

The Police Community Clubs of Great Britain – Supplementary written evidence (NPS0148)

As requested, I am responding to the request from their Lordships for further details on two areas of information I provided during my appearance before them.

With regard to a piece of work carried out by our development consultant in the Durham Constabulary area, this was as a result of their approach where resources were produced for use by that Constabulary within schools. Any evaluation, if carried out I would have believed that that Constabulary carried out themselves, unfortunately I cannot establish to what level that was done and for that reason, I cannot provide an informed response regarding evaluation.

With regard to the Metropolitan Police project carried out extensively through a number of London Boroughs, we can give a more informed response.

- The Stolen Lives Project

The Stolen Lives project was commissioned by the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) with Home Office Funding.

The aim was to engage young people in a gang and knife crime reduction programme with the objective of increasing awareness (of the risks & dangers), changing perceptions of why young people get involved with gangs and knife carrying and, ultimately changing behaviour.

The delivery model was underpinned by a peer led approach. We held workshops with young people (11-18 years) from different backgrounds that included mainstream schools, Pupil Referral Units (Pru's) and a variety of community groups.

The objective was to understand how gang and knife crime affected the lives of young people from their own perspective. We held over 50 workshops and engaged 2,000 plus young people across 12 targeted boroughs (identified by the MPS).

The reasons for carrying weapons and getting involved in gangs were largely similar (for self-defence, increased status, group protection) but there were variances in the type of weapons carried (by locality and group) and in the nature of gang membership (structure and operation).

The workshop findings of each borough were then used to inform key learning goals for the production of a short film (around 15 mins). Young people from the consultation groups were invited to work with filmmakers and professional actors to produce a script and support production. The underlying principle being that it was their film, highlighting issues that are real to them in their daily lives. We wanted young people to have ownership.

Once the film was complete, we then engaged local education professionals to write a 'Teachers Resource' which consisted of lesson plans tied around the film. The lesson plan was produced so that the resource could be used in schools and other settings by teachers, police officers or community workers.

There was no independent evaluation undertaken but we did produce our own evaluation of the workshop consultations. This included pre and post surveys that indicated a positive shift across a range of attitudinal measures e.g. a reduction in the perceived likelihood of carrying a weapon of around 50%, a reduction in the perceived likelihood of joining a gang circa 60%.

We also produced a 'making of' documentary that we could supply. This includes testimony from teachers, police officers and the young people themselves on the impact of the programme.

- The Prison Project

Having carried out a number of minor (maximum of two days) sport based (Amateur Boxing) interventions within various prison establishments over a number of years including Featherstone, Lowdham Grange, Pentonville and Aylesbury, in 2013 we were contacted by SERCO who were the custodians of HM Prison and Youth Offending Institution (YOI) in Doncaster, with a view to delivering a larger project based on the sport of boxing together with Citizenship.

In as brief terms as practicable, the programme agreed was as follows:

- The over-riding factor in the programme was its focus on NGB endorsed courses which were 'non-contact' and would qualify and certificate the successful participant as a NGB registered coach, provide an insight into citizenship issues and deliveries and membership (including twelve month mentoring) of a NGB club in the area within which they were subsequently released into;

NOTE: It is important to state that, at no time during this programme was anyone allowed to participate in physical competition (this replicates the system used in any civil Olympic boxing coaches course).

- To ensure longevity and on-going training within the prison (pre-release), two prison officer physical training officer/instructors [PTI's] also took part in the full programme;

- We worked with two cohorts of twenty [20] prisoners who were pre-selected by the prison in liaison with ourselves. The criteria being that they satisfied the requirements of membership of the National Governing Body [NGB] England Boxing;

Whilst this was felt appropriate by both ourselves and SERCO Limited, an intervention by HM Prison Service required that no prisoner with a conviction for violence at any level would be excluded. Clearly this requirement was very restrictive and excluded the vast majority of the prison population. In spite of this, the numbers were achieved

- All were instructed and certificated in 1st Aid and Safeguarding;
- All were trained and qualified as both a NGB endorsed Boxing Leaders and Level one Olympic Boxing coaches. These qualifications would allow the prisoner to immediately join a NGB club in their chosen region and to play an active and meaningful role within such clubs. All nominated clubs and places were agreed with these to be taken up upon release;
- During the period of instruction outlined above, twelve appropriate participants including the PTI's were instructed in the delivery of Police Clubs GB Citizenship programmes which address a number of subject areas including gun & knife crime, gang crime, bullying, internet safety, anti-social behaviour and drug abuse etc.

The final choice, consisting of three of the Citizenship cohort, were selected to deliver within the prison establishment to invited school groups. This would involve the delivery of the preferred Citizenship subject area resource together with a presentation by the prisoner on life experiences and the folly of involvement in crime etc.

- Over a period of approximately six months, those prisoners who were released, were integrated into their chosen club.

NOTE: During the six month period that the Police Clubs were directly engaged with the programme we had continual contact with the Prison Director and we understand that there had been no cases of discipline involving the participants in the prison.

We were initially commissioned to carry out ongoing monitoring of the prisoners for a period of twelve month after release. At a time approximately six months into this period, we were informed that the prison service had directed SERCO to conclude the programme.

I have recently spoken to a senior member of prison staff at that time who confirmed the reason¹ for not continuing the programme to its conclusion, their disappointment and as they recall, 'The programme was a game changer'.

Anecdotal information was equally as upbeat as we understand, that only two of the members of the programme failed in its objectives which was to provide them with recognised sports coaching qualifications, awareness of the impact of their criminality, membership of a NGB boxing Club and no re-entry into the criminal justice system.

This of course highlights my stressing the need for the education of those who perceive boxing programmes in prisons to be related wrongly, to competitive

¹ It is my understanding that the problem emanates from the 'perception' that we were teaching prisoners 'to box' and therefore to become violent. This was not the case as we were teaching them to become fully qualified sports coaches and facilitated their membership of NGB sports Clubs within their local community. From conversations with members of the House of Commons, this continuing 'perception' is a huge barrier for allowing such activities within prisons.

sporting activities and, had there been sufficient funding for the programme, we would have been delighted to have seen it to its conclusion.

As a vehicle for providing comprehensive Olympic boxing coaching qualifications together with Citizenship & mentoring, I understand that this was / has been the only programme of its kind held within a prison establishment.

- Research into Police Community Club retention of ex-members including peripheral membership of the criminal fraternity.

I have circulated all of our Community Clubs with a view to assessing the success or otherwise of their membership resulting in their continuance of membership and rejection of previous criminal / anti-social behaviour. I will submit the findings as soon as this process is completed if you so wish.

- The Department of Work and Pensions 'Kickstart Scheme'

Just as an aside, Your Lordships, I felt I should tell you how we have taken advantage of the awful pandemic in a positive way, we have become involved in the above programme which is designed for young people 16 to 24 years, unemployed, not in education and in receipt of Universal Credits.

We saw this as being aimed at the very demographic of those we wish to engage with. As a result, we have currently identified 100+ candidates who we have identified as falling within the criteria.

We have placed them in paid roles within sports clubs. Included in their employment, our coaching programmes and Citizenship modules plus other appropriate learning both in house and E-learning. This has been in progress for 5 months only and we are hoping to double the numbers we are engaged with within six months. We're rather pleased with this development and, we think it quite innovative!

In conclusion, if I may, I would like to express my gratitude to the Chair Lord Willis and to congratulate him on his boxing achievements in the 1950's, I also boxed as a youngster in that period however, unlike the Noble Lord, I had three bouts before I realised that there were in fact, three round in the contest !

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