referral pathways into VCS organisations, such as from multi-agency panels and teams, substance misuse services, and statutory organisations including education, social care, and youth justice.

- **Developing and delivering joint activities**. In some instances, organisations have also developed joint activities or interventions. Some examples include: an information sharing meeting established by Act as One in which individual cases are discussed and triaged through a multi-agency approach; football matches between young people and the police, established by OFOB (see case study for more details); and a Community Stakeholder Alliance group, developed by Ecosystem Coldharbour in response to an incident, which brought together over 20 local organisations in an effort to support a more collective response.

Partnership working as a foundation for greater collective action

Stakeholders agreed that **these changes have led to local networks working more closely and making better collective use of existing resources and services**, whilst also **identifying and building on opportunities for joint working more readily**. They are hopeful that these ways of working can continue in the longer-term for the benefit of local organisations and the community.

7.7.2 Impact on shared commitment to, understanding of, and vision for reducing violence

Consultation with stakeholders indicates that MyEnds has helped to develop and **build on strong local commitments to reducing violence** in the target areas, and are positive about the **potential for shared understandings and visions to also strengthen**.

Extension of pre-existing shared commitment

> *"You've got the charities and CICs who are leading the project through the consortium and then about 10 other organisations funded. You've got this massive mix of organisations working together to reduce crime and make it a better neighbourhood."*
>
> *- Local stakeholder*

Stakeholders agreed that **local organisations and sometimes partnerships were generally already committed to reducing violence in the longer-term**. However, **MyEnds has helped to add to this** by injecting resource, bringing different organisations and sectors together under a shared aim, and giving the remit to 'think outside the box' in reducing violence. Indeed, stakeholders suggested that **consortiums have helped build up wider commitment to drawing on the community and grassroots sectors and working in partnership**. At the same time, commitment is less consistent so far amongst grassroots organisations, particularly those whose work links to violence indirectly rather than directly, and limited capacity to be involved in more strategic system initiatives is a key reason.

Stakeholders noted that **leadership plays a key role**, and that strong leadership skills within some consortiums (particularly lead organisations) have been a supporting factor to developing the shared commitment of the local network. At this stage, **the momentum for maintaining a shared commitment within wider local networks is often driven mainly by key individuals** within consortiums, rather than collectively embedded.

Increase in shared understanding

Stakeholders agreed that **MyEnds has helped local organisations to pool their understandings** of local needs, issues, and hotspots through more connected networks; **and to gather new insight** through intervention delivery and community engagement. The format of this knowledge is generally more

anecdotal and less systematically collated than originally envisaged during the programme design, which anticipated that sites would develop a clear articulation of local needs and drivers of violence to inform programme development.

However, this approach brings potential benefits such as building on the existing skills and processes of VCS organisations; enabling consortiums to protect capacity for other activities; and being able to pivot and respond to new information and changing needs at pace. There was also some suggestion that VCS organisations are well-placed to contribute knowledge that takes into account nuance and cultural competence in ways that more formalised approaches may struggle to do.

Shared vision for violence reduction less well-developed

> *"We have been reactive to violence, but sometimes it would be good to be proactive and get ahead as a borough."*
>
> *- Local stakeholder*

The understanding and shared vision of how to reduce violence within the target areas is generally less well-developed so far. **Within consortiums and wider local networks, the vision for the MyEnds programme is typically broadly understood**, and the expectation is that the progress began during the programme will continue afterwards. However, **longer-term visions for violence reduction with local networks have not yet formed**.

One factor is the need to engage with and build on existing local initiatives to tackle violence, which vary by site. This is limited by the extent to which sites can build collaborative relationships with wider organisations who are already carrying out this work.

Another challenge is that the existing evidence base is not yet well-established for 'what works' to reduce violence in highly localised areas in line with a community-led approach. Local networks may not yet be well-placed in terms of capacity and skills to develop these ideas and may lack the influence to impose them on the wider local system without the support of influential local partners including statutory organisations.

Finally, **key local partners may have different visions for how organisations will come together to reduce violence**, and the role of statutory services is a key example of this.

Context: The role of statutory organisations in the vision for MyEnds

One point of variation between sites' visions for MyEnds is the relationship between statutory and VCS organisations. Where sites have established stronger relationships with the local authority, they have tended converge towards the idea that MyEnds consortiums and wider VCS organisations can act as a 'bridge' between statutory organisations and communities.

For some sites, this relationship is seen as an asset whilst in others, it can be experienced as limiting to other potential ways of working. The experience varied by site as each local context is different. Sites' relationships with statutory organisations were also multi-faceted, not one-dimensional, and they recognised that this partnership brings many opportunities and benefits as well as potential challenges. Nevertheless, it raises important considerations for the future direction of travel in local systems in which MyEnds has been implemented.

Consortiums and wider local networks can support statutory organisations to link community members into statutory organisations and share messages and gather views from community members via community engagement activities. These VCS organisations may be able to access groups that statutory organisations might otherwise struggle to engage, for example due to mistrust amongst communities, and could help to improve perceptions and relationships. For example, consortiums have delivered community engagement events funded by the local authority on target estates, to help broker trust and stronger community relations; and stakeholders in one site shared the example that youth offending services have reached out to consortiums to help them carry out community engagement.

It was also suggested by some local stakeholders in the VCS sector that some of the interventions funded by consortiums, particularly youth work interventions, are helping to redress the decline in statutory provision in recent years.

Stakeholders agreed that partnership working between the VCS and statutory sectors in the ways seen through MyEnds can bring benefits, and local VCS organisations are encouraged that it shows more recognition of the sector's potential value. One local stakeholder reflected it has been a *"good eye-opener for councils [who may] no longer see the third sector as an add-on'."*

However, facilitating or delivering activities that are priorities for statutory partners encroaches on the capacity and scope for VCS networks to explore and deliver other priorities, which might be more aligned to those of community members. Therefore, these dynamics will require close monitoring and management to ensure that they continue to promote the principles of MyEnds in increasing community-led decision making and action to reduce violence.

7.7.3 Impact on trust and collaboration between local communities and agencies

Greater trust and collaboration between agencies, with room to embed further

> *"As we have developed, [local housing organisations have become more involved and] could see that they needed to get communities and statutory agencies together to inform people about what is happening and get their solutions."*
>
> *- Local stakeholder*

Working together in new ways is contributing to greater trust, mainly between consortium and wider local network partners. For instance, stakeholders reported signs of local VCS and statutory organisations becoming more open to working in partnership and increasingly recognising the value of collaborative approaches, including putting trust in other organisations.

Making this more embedded in local systems and widening it to include the community more consistently are areas for development. Stakeholders recognised that these will take time to achieve.

More limited evidence of greater trust and collaboration with communities

In terms of collaboration with the community, stakeholders highlighted that there are 'pockets' of progress, mainly within MyEnds funded activities, but this does not yet seem to be embedding within wider systems. Some contributing factors may be, slower-than-hoped progress with community engagement in some sites, and limited capacity and influence amongst VCS networks to affect wider system processes. Nevertheless**, stakeholders were enthusiastic about the emerging examples of more collaborative approaches, particularly where police and communities have come together**.

Whilst they could not comment on the community's level of trust, stakeholders are hopeful that the activities delivered will have made a positive contribution, especially community engagement. At the same time, they recognised **the need to be sensitive to the mistrust and potential previous negative experiences of some communities particularly regarding statutory organisations**. VCS networks may be limited in the extent to which they alone can broker stronger trust in this area (see Section 7.7.2 for a discussion of this dynamic).

7.7.4 Inclusive and equal decision making

Increased inclusivity and equality in decision making within consortiums

Stakeholders agreed that **inclusive and equal decision making within local networks has strengthened** through the mechanisms and culture that MyEnds has helped to develop. This has been **strongest within structures established and run by consortiums**, such as consortium and wider local network meetings and forums and community engagement forums.

Core local stakeholders agreed that making decisions collectively, particularly within consortiums, has been a positive experience and new way of working for many sites. Programme stakeholders suggested that the more this incorporates ideas and steer from wider local network organisations, the stronger the local MyEnds approach will be, although there is a balance to be struck in terms of maintaining strong leadership within the consortium.

Some progress with more inclusive and equal decision making across wider networks, with scope for further progress

There are **some examples of more shared decision making between statutory and VCS sectors**. As discussed in Section 7.7.1, statutory

organisations have also been able to gather more community insight via MyEnds consortiums, which may inform their decision making. Grassroots organisations, in the main, have not yet become more included in decision making in the wider local system, with limited capacity playing a key role (see Section 7.5.3).

Sites vary in the degree to which consortiums and wider local networks use 'flat' versus hierarchical decision making structures. For example, via Friday meetings, West Croydon's wider local network partners and community members can come together to make decisions (see Section 7.6.2), however in other sites consortium structures are more layered and key decisions tend to sit with core consortium partners, who then delegate aspects of delivery to sub-groups.

Beyond consortiums, stakeholders shared some examples of more inclusive decision making approaches within wider local systems but in the main these are not yet embedded. Examples include: wider organisations reaching out to consult consortiums and wider local network organisations on how best to respond to incidents and to co-deliver responses; and consortiums or VCS organisations being invited to join wider forums or boards in the local system. Programme stakeholders suggested that to progress, **openness to working in partnership between and within sectors could be further improved in some areas**.

Less focus so far on greater community inclusion in decision making structures but promising emerging examples

In terms of including the community in decision making, **stakeholders were enthusiastic about the progress made so far within MyEnds activities** (such as community engagement forums and Youth Steering Groups), but **sites have made less progress in achieving more inclusive decision making structures and processes beyond these**. This relates to the time needed to build relationships and skills in community engagement, both amongst local programme stakeholders but also communities themselves (see Section 7.6).

It would also be challenging to achieve this impact in the wider system without the support and efforts of those organisations with a role to play in decision making. Within the timeframe of the programme, sites have tended to prioritise other aims when drawing on the support of wider organisations (for example, joining up approaches to delivering support, sharing information, and responding to incidents) and when seeking to make changes in the local system (for example, strengthening wider local networks and building capacity amongst statutory, VCS, and grassroots organisations).

However, **stakeholders shared emerging examples of more inclusive decision making practices** beyond those carried out as part of MyEnds and were enthusiastic about this direction of travel.

Spotlight: Examples of community involvement in decision making (Ecosystem Coldharbour)

- Youth Steering Group members from Ecosystem Coldharbour sitting on the local authority's housing forum and participating in a local authority panel to allocate funding for employment support for young people.

- Through their involvement in an estate-based community engagement forum run by Ecosystem Coldharbour, one resident has received training to develop skills in agenda writing and reporting and formed relationships with local organisations. Building on this experience, this resident has gone on to co-chair a local ward meeting with the police.

More broadly there was some suggestion that MyEnds has helped to highlight the possibilities of how to involve community members to wider organisations, and strengthened groups and forums which wider stakeholders can then access as part of their decision making processes. They are hopeful that this will increase over time, however the majority of community engagement forums and groups strengthened through MyEnds may not be on-track to self-sustain beyond the end of the programme without similar levels of input and support.

7.7.5 Local networks collectively leading programmes to reduce violence

Increase in collective action on violence reduction driven by MyEnds consortiums

Across the MyEnds sites **there are examples of organisations collectively leading activities and initiatives to reduce violence more so than prior to the programme. In the main this is happening through MyEnds programmes with consortium partners playing a driving role**, although there are emerging examples of initiatives between wider local network organisations.

As with other community networks activities, collectively-led initiatives have developed somewhat opportunistically. They **tend to build organically from strengthened relationships between organisations and opportunities for their agendas to align**. As such, they typically focus on individual activities and initiatives rather than programmes of activities, and typically involve two or three organisations rather than whole networks.

The main examples of collectively-led activities are:

- **Taking a multi-agency approach to delivering outreach and detached youth work**, wherein outreach teams collectively spread across target areas and days of the week. Some sites have carried out a mapping exercise between teams to inform this, identifying hotspots and resources within the target areas. Some outreach also join together in multi-agency meetings to share information.

- **Community engagement events** are typically developed with some input from multiple wider local network organisations who also participate in the events, for example running stalls to publicise their support offer.

- **Multi-agency summits to address key issues.** Some sites have held summits or events to bring local organisations together to address particular

issues, for example supporting women and girls, or school exclusions. Whilst these are typically initiated by consortiums, they aim to establish a shared commitment to being part of the solution across wider local organisations.

- **Activities delivered in partnership with police**. Many of the examples of collectively-led initiatives involve police and VCS organisations, and typically relate to building community relations and creating a dialogue, and/or upskilling police offers.

Spotlight: Delivery of Stop and Search focus group led by Black Thrive (Ecosystem Coldharbour)

Black Thrive delivered three workshops with young people looking at the impacts of Stop and Search, particularly the negative effects of racial profiling of Black young people in Lambeth by the police. This piece of work draws on Black Thrive's existing knowledge gathered through partnership work with King's College London (researching the impact of stop and search on the mental health of Black young people) and with the ESRC Centre for Society and Mental Health (researching the mental health of young people in South London).

Workshops explored research and testimony, as well as creating a space for young people to discuss their views and experiences. After the workshops, young people have started sharing their views with local police and co-producing a research piece to better inform police on the negative impacts of Stop and Search in the hopes of reducing its disproportionate use. This research piece is intended to be useful for the local authority, police, and community members.

Spotlight: Issue-based workshops with police in schools (Home Cooked)

Home Cooked has funded an activity delivered between the police, a VCS organisation called Hope in Haringey, and a local school. Hope in Haringey liaise with teachers at the school to identify prevalent issues (for example, consent) and police then deliver workshops on these issues. Pupils also have the opportunity to propose topics for workshops or open discussions with the police, for example the use of stop and search. Sixth form students have been able to share their views with newly qualified officers as a part of the onboarding process.

Continued areas for development in engagement and buy-in of all relevant partners

Whilst stakeholders are positive about this progress, **there was some suggestion that the buy-in and openness of some organisations to working in partnership could be improved**. At the same time, stakeholders recognised

that **this way of working may be a change in mindset and a new experience** for some organisations.

8 Contribution to future violence reduction

8.1 Key messages

- Stakeholders recognise that violence reduction will take longer than MyEnds and will also depend on other factors outside of the scope of the programme. Sites are working towards a series of longer-term outcomes to set local networks up to contribute to violence reduction, such as ensuring that they are better equipped to monitor and respond to violence and are more sustainable.

- Stakeholder consultation suggests that MyEnds has contributed to greater responsiveness to need and more joined-up and proactive responses to incidents. For core local stakeholders, this was often seen as a key success of MyEnds in their area. It has resulted from stronger local networks and partnership working and from the ability of consortiums to take a lead in driving wider partners towards a more shared response. Some sites have also developed processes and infrastructure to prepare for incident response.

- Community awareness and support for local network initiatives is fairly positive, with reach having grown in Year 2. However, reaching all target groups remains a challenge, particularly those furthest from support.

- Stakeholders suggested that improvements to joined-up working will have strengthened the ways that services operate and support is delivered. The interventions funded by MyEnds have also contributed to a sense of support in the local area being appropriate for some needs and available in suitable locations. However, this doesn't yet reach more tertiary support in most cases. Beyond MyEnds, there remain gaps and areas for improvement in the local support landscape, and stakeholders are not yet generally seeing these shift.

- Planning for the sustainability of local networks is not yet embedded, but will likely be a bigger focus in the extension period. Stakeholders are hopeful that stronger relationships and trust will remain, plus information sharing and some joint forums. However, it is likely that further funding will be needed to embed progress seen so far and continue to work towards longer-term MyEnds aims.

- It is challenging to comment on progress towards future violence reduction. Clear strategies for this at the programme and intervention level are not yet embedded, and the majority of interventions are targeting prevention or early intervention and may therefore take longer to bear fruit. Developing clearer mechanisms of change and measurement of shorter-term outcomes will be a key area of focus for the extension, which may help gauge progress.

- The commitment of local networks has been a key supporting factor of progress towards longer-term goals, often underpinned by the passion and leadership of consortiums and a shared desire to improve local systems. Some common challenges are the level of buy-in of some local partners, the capacity and skills to focus on longer-term strategic goals whilst also meeting more immediate needs, and working within the contexts of their local systems.

8.2 Chapter overview

This chapter explores the differences made by MyEnds in terms of contributing to future violence reduction. It covers ways that approaches have been strengthened so far and then explores stakeholders' views about progress towards longer-term impacts including stronger trust and collaboration, more sustainable networks, and reduced violence.

8.3 Building stronger approaches to violence reduction

8.3.1 Greater capacity to respond to need

Having up-to-date information about new and changing needs was highlighted as a strength of local networks, which is contributing to better responsiveness to need amongst network partners. Stakeholders agreed that **strong local networks developed through MyEnds enable organisations to share information about new and emerging needs quickly and coordinate appropriate responses**.

The **activities funded through MyEnds have also enabled networks to better identify needs, particularly through community engagement and outreach and detached youth work**. For example, outreach has been useful for identifying hotspots and potentially escalating tensions between groups and implementing more targeted support in response.

However, **sites vary in the degree to which their activities, including outreach, are geared to those with higher need levels and who are closer to violence**. Responding to this group's needs may therefore be an area for development.

While core local stakeholders appreciate the freedom they have within MyEnds to develop locally-specific activities in response to this information, **it may be a challenge to strike a balance between flexing to new and emerging needs and maintaining a focus on the longer-term goal of violence reduction**. On the one hand, local stakeholders agreed that addressing shorter-term needs has been useful for gaining community buy-in, showing goodwill, and benefitting community members. On the other hand, it may draw sites' resources and focus towards some activities which are less clearly aligned to violence reduction.

8.3.2 Improved capacity to respond to incidents

Stakeholders agreed that **more joined-up and proactive responses to incidents are evident since MyEnds**, and core local stakeholders often highlighted this as a key success of MyEnds in their area.

They reported that **improved responses are mainly happening through increased and quicker communication between organisations** (particularly between statutory and VCS organisations, typically via consortiums) about incidents that have happened and potential support needs as a result. This

communication helps networks plan timely targeted support and join this up between organisations, including:

- Targeting existing support to new hotspots or potential hotspots.
- Efforts to de-escalate tensions and mitigate potential retaliation, typically via increased outreach and detached youth work.
- Offering support to victims/survivors and communities.
- Helping to facilitate a dialogue between statutory organisations and communities through community engagement, to help with trust and information sharing between the two.

Some sites have also developed processes and infrastructure to prepare for incident response, although these have generally not been embedded for long enough for stakeholders to comment on their impact.

Spotlight: Community Blueprint for responding to incidents (Rise Up East)

Statutory organisations, community-based organisations, and parents had all expressed the need for a localised framework which would enable the community to be kept abreast of violent incidents happening in Hackney Wick, and to reduce speculation which can heighten fear and tensions. Bringing statutory partners and community-based organisations together through the Rise Up East consortium enabled closer partnership working, through which such a framework (the Community Blueprint) was drawn up.

This is a localised framework for incident response, intended to be used as a tool to bring together consortium partners, statutory organisations and parents in decision making relating to risk assessment, provision for young people, and as support to the community. It lays out via a flowchart the immediate information sharing that should happen, and the key groups, settings, and responses that should be considered depending on the nature of the incident and the community's needs. It is perceived by stakeholders as a legacy piece for Rise Up East, expected to be adopted and adapted beyond the MyEnds programme.

Overall, **stakeholders agreed that more consideration is being given to how agencies come together to respond to incidents**, and the planning of these responses has therefore become slightly more proactive and less reactive. They also agreed that **responses themselves have improved**, and shared examples of community members receiving timely and appropriate support. In some cases, they highlighted examples of statutory organisations, particularly the police, delivering more appropriate support to the needs of the community, for example taking a whole-family approach.

The key supporting factors to this progress were:

- **Stronger relationships, trust, information sharing, and awareness between services,** tied to efforts to strengthen wider local networks (see Sections 7.4 and 7.7.1). Stakeholders also suggested that examples of statutory organisations working in partnership with wider VCS organisations and networks when responding to incidents are an indicator of their trust in these organisations. This was highlighted as a key change since MyEnds for some sites.

- **The capability and ability of consortiums to take a leading role** in driving this collective approach.

- **The links and relationships between local networks and communities** and community groups, which wider community engagement activities (see Section 7.6) may have supported. In one example, a consortium partnered with a local Latin American community group, focusing on co-ordinating a culturally competent response that would be effective in engaging the local community. To support this, the consortium used a local youth centre as the base for the response.

Stakeholders are hopeful that these improvements in incident response will be sustained in the longer-term, however this may be limited by the extent to which this momentum is currently driven by key individuals within consortiums.

8.3.3 Community trust in services and support

The evaluation has not included methods which enable us to comment with confidence on community members' trust in services and support. It is possible that community engagement has led to increased trust in the appropriateness of services and support, for example in instances where they have seen their input inform the interventions and activities delivered. However, we do not have enough evidence to make a judgement about this. In addition, any positive impact on this outcome is likely to be limited to those community members who have participated in or are aware of the MyEnds programme in their local area (see Sections 7.6 and 8.3.4).

In lieu of direct consultation with community members on this outcome, consulted programme and local stakeholders shared their views on whether MyEnds has increased the appropriateness of services and support delivered in target areas. They highlighted **some improvement in appropriateness, with room for further improvement**. Examples of improvements in appropriateness included:

- **More joined-up working**, particularly via increased signposting and referring; new referral pathways; and more information sharing (see Section 7.7.1). Stakeholders suggested that these changes will have: strengthened the ways that services operate and support is delivered; created more access points into support; and enabled more participants to be linked into appropriate support.

- **Interventions funded by MyEnds**. Stakeholders suggested that these interventions have benefitted participants and met some needs, particularly in relation to positive diversionary uses of time (see Section 6.6). Stakeholders also suggested that the ethos and approaches of funded interventions are appropriate to the community's needs, especially culturally competent, whole-family, and trauma-informed approaches. However, it is challenging to explore this in more depth at this stage whilst monitoring data is still under improvement.

- **Securing physical spaces in target areas for young people and community members to spend time and receive support**. This has been a focus for some sites, where core local stakeholders agreed that it has been important to establish these spaces where communities live to avoid the need to travel far to receive support, but also to increase the visibility of local organisations and their commitment to the community.

Spotlight: Opening up youth club provision and spaces for young people to spend time (THICN)

THICN identified a dearth of available provisions for young people on the Isle of Dogs, including a lack of spaces or youth centres. Based on knowledge of local infrastructure and relationships with housing providers, THICN has introduced three new youth club spaces where this previously wasn't available. These provide young people with a safe environment in which to spend time on a regular basis and offer indoor spaces where interventions can be delivered. THICN is also able to open the spaces at targeted times to reduce the risk of young people becoming involved in violence on the streets. For example, the consortium has found that having a space open on Friday evenings seems to decrease the risk of violence affecting young people occurring.

At the same time, stakeholders agreed that **the appropriateness of services and support in target areas could still be improved**, with gaps remaining including potentially for tertiary support.

They also highlighted **some wider gaps in local systems which are not yet shifting in a substantial way**, such as: support for potentially underserved demographic groups such as women and girls (see Section 6.5.2); support for those involved in youth justice or alternative provision; and support that sits with statutory organisations but may be 'stretched', such as CAMHS.

8.3.4 Community awareness and support for local network initiatives

Progress has been somewhat mixed in terms of raising awareness and support for local initiatives amongst the community, stakeholders reported.

Whilst sites have made positive headway, **stakeholders agreed that community awareness and support could increase further and that**

reaching some target groups remains a challenge. This was particularly true for young people and community members who are furthest away from support. This was also evident in the systems change survey, where responses highlighted improving the visibility of initiatives as one of the main areas for improvement for local MyEnds programmes.

Where sites have raised community awareness and support, stakeholders highlighted several supporting factors: carrying out community engagement events and outreach; and the reputations and community links of consortium and wider local network partners.

> *"When people hear any of these big names [of consortium partners], they know what the project is about and they know what issues they can help deal with."*
>
> *- Local stakeholder*

Programme stakeholders reflected that **increasing the branding and promotion of their MyEnds programme could support sites** with increasing awareness, improving community support and also potentially attracting wider local organisations to participate in MyEnds. Sites have varied in the extent to which this type of awareness raising has been a focus. Sites which have invested more energy in branding have mainly done so via creating a consortium website, using social media channels, using a logo and, in one case, publishing a fortnightly newsletter highlighting their activities and available support in the area.

8.4 Sustainability and ability to contribute to violence reduction

8.4.1 Local networks not yet more sustainable

Stakeholders agreed that i**t is challenging to predict the sustainability of local networks at this stage**. In the main sites plan to focus on this more during the extension period. They also **recognised that further funding will be needed to embed the progress seen so far and to continue to work towards the longer-term aims of MyEnds**.

They are hopeful that some of the changes seen so far during MyEnds will be sustained beyond the programme timeframe, in particular: stronger awareness, trust, relationships, and joined-up working between local organisations; resources developed via MyEnds such as service directories and incident response blueprints; and the skills, knowledge, and confidence developed amongst local organisations and some community leaders, particularly Youth Steering Group members.

Most sites have not yet developed plans for the legacy of MyEnds beyond the programme timeframe. Core local stakeholders suggested that as a minimum they would like to retain key network meetings in some form, although potentially with more streamlined membership and governance. Stakeholders are also hopeful that the experience of working in partnership on MyEnds will open up local networks to future similar funding opportunities. Programme stakeholders suggested that some other factors in sites' ability to secure

additional funding may be (1) their ability to demonstrate the impact of their activities including through monitoring and evaluation, and (2) the strength of relationships with key local funders including local authorities.

Most sites plan to explore resourcing options during the extension period, however Rise Up East has begun activities aiming to address this in Year 2.

Spotlight: Supporting the sustainability of local networks (Rise Up East)

Rise Up East has taken steps to support the sustainability of its wider local networks:

1. Arranging for support from the East London Business Alliance (ELBA) including with developing organisations' internal structures and business models and acting as a broker between VCSE organisations and the business sector.

2. Consortium partners working in partnership to seek funding opportunities in addition to and beyond MyEnds.

3. Linking into meetings cand networks that pre-exist and are likely to continue beyond MyEnds. This avoids duplication and leaves resource available for creating new forums related to topics that are of interest to the community but may not have an existing network attached to them, such as the Reducing School Exclusions Programme. Collaborating with people and organisations with shared interests in these topics is expected to support the sustainability of these forums.

8.4.2 Contribution to violence reduction not yet established

"You are sending seeds of opportunity out into the community and you don't know where they all land."

- Local stakeholder

It is challenging to comment on whether MyEnds sites are on track to reduce violence at this stage.

Local stakeholders agreed that longer-term delivery of activities that have been initiated or and strengthened through MyEnds would be needed for them to be able to make this impact. Successfully reducing violence will also depend on other factors outside of the scope of the programme, such as policy and funding contexts, wider initiatives, stakeholder buy-in, factors affecting violence levels, and changing needs amongst the community.

However, stakeholders shared the view that **local systems will be better placed to respond to** incidents and to deliver violence reduction efforts as a result of MyEnds, particularly through stronger local networks (see Sections 7.4.2 and

7.7). They are also hopeful that emerging stronger links with the community will support violence reduction efforts through increased awareness, participation, support, and co-development of activities and interventions.

At the same time, stakeholders recognised that **it has been challenging within the timeframe and remit of the programme to embed a shared vision or strategy for violence reduction within the target areas** (see 7.7.2). One potential challenge suggested by a small minority of stakeholders, is the hyper-local focus of MyEnds. They suggested that key local stakeholders with a role to play in violence reduction – and especially those whose remit is wider than the local area covered by MyEnds – may struggle to buy into this approach. This could be because they identify competing needs in other areas or see the causes of violence as crossing between hyper-local areas and therefore requiring responses that are co-ordinated across larger areas.

It is currently challenging to comment on the likely contribution of funded interventions to violence reduction. This is partly because many of their models, mechanisms of change, and intended outcomes are still being defined and articulated. This is an area of ongoing support for sites and a key priority for the extension period, which the VRU outcomes framework is intended to support (see Section 5.5). Programme stakeholders are hopeful that developing this information about interventions and improving short-term outcomes measurement will help with being able to gauge progress towards violence reduction.

Based on the profile of funded interventions, their potential contribution to violence reduction is mainly via prevention of potential future violence through supporting those at risk or potential risk, stakeholders agreed. This has been the focus of the majority of interventions, although **there are emerging examples of interventions which seek to reduce involvement in violence amongst those already involved or at higher levels of risk**. As such, any impact of funded interventions on violence levels is only likely become evident in the longer-term.

Context: The role of a theory for how to reduce violence

This has been a key area of learning for local and programme stakeholders, though MyEnds. Whilst stakeholders appreciated the way that sites have been empowered to develop their own localised approaches for how to tackle violence, they may have struggled to understand, draw on, and add to the evidence base for 'what works', which itself is newly emerging and not yet well consolidated. As such, they may have geared their interventions more towards shorter-term outcomes which may or may not also align with violence reduction in the longer-term. Stakeholders also reflected that developing interventions to support those with higher need levels is generally not an existing area of expertise for consortiums and wider local networks, and may also require a shift to longer-term planning.

One consequence of the limited use of theory is that, as the models of funded interventions are articulated more clearly, some may turn out to be limited in their scope to reduce or prevent violence. It could also mean that sites'

overall approaches are not well-rounded and comprehensive in how they respond to different levels of need. For instance, there was some suggestion that referral pathways for those with higher need levels who are identified by local networks could be improved, as well as support offers. Some examples included those involved in violence, looked after children, vulnerable adults, victims/survivors of violence and exploitation, and those released from prison.

In response to this learning, the VRU has introduced more steer and guidance to sites, particularly for the interventions strand, through developing VRU outcomes framework and encouraging sites to develop and deliver a greater mix of primary, secondary, and tertiary interventions.

9 Recommendations

Figure 9 presents recommendations for MyEnds and future similar programmes based on learning from the impact evaluation. Many of these recommendations are already recognised by stakeholders involved in commissioning, programme management and delivery. We realise that not all stakeholders will agree with all recommendations. They are included here in the interests of summarising learning and promoting discussion to support further efforts to design and implement community-based programmes aiming to reduce violence.

Figure 9: Impact evaluation recommendations and rationale

Recommendation		Explanation	Report Section(s)
1.	Considering the balance between ambitious programme design and programme timeframe.	While the ambitious aims of MyEnds were appreciated by stakeholders, they also recognised that the number and complexity of delivery strands, key principles, and intended outcomes and impacts were challenging to balance within the timeframe of the programme. As such, sites have typically de-prioritised some areas of focus compared to others, and may have struggled to progress as far with delivery in line with the MyEnds approach as originally envisaged during programme design. Where longer timeframes are not possible, taking a less ambitious approach to programme design and aims may be helpful for ensuring efforts can be focused on the key priority areas and that the capacity of those delivering the work is well-matched to the programme requirements. Some particular considerations include, building in adequate lead-in and scoping time; building in adequate programme management capacity from the outset; and providing sufficient steer and support to those involved in delivery (see recommendations (2) and (6) below) whilst maintaining the emphasis on locally-developed approaches.	Sections 2.4, 3.3.2, 7.5, 7.6, 7.7.2, and 7.7.4.
2.	Developing a clear theory for how to reduce violence from the outset at the programme and local levels, whist still facilitating the emergence of	Future similar programmes would benefit from providing clearer consideration and steer from the outset about how best to approach violence reduction, articulate and embed this thinking, and test its efficacy. Whilst stakeholders supported the principle of empowering local organisations to develop their own locally specific approaches, the clarity of these approaches in terms of violence reduction is an area for improvement at both the local programme and at intervention/activity levels. There were also some differing	Sections 2.4, 4.7, 6.3, 6.4, 7.3, 7.7.2, and 8.4.

Recommendation		Explanation	Report Section(s)
	locally developed ideas and approaches.	expectations between programme and local stakeholders about the approaches that sites would lean towards, with programme stakeholders envisaging more activities seeking to reduce violence amongst those involved in violence and less of a predominance of prevention and early intervention. By contrast, sites typically saw their approaches as in line with the public health ethos of London's VRU. Future similar programmes would therefore benefit from clearer steer and support on how to approach violence reduction, so that these theories at the programme and intervention levels can better be articulated and delivered, and to add to the emerging evidence base of 'what works'. Providing clear guidance and ensuring shared understanding of key principles which may inform approaches (such as 'public health approach' or 'trauma-informed') would also be beneficial.	
3.	Taking a strategic approach at the programme and local levels to reach, including identifying target groups and monitoring progress in reaching these.	Stakeholders agreed that the reach of MyEnds activities and interventions has been an area for development, whilst recognising that promising steps in this direction have been taken towards the end of Year 2. Tied to recommendation (2) above, differing expectations and unclear strategies and rationale in terms of intended reach have played a role. Future similar programmes would benefit from taking more strategic approaches to target reach at the local programme level, and from clearer steer at the programme level about target groups if this is a priority. They should: • Consider carrying out needs assessments as part of programme design to help target activities towards those with greatest need levels and to avoid duplicating efforts locally.	Sections 2.4, 6.3, 6.5, 7.6, 6.3, and 8.4.

Recommendation		Explanation	Report Section(s)
		• Map and build on existing routes into reaching target group(s) locally. • Consider the range of approaches and the existing evidence base for reaching different target groups. • Consider both demographic reach and reach in terms of need level, which should link to the wider theory of change for the programme (see recommendation (2) above).	
4.	Taking a strategic approach from the programme outset to developing and embedding robust monitoring, evaluation, and learning.	Stakeholders at the programme and local level agree that embedding robust monitoring processes to understand the approaches, delivery, reach, and impact of MyEnds activities has been an ongoing area of development. This relates to clearly articulating the models of activities delivered, but also to collecting, collating, and analysing data on delivery, reach, and outcomes. Some contributing factors have been: changing steer and requirements over the course of the programme; limited capacity at the programme management level to support sites to understand and meet requirements; and limited capacity (particularly skills and confidence) and buy-in to carry out robust monitoring, learning, and evaluation amongst local partners particularly amongst the VCS and grassroots sectors. Future similar programmes should build in robust monitoring from the outset and allocate adequate resourcing to understanding and supporting the capacity building needs of those involved in delivery. It may also be valuable to reflect on whether the standards of robust monitoring which are typically required by larger organisations could be adapted to ensure they are reasonable and accessible within projects which emphasise devolving power, taking into	Sections 2.4 and 5.5.

Recommendation		Explanation	Report Section(s)
		account the 'stage of development, context, and continuous learning needs' of the VCS organisations involved (Youth Endowment Fund, 2021a).	
5.	Continuing to gather learning about useful pre-conditions to future similar consortium-led approaches to violence reduction.	The variations between sites' set-ups and approaches has facilitated a range of useful learning, particularly around supporting factors for establishing strong consortiums and wider local networks working in partnership. Those involved in MyEnds should continue to add to and pool this learning, which can also benefit future similar programmes.	Sections 2.3 and 7.4.
6.	Considering how best to understand and meet the capacity building needs of those involved in delivering MyEnds or future similar programmes.	The VCS organisations involved in delivering MyEnds at the local level bring a range of important skills and resources. However, their skills and knowledge in some areas have been an area of development, programme stakeholders agreed. Examples included, reaching new groups and adapting support and community engagement for these groups; delivering capacity building support and grants funds to the grassroots sector; and monitoring, evaluation, and learning. Whilst capacity building support has been made available to support some of these areas throughout the programme, the resourcing, participation, and efficacy could have been strengthened, stakeholders agreed. Having a stronger initial understanding of the capacity building needs of VCS and grassroots organisations would support this. Future similar programmes would benefit from taking steps to establish the assets and gaps in local partners' skills; developing capacity building support which is targeted and resourced in line with requirements; and building in clear expectations for participation in this support.	Sections 2.4 and 5.4.

Recommendation		Explanation	Report Section(s)
7.	Considering the opportunities and boundaries for aligned and partnership working between statutory organisations and the VCS and grassroots sectors.	Building closer relationships and collaboration between VCS and statutory sector organisations has been a key strength and achievement of MyEnds, stakeholders agreed. As this has developed it has also raised important considerations about the most appropriate functions and responsibilities of the different partners. Statutory organisations in MyEnds sites have often capitalised on the opportunity for consortiums to facilitate reach into communities which may have previously been limited (at least for the statutory organisations themselves). This has related especially to community engagement and dialogue but also to some intervention delivery such as youth work. This relationship can benefit both the VCS and statutory organisations in enabling them to work better with and for communities. However, facilitating or delivering activities that are priorities for statutory partners encroaches on the capacity and scope for VCS networks to explore and deliver other priorities, which might be more aligned to those of community members. Therefore these dynamics will require close monitoring and management to ensure that they continue to promote the principles of MyEnds in increasing community-led decision making and action to reduce violence.	Section 7.7.2.
8.	Building in networking and knowledge-sharing opportunities for sites throughout the programme.	Sites have found it useful to network and share learning and would appreciate more frequent opportunities for this. Building in more regular networking opportunities which include scope for discussion beyond specific topics would be useful.	Section 5.4.4.

10 Appendix 1: Bibliography

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11 Appendix 2: Methodology

11.1 Overview

This appendix details the methodology for the impact evaluation, which is summarised in Section 3.3.1. It used a mixed-method approach. Methods and tools were agreed with colleagues at London's VRU before use in the field, including consent, information sharing, and research tools.

11.2 Impact evaluation methodology

This impact evaluation was carried out via the following methods, each described in more detail below. Analysis was triangulated across all methods.

1. Stakeholder consultation (carried out January – February 2023).
2. Review of site and programme level documentation (carried out October 2022 – April 2023).
3. Systems change survey (carried out January – March 2023).
4. Case study research of one activity or intervention per site (carried out November 2022 – February 2023).
5. Observation of local network meetings (carried out January – February 2023).
6. Review and analysis of monitoring data (carried out April 2023).

11.2.1 Stakeholder consultation

We carried out semi-structured interviews with a range of key programme and local stakeholders. Interviews were carried out remotely in most cases except where they aligned with other in-person fieldwork, in which case they were carried out in-person.

Context: About a semi-structured interview approach

A semi-structured approach allows each interview to be adapted to the research participant's role and insight into the MyEnds programme, and for research participants to highlight the areas that they identify as important.

We recognise that not every participant is able to comment on every topic. For example, wider local stakeholders will have different insight to core local stakeholders in relation to consortium functioning. We reflexively adapted our interview approach accordingly, and interviews focused on the areas on which participants had the most insight.

We developed and agreed with colleagues at London's VRU, topic guides and a sampling approach for interviews with each of the following groups:

- **Programme stakeholders**: The VRU team and Listen Up (with capacity for up to eight interviews).

- **Local stakeholders**: Core and wider local stakeholders (see Glossary for descriptions) (with capacity for up to 13 interviews per site).

Figure 10 provides a breakdown of the stakeholders interviewed across these groups.

Figure 10: Breakdown of stakeholders interviewed

Stakeholder group	No. interviewed
Programme stakeholders	
London's VRU	8
Listen Up	2
Local stakeholders	
Act as One	12
Ecosystem Coldharbour	12
Gamechangers	11
Home Cooked	11
OFOB	11
Rise Up East	13
THICN	12
West Croydon	8
All stakeholders	
Total	**100**

11.2.2 Review of programme documentation

We requested and reviewed available site and programme level documentation and data (additional to monitoring data) at two points in time: (1) prior to stakeholder consultation to establish a baseline understanding of progress with delivery and learning in Year 2, and (2) at the point of triangulating analysis across methods, following all fieldwork.

Whilst not all sites shared all of the following, the main types of documentation shared with the evaluation were:

- Programme plans and strategies.
- Theories of change.

- Outcomes frameworks.
- Key meeting minutes and terms of reference.
- Presentations to London's VRU or local stakeholder groups.

Where consortium websites were in place, we also reviewed these.

11.2.3 Systems change survey

We designed and agreed with VRU colleagues a short online questionnaire for use with core and wider stakeholders in each of the eight sites. We encouraged:

- Responses from a range of groups including strategic stakeholders, managerial staff, frontline workers, volunteers, community leaders, and community members otherwise involved in the local MyEnds programme.
- Local stakeholders to disseminate this survey more widely to include local stakeholders who may not be involved in MyEnds but whose role gives them insight into violence reduction efforts in the local system, or into the issues that MyEnds seeks to address in the shorter-term.

This online questionnaire was distributed via key local programme stakeholders and was also sent to stakeholders who were interviewed. Figure 11 provides the numbers of survey responses per site which were analysed (50 respondents who did not answer questions beyond their role were excluded before analysis).

Figure 11: Survey response numbers, by site

Site	No. responses
Act as One	31
Ecosystem Coldharbour	32
Gamechangers	29
Home Cooked	36
OFOB	28
Rise Up East	31
THICN	32
West Croydon	30
Total	**249**

We carried out quantitative analysis of closed responses broken down by site, role type, and consortium members, and thematic analysis of open-text responses broken down by site.

11.2.4 Impact case studies

Eight interventions/activities, one per site, were selected for an impact case study. These were selected in collaboration with VRU colleagues and core local stakeholders such as site programme managers, via on a scoping exercise which sought to identify those which (1) represent potentially innovative or promising activities, (2) collectively across the sites would explore a range of activities and learning, and (3) in which case study research would be feasible. The scoping process involved:

- **Identification of activities**: Monitoring data, data from the process evaluation, and conversations with VRU colleagues and site PMs were used to identify lists of activities carried out in each of the MyEnds sites, and potential candidates for case studies.

- **Selection of case studies**: Using the above information, a shortlist of two potential case studies per site was developed and agreed with VRU colleagues and local programme managers. Local programme leads then brokered contact with activity providers to enable the evaluation team to meet with them to understand their suitability. A list of one case study per site was then agreed with VRU colleagues.

Bespoke research methods were undertaken for each case study to best reflect the activities selected.

Context: Case study research methods

The Cordis Bright team used a range of methods in each case study, including:

- Attending and observing activities in action.

- Consulting with those most closely involved, including providers; young people and community members who were participants in the activity/intervention; and in some cases family members and wider stakeholders with insight into the activity/intervention and its impact.

- Analysis of available demographic and monitoring data.

We worked closely with VRU colleagues, site PMs, and case study providers to agree and carry out this research, including the development of tools.

Broadly, case study methods were developed and carried out via this process:

- **Fieldwork for case studies**: A template for scoping each case study was developed and agreed with VRU colleagues and used to guide an initial meeting with the activity provider, in some cases combined with an observation of the activity. This contributed to a greater understanding of the development; rationale; nature; scale of delivery; key beneficiaries; and intended outcomes, outcomes measurement approaches of each activity. This

information was then used to tailor our approach to qualitative data generation and quantitative data collation, and to develop appropriate research tools and protocols in agreement with VRU colleagues. Finally, fieldwork was conducted using agreed methods and tools.

- **Analysis and write up of case studies**: This included receiving, cleaning and carrying out analysis of quantitative data using Excel; initial thematic analysis of qualitative data; an internal meeting to discuss key findings; subsequent analysis to confirm understanding and add detail to key findings; and write-up of a final report for each case study.

11.2.5 Observation of local network meetings

We carried out one observation session of a key strategic meeting per site. We liaised with key local programme stakeholder(s) in each site to identify a suitable meeting, where possible re-visiting the same meeting which was observed during the process evaluation.

We developed and agreed with colleagues at London's VRU a meeting observation template for data collection, which captured key information about each meeting, evidence of progress towards intended impacts and outcomes, and evidence of effective functioning and functioning as intended.

The following meetings were observed:

- Act As One: Co-ordinating Group Meeting.
- Ecosystem Coldharbour: Leadership Meeting.
- Gamechangers: Consortium Meeting.
- Home Cooked: Project Steering Group Meeting.
- OFOB: Stakeholder Meeting.
- Rise Up East: Consortium Network Meeting.
- THICN: Board Meeting.
- West Croydon: Consortium Meeting.

11.2.6 Review and analysis of monitoring data

Quarterly standardised monitoring data from Y2Q3 of the programme was shared with the evaluation team for review and analysis. This included qualitative and quantitative data on key activities and outputs and reflections on learning to date; and quantitative data on the number, type, design, and reach of interventions delivered so far; and available outcomes data for interventions.

We reviewed the data quality and agreed an analysis approach with VRU colleagues focusing on data with sufficient completion and quality across the sites to warrant analysis at this stage. This excluded demographic reach and outcomes data. We carried out descriptive statistical analysis of quantitative data and thematic analysis of qualitative data, within and across each site, and triangulated findings with other evaluation methods.

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