

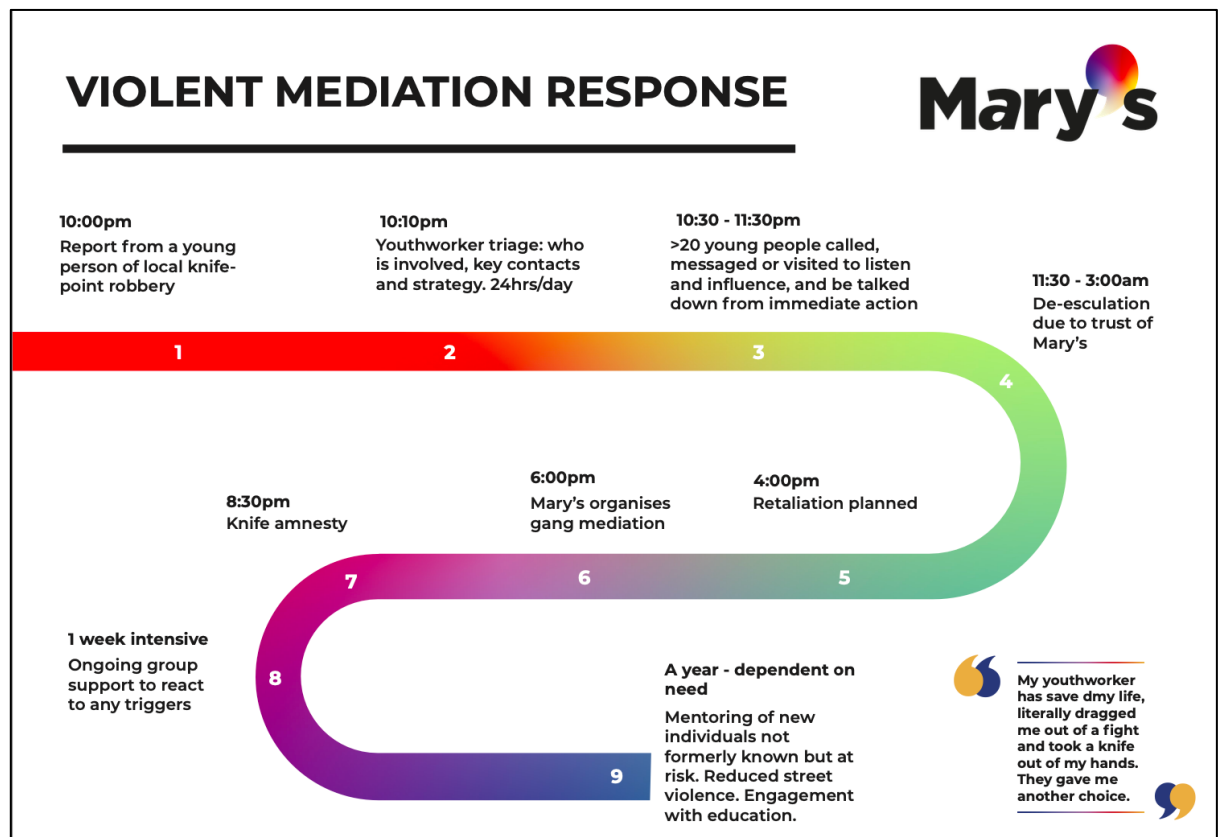


Technical Note to accompany New Year's Letter 04.01.23

Mary's Activity

Following recent stabbings Mary's has:

1. Operated our Violent Mediation Response – this uses in person and phone contact to rapidly network, risk reduce and reach young people at risk of further violence or furthering violence as a result of the incidents. This includes one to one discussions about retaliation and anger, and then moves into any required mediations and longer term bereavement and violence interruption support.



2. Systematically sent Detached Teams, of one or two youthworkers from the local area, to discuss events of violence and the on the ground situation with young people. This is done by individuals with knowledge of Serious Youth Violence who know communities and the local area such that they are able to engage.
3. Where requested, family and friends of those affected and discussed the situation and the support we can give, with Mary's practical, highly informed local understanding.



4. Longer term provision of therapeutic interventions and support to young people.
5. Working with the Local Authority and other key partners on prevention of further violence.

The Environment we operate in

Cautions and convictions related to knife crime are relatively unchanged over the past 5 years¹, with one notable dip for 2020 which was an unusual year for youth violence.

There are groups of young people who are disproportionately affected by knife crime. 2023 data shows children were twice as likely to be victims of violence if they were regularly missing education (32% were victims) or were supported by a social worker (37%). Children were four to five times more likely to be victims if they'd been in a gang (63%), carried weapons (65%) or had contact with the police (76%)². This is not to say that other families are unaffected. Any single act of violence can be terrifying and affect a young person's mental health and outlook. We acknowledge that theft from the person can escalate to dangerous violence.

What is happening to those caught with a knife is changing. In 2008 Magistrates' sentencing of knife carrying offences changed³ and since then a young person carrying a knife is less likely to receive a caution and more likely to receive a custodial sentence. We're seeing more young people who are in prison and being released back to the area as a result of lower order offences.

What works to reduce knife carrying at Mary's is credible local examples with people they believe. Discussions that are knowledgeable of the lives they are living. This is personal and human. Mary's believes there is no substitute for this level of direct contact and intervention.

A three year evaluation of Mary's Core Cohort Intervention found a 39% reduction in aggression, 59% increase in mental wellbeing and 49% increase in self esteem through a one to one support intervention for those excluded from school or involved in the criminal justice system. These are mechanisms of change affecting Serious Youth Violence as established by the Centre for Youth Impact.

¹ Office of National Statistics (2023) , *Crime in England and Wales: Police Force Area data tables*

² Youth Endowment Fund (2023), *Children, Violence and Vulnerability*

³ House of Commons Library Research Briefing (2023), *Knife Crime Statistics, England and Wales*



The approach to young people needs to address the situation holistically and deal with fear and adverse events. The cost of intervention is quite low (provision cost is around £20 per hour) with effects on outcomes that reduce youth violence, such as aggression levels and individual mental health⁴.

Broader social value work indicates that generic youthwork provides a valuable return for society. Public spending through crime reduction saved £500m on public spending and £1 investment in youth work gave a social return on investment of £3.20-£6.40.⁵

London's Violence Reduction Unit is excellent, producing evidence and needs assessment that are critical tools. However, assessment can and should broaden to Life Years Lost. This would account for many victims being young and better capture of the scale of loss being experienced. This would bring value and impact studies into the public health norms of assessment so embracing more completely the public health model of prevention of serious youth violence.

Young people have visits from police in secondary schools which go over their advice. The communication is critical and can save lives. The content for these should be improved to include an understanding of pride and how risk escalates in situations of confrontation.

Social media is, without exception, raised as a powerful and inflammatory factor in Serious Youth Violence by the workforce. Data shows 6 in 10 young people having seen real world acts of violence on social media; half of TikTok users seeing violent content on the platform; and evidence suggesting platforms pushing content promoting violence⁶. Current internet content is increasing exposure and normalisation of violence.

⁴ Violence Reduction Unit (2020), *Violence in London: What we know and how to respond*

⁵ National Youth Agency (2023), *The Social Cost of Youth Work Cuts*

⁶ Youth Endowment Fund (2023), *Children, Violence and Vulnerability*