

The *Fear* *and Fashion* evaluation

A summary report



Tackling knife crime in London

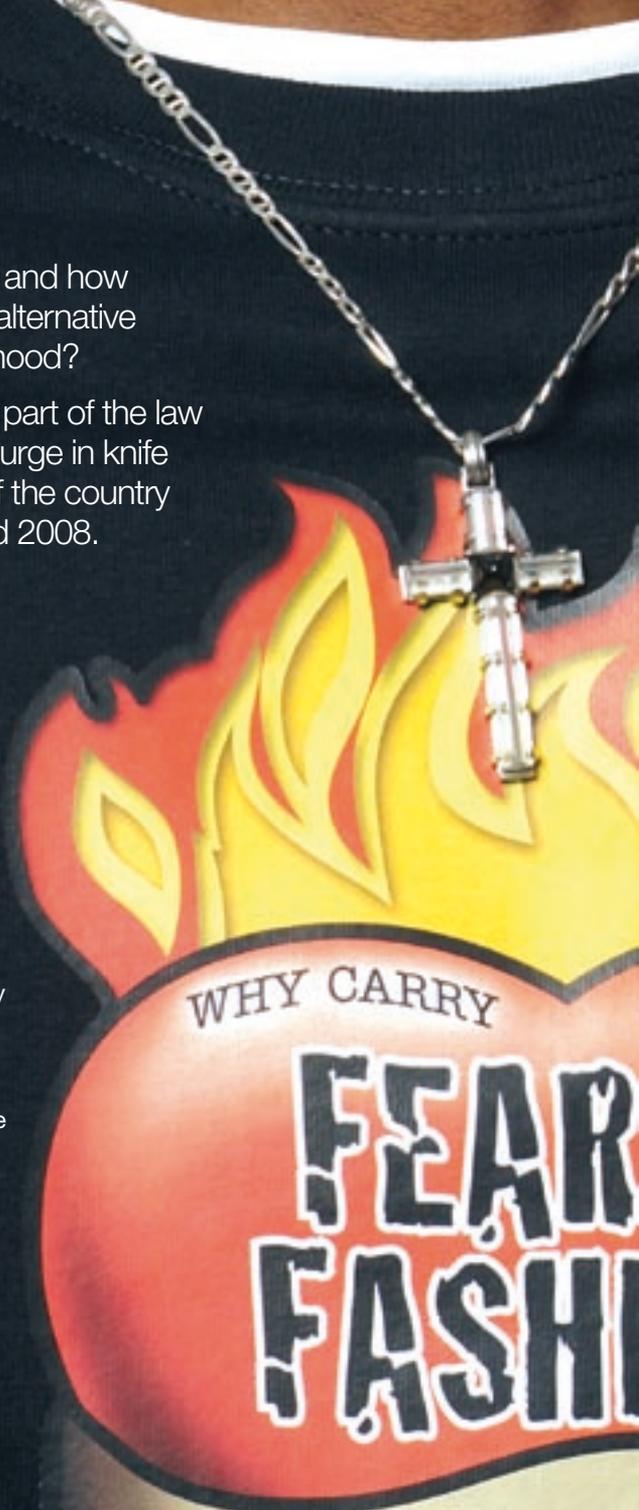
Why do young people carry knives and how can they be persuaded to choose alternative paths during the transition to adulthood?

These questions became a central part of the law and order debate following the upsurge in knife crime which affected many parts of the country but particularly London in 2007 and 2008.

Of course while the issue of what to do about knife crime seemed to emerge from nowhere in these two years, some organisations had already begun to take action to tackle what they saw as a dangerous and growing social problem.

This summary is taken from a larger evaluation report by Clear Plan (UK) Ltd into anti-knife crime activity in London from 2007 to December 2009.

This is available to download from www.fearandfashion.org.uk



An introduction to *Fear and Fashion*

The City Bridge Trust (formerly known as the Bridge House Trust) commissioned research into young people and knife crime back in 2004, long before the issue became a major social policy issue.

The research – by Lemos&Crane – concluded that there were two main reasons for young people carrying knives:

- Fear of violence from other young people; and
- To acquire status amongst their peers for carrying and/or being willing to use a knife.

Five independent grant-making trusts formed a partnership following the release of the 'Fear and Fashion: The use of knives and other weapons by young people' report. They were:

- The City Bridge Trust;
- The Esmée Fairbairn Foundation;
- The John Lyon's Charity;
- Trust for London (formerly known as City Parochial Foundation); and
- The Wates Foundation.

Their intention was to pool financial and intellectual resources to develop and fund a collaborative programme named 'Fear and Fashion' which would devise appropriate practical responses to the issues raised in the report.

The initial ambition to fund local partnerships to design and deliver holistic approaches to tackling knife crime within selected localities was abandoned – as no suitable partnerships came forward – and replaced by discrete project-based initiatives.

So where did these projects take place and how did they work?

Working with young people

Four projects designed to develop and test out different interventions to prevent young people from carrying and using weapons each received three years' worth of funding in 2007. The organisations funded to deliver exemplar projects under the Fear and Fashion programme were:

- Crime Concern's Kickstart project – Fear Or Fashion (sic) – in Southwark and Lambeth;
- Rainer (Tackling Knife Crime) in Brent;
- Paddington Development Trust hosted Working With Men (Uncut) in North Westminster; and
- Leap Confronting Conflict in North Westminster.

Each of the projects tested out a range of approaches and activities designed either to prevent young people from becoming involved in knife crime, or to address the behaviour of young people who were known to already be involved in knife crime in some way.

Three (those led by Crime Concern, the Paddington Development Trust and Leap Confronting Conflict) adopted a preventative approach aimed at young people who were considered at risk of becoming involved in knife crime. The fourth project (Rainer) worked only with individual young people who were identified through the criminal justice system as already being involved in knife crime.

The range of approaches applied by projects included:

- Awareness raising;
- Informal education;
- Mediation;
- Conflict resolution techniques;
- Mentoring;
- Social action;
- Highlighting the interplay of action and consequence; and
- Victim support.

The projects also began to develop work with parents during the later phase of their work. This decision was driven by increased recognition of the role played by parents in influencing young people and challenging or accepting a culture of knife crime, and because of the general lack of provision in this area.

Evaluating the projects

In January 2008 a team from Glasgow-based consultants Clear Plan began a two-year evaluation of the programme which also informed and supported the development of the four specific projects.

In addition to evaluation activity with individual projects, which included reviewing key documents, meeting staff, managers, steering groups and local partners, engaging with young people, and supporting projects to help them develop monitoring tools, a number of key evaluation tasks were identified:

- Field work with staff and other stakeholders in each of the projects to provide baseline information for the interventions provided or planned;
- A survey of young people engaged in the projects to examine their experience of, and attitudes towards, knife crime;
- Follow-up field work with staff and stakeholders to consider the implications of the baseline report findings; and
- A seminar to understand the opportunities, issues and challenges identified by the evaluation.

The release of the Interim Report saw a number of new priorities identified for the evaluation of the Fear and Fashion projects during 2009. Projects and the evaluation team were asked to engage with relevant stakeholders to:

- Determine to what extent the benefits/impact from the project's contributions could be attributed to good youth work practice rather than specialist knife crime related knowledge or skills;
- Assess how much of a priority knife crime in the locality actually was. Had it become more or less important than previously? Was it likely to become more or less important? What were the reasons for any changes?
- Understand how project stakeholders could embed community engagement as part of the programme's legacy; and
- Establish how possible continued Fear and Fashion investment could be best used to address these issues for the future.

A seminar with funders to consider the impact of the programme and the implications of the evaluation on future funding was also held before the production of a final report in November/December 2009.

Key findings, activities and achievements

Kickstart (now part of Catch 22, the organisation resulting from the merger of Rainer and Crime Concern)

Young people on the project responded very well to opportunities to express their views creatively to their peers in a performance format; much of the success of the Kickstart work can be attributed to expert and visible youth work practice rather than any expertise or specialism in knife crime; the project has established its credibility as a provider of specialist knife crime services with both partner agencies and with young people.

Activities	Achievements
Flexible Response Activity: one-off educational sessions and work with groups where knife crime education is discussed	Sessions included a Knife Crime Forum and a Football group (including the Drop your Knife, Live your Life tournament in summer 2009)
Circle Programme: workshops	A six week programme to be delivered in secondary schools was eventually rolled out to nine schools and a total of 411 young people
Expressions: performances and group discussions	Seven performance nights, all planned and delivered by hundreds of young people, have been held since September 2008

Tools

The Circle Programme created a flexible toolkit for use in schools and in youth work. More information on this can be found at www.fearandfashion.org.uk

Rainer (now part of Catch 22)

Success in working with young people is largely based on the interpersonal skills of the worker involved rather than their expertise in knife crime; working with young people who want to stop or reduce their links with knife crime requires a unique set of skills and tools; once a member of staff has established a status as an expert practitioner in working with young people on issues of knife crime, other local agencies are likely to seek their guidance and support to improve their own efforts to engage with young people on knife crime issues.

Activities	Achievements
One-to-one casework service based within/alongside the Brent YOT	During 2008/09 the project supported 32 young people through key working and structured group work programmes. 73% did not re-offend whilst engaging with the service and 68% were referred on to education, training or employment. The service now works with an active caseload of 25-30 young people

Tools

The Brent Tackling Knife Crime project developed two toolkits – a manual for group work and assessment tools and activity sheets for the one-to-one programme. More information on this can be found at www.fearandfashion.org.uk



Kickstart
Youth Inclusion Programme
1997 - 2007

Leap Confronting Conflict

The priority placed by Leap Confronting Conflict on evaluating young people's perceptions allowed them to amend the nature of the interventions; working in schools is difficult for external agencies because they represent a threat to school practices and could cause negative publicity; the absence of longitudinal tracking makes the task of measuring the long term impact on behaviour very difficult to achieve.

Activities

A schools programme, intensive group work and Youth Work placements

Achievements

The project worked with a total of 119 young people and 15 teachers.

A further 126 young people and 40 adults responded to conflict audits. 54 young people completed a groupwork course, and four had moved into Youth Work placements.

Six now deliver workshops exploring the consequences of knife crime

Tools

Conflict audits were created in consultation with schools. More information on this can be found at www.fearandfashion.org.uk

Working With Men (who delivered the Uncut project on behalf of Paddington Development Trust)

The importance of branding and how interventions are introduced to partners was highlighted as a key lesson. Working With Men had to re-brand their services as community safety rather than knife crime or conflict management; raising the profile of the work was important to help harness support from partners. Uncut earned significant local credibility through playing a lead role in responding to a knife-crime related death in the early stages of the project; methods and approaches were developed in response to what project workers were learning/hearing from the young people in the locality. Young people wanted to see knife crime in a broader context. They wanted better connections between what they learned from Uncut and what they learned in school.

Activities

Three programmes and additional one-to-one work:

- Conflict management;
- Mock trials; and
- Fatal Stabbing Assemblies.

Achievements

Over 1,500 young people aged 11-17 participated. This includes whole school years participating in school assemblies and those selected to take part in intensive 4-6 week programmes or one-to-one work with Uncut staff

Tools

Conflict Management Year 6 Pack; Conflict Management Key Stage 3 and 4; Uncut Parents Training pack. More information on this can be found at www.fearandfashion.org.uk



Evaluation conclusions

What have we learned from this evaluation and how can this knowledge inform future evaluations?

The projects have been effective in engaging young people in education and awareness-raising activity on knife crime. Participant evaluations report increased knowledge of the consequences of knife crime and less inclination to be involved in knife crime.

The effect of individual tailored interventions with young people already identified as having engaged in knife crime is much easier to measure than informal education or awareness-raising projects.

The success of the Fear and Fashion projects is more associated with effective practice with young people, or with broader violence reduction and conflict resolution agendas, than with specific 'knife-crime' knowledge or skills.

Impressive partnership work with schools and Youth Offending Teams has been developed by Fear and Fashion projects.

While Fear and Fashion projects have all established credibility with local partners, there has been limited success in transforming this credibility into wider sustainable influence for change outside the immediate work of the projects.

There could have been a stronger link between lessons learned during the evaluation and how the projects developed over time.

Looking to the future

Despite funding ceasing in 2010 a number of steps have been taken to preserve the legacy of Fear and Fashion.

The website set up to promote knowledge sharing (www.fearandfashion.org.uk) will continue to provide information and tools from this work and has a particular value in highlighting what support exists for parents.

Working with Men (Uncut) have plans to sell a conflict management pack and training on how to use it.

Practice tools and materials could be presented in a dedicated publication or a showcase opportunity/conference.

Discrete pockets of activity may be funded to ensure that investment to date is fully exploited to produce greater social benefit.

Training programmes to embed the Uncut materials in Youth Offending Teams and schools across London could be commissioned.

Plans to publish and disseminate Circle programme materials are in development.

Acknowledgements

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