Fear and Fashion
Programme Evaluation

Final report

March 2010
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1. Introduction

Research was commissioned in 2004 to support the Bridge House Trust to identify how it could best make a contribution to addressing the problem of knife crime and young people in London by determining:

- what were the key factors involved in young people deciding to carry knives and weapons?
- what was the scale of the problem? and
- what were the most effective types of intervention?

‘Fear and Fashion: The use of knives and other weapons by young people’ was the report which emerged, based on an examination of the available evidence. Additional primary research into the perceptions and experiences of practitioners working with young people extended this analysis. The report concluded that there were two main reasons for young people carrying knives: fear of violence from other young people, and to obtain status amongst their peers for carrying and/or being willing to use a knife. The primary recommendation of the report was the need for demonstration or pilot projects to combat the problem.

Five independent grant-making trusts developed and funded a collaborative programme named Fear and Fashion to devise practical responses to the issues raised in the report. These were:

- The City Bridge Trust
- The City Parochial Foundation
- The Wates Foundation
- The John Lyon’s Charity
- The Esmée Fairbairn Foundation

The initial ambition was to fund local partnerships to design and deliver holistic approaches to tackling knife crime within selected localities. A commissioning process featured innovative approaches such as a ‘speed dating’ type event and the provision of small development grants of up to £5000. Following initial exploration a decision was taken to abandon the ambition for locality based holistic partnerships and a more specific focus on discrete project based initiatives emerged. Overall, the revised Fear and Fashion programme comprised the following elements:

- Four projects funded to deliver work with young people.
- An evaluation conducted by Clear Plan
- Action learning managed by Lemos & Crane.
- A website to share knowledge and disseminate good practice

Four exemplar projects were funded in 2007 for three years, one in Lambeth / Southwark and three in South Brent / North Westminster, to develop and test out different interventions to prevent young people from carrying and using weapons. The organisations funded to deliver exemplar projects under the Fear and Fashion programme were

- Kickstart/Crime Concern (Fear Or Fashion) in Southwark / Lambeth
- Rainer¹ (Tackling Knife Crime) in Brent
- Paddington Development Trust (Uncut)² in North Westminster
- Leap Confronting Conflict in North Westminster

¹ In 2008, Rainer and Crime Concern merged to form a single new organisation Catch 22.
² Activity delivered by Working with Men on behalf of Paddington Development Trust.
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. The organic nature of how projects tested and developed their activities over time limits the possibility of describing any specific approaches to any particular projects however in each case there was some element of information sharing on individuals mapping of trends in knife crime followed by development of some form of action plan on how to address knife crime. Three of the projects, Kickstart Fear Or Fashion, Paddington Development Trust Uncut and Leap Confronting conflict took a largely preventative approach applied to communities of young people who were, to some degree, considered at risk of becoming involved in knife crime. The remaining project, Rainer Brent Tackling Knife Crime Service, took a remedial approach, working only with individual young people who were clearly identified through the criminal justice system as already being involved in knife crime.

The range of approaches applied by projects incorporated elements of awareness raising, informal education, mediation, conflict resolution techniques, mentoring, social action, gangs work, highlighting the interplay of action and consequence and victim support.

Projects began to develop work with parents towards the end of the evaluation period, largely as a result of an 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. Increased emphasis on the role of parents across a range of policy agendas is part of the changing context for the Fear and Fashion work. "Evidence shows that parents have a significant impact on outcomes for children and young people – right across the five outcomes identified in Every Child Matters. A positive parenting style has a strong and positive impact on children’s outcomes and can act as a protective factor against other risk factors such as multiple disadvantage" Parenting Support, DfES, 2006

Lemos & Crane, a consultancy company specialising in work with professionals in social housing, local government, criminal justice agencies, schools and voluntary organisations, were commissioned to:

- Develop a knowledge framework
- Describe the learning and practice of the exemplar projects
- Create and manage a website to host learning and knowledge
- Create a community of interest and influence
- Design and deliver Action Learning Sets for the exemplar projects

In January 2008, Clear Plan was commissioned to undertake an evaluation of the projects over a two-year period. A baseline evaluation report was produced in Spring 2008. A detailed interim evaluation report followed at the start of 2009 which described the progress made by projects and offered an analysis of the impact already achieved. The findings from both reports were used by funders to encourage some shifts in expectations of what the projects and the overall programme would achieve.

This final report (at the end of 2009) builds on the findings and conclusions contained in the interim report and offers an overall analysis of the impact of the projects and the programme.

The overarching aim of the Fear and Fashion programme was to develop exemplar projects working with young people to tackle knife culture so as to reduce the use
and carrying of knives and other weapons and to provide alternatives and long-term change.

The desired outcomes agreed for the projects’ work were:

- Raised awareness amongst young people about the consequences of carrying and using weapons
- Reduction in the frequency and patterns of young people carrying knives / weapons
- Reduction in the number of incidents using knives / weapons involving the key target group for this work
- Young people adopting alternative solutions to conflict resolution
- Young people reporting a reduction in the fear of crime
- Strong partnership structures established between partner agencies to tackle the issue
- Local strategies developed and implemented by partner agencies to discourage the carrying of weapons
- Models of good practice developed and disseminated / replicated
- Lessons learnt from the work contributing to Government policies on this issue
2. Fear and Fashion: context

The context for the Fear and Fashion programme has changed significantly and has changed at a swift pace. Among the initial motivations for the funders' interest in work on knife crime issues was the relative absence of any dedicated activity designed to address knife crime. The Fear and Fashion Report noted in 2004

"Although the problem of young people carrying knives and other weapons appears, by common consent, to be growing, few dedicated public awareness or educational programmes have been developed or delivered. Similarly few dedicated programmes working with young people at risk of carrying and using knives have been developed."

Significant changes to that context include:

- Possibly as a result of the high level of media and community interest in recent years, there has been a significant increase in activity focused on preventing or tackling the use of knives by young people. Staff and stakeholders in the Fear & Fashion project report "an explosion of services and providers seeking to work with young people on knife crime issues". It is difficult to establish with any certainty the number of activities or range of providers who are presently offering something which seeks to address knife crime in young people.

- A large volume of this work appears to have been initiated from the bottom up, i.e. in response to need or opportunity identified by local agencies and community organisations. There has also been an increase in specific commitments and actions to prevent or tackle carrying and use of knives by young people by government at national level. The second key objective of the Home Office action plan for reducing violence is "To crack down on knife crime, in particular involving young people". In June 2008 the Home Office published the Tackling Knife Crime Action Programme, supported by £2m distributed across ten police force areas, including the Metropolitan Police. The plan aims to reduce teenage knife deaths and serious woundings and to increase public confidence by focusing on three key areas:
  o Enforcement: Offenders more likely to be caught, to be prosecuted and to get tough punishment
  o Prevention: Prevent young people getting involved in knife crime in the first place
  o Reassurance: Reassure the public

Activity supported by the Tackling Knife Crime Action Programme includes
  o stepping up enforcement operations
  o targeting the most dangerous young people in each area
  o home visits and sending letters to parents if their children are known to carry weapons
  o working with A&E departments on information sharing
  o setting up or expanding youth forums to enable young people to have a say on local issues

3 The evaluators are aware that both the National Youth Agency and the Metropolitan Police have sought to map knife crime related provision for young people in the capital. At the time of writing the results of these exercise have not been published. Informal discussions with officers responsible for working on their production indicate that the number of activities and range of providers is great, and that the mappings are considered unlikely to be complete.

- Clamping down on retailers who continue to sell knives to young people

- As part of the Tackling Knife Crime Action Programme, the Youth Justice Board has been rolling out the Knife Crime Prevention Programme (previously the Knife Possession Prevention Programme) to reduce knife carrying among young people who offend. It was originally available to 10-17 year olds who had been convicted of possession of a bladed article or offensive weapon (knife) only. The criteria have recently been extended to include any offence where a knife, or the threat of a knife is a feature.

- Media interest in knife crime, which has been described as “sensationalist”\(^5\), appears to be abating\(^6\). The House of Commons Home Affairs Committee Knife Crime report concluded “It is difficult to draw firm conclusions from Home Office data about levels of knife use in non-fatal violent crime, partly because of the limitations of the source data and partly because they do not indicate many clear trends.” Increased awareness of limitations of the data available has led some to question whether the prevalence of knife crime among young people is significantly greater than in previous years.

- Within the Fear & Fashion locations, the focus of strategic level discourse has shifted from a consideration of knife crime as a phenomenon per se, to a broader consideration of knife crime as part of an overall pattern of youth-on-youth violence, including gang-related activity. With this shift in focus comes a shift in the required response: explicit recognition of knife crime as one element of a more complex set of issues, both for young people and for those who design responses, requires equally complex policy and practice responses.

- Along with the increase in the number of providers of knife crime interventions, and partly as a result of lobbying by Fear & Fashion projects, commissioners of services for children and young people have become increasingly concerned with quality assurance for knife crime interventions. It has even been expressed that, in some cases, knife crime interventions may be more harmful than helpful: increasing unfounded fear in young people. As well as being a negative impact in itself, this may of course have an indirect negative consequence, i.e. that increased levels of fear could actually lead to increased carrying of knives. One commissioner of services for young people points out

> the knife crime ‘bubble’ appears to be bursting. There was a moment in time where everyone was talking about knife crime and everyone claimed to be doing something about it. That has calmed down now. With any luck, after the dust has settled we will be left only with those agencies who were serious about it in the first place and we can begin to put together some kind of coordinated set of interventions – not this chaos and mish-mash that we have had for the last few years.”

- Evidence of the difference made by knife-crime related interventions has become a greater priority. Project Oracle is currently being developed as a key plank of the Mayor of London’s Time for Action strategy for tackling youth violence in London. Project Oracle will promote the understanding and sharing what really works and it "responds to widespread agreement on the need to address causes, rather than just symptoms: a stronger focus on

\(^5\) House of Commons Home Affairs Committee Knife Crime report
\(^6\) Perception of interviewees in the evaluation August to October 2009. (CD May be useful to check the archives of a number of newspapers to see if there are identifiable trends)
quality early intervention and preventative work to balance current enforcement efforts”.

- Examination of the local context for the projects in this evaluation suggests that borough-level coordination of strategies and mechanisms for tackling youth violence and knife crime is beginning to emerge as a priority.

- Conclusions noted from the Fear and Fashion multi-agency senior practitioners’ seminar, held in November 2009, also highlighted the significance of the changing context for knife crime policy. Policy discourse and subsequent measures have been informed by a varied and evolving set of paradigms with criminal justice; sociological; and public health drivers all at work. Support for investment in broad-based awareness-raising and preventive measures has been tempered by public interest drivers for more emphasis on punitive criminal justice responses. It was reported at the seminar that knife use has reduced: largely as a result of enhanced enforcement coupled with changing fashions. Seminar conclusions included that effective policy and practice interventions need to be founded on promoting aspirations, contributions to community/society, hope and choice. Parenting and family mediation needs to become a central feature of responses and there is a need to drive up the quality of evaluation-based evidence, and to use measurement/evidence to drive delivery expectations.

The changing context outlined above has affected the ability of the overall Fear and Fashion programme, and more particularly the projects, to make an impact. Fear & Fashion projects have operated alongside a much larger and more varied panoply of initiatives at national, regional and neighbourhood levels.

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7 Time For Action – Update Report, September 2009
8 Policy note produced by Lemos and Crane, November 2009
3. Evaluating Fear and Fashion

Since January 2008, the Clear Plan team have engaged directly with the projects and maintained a regular dialogue with the funders group. This has shaped and guided the evaluation process over the two years of the evaluation. The overall expectations for the programme were reviewed and adjusted in light of the baseline report.

Key evaluation tasks have included:

- Field work with staff and other stakeholders in each of the projects to describe a baseline for the interventions provided or planned:
  - evidence of need for these interventions
  - local context for development and delivery
  - opportunities, issues and challenges associated with developing and delivering these interventions.

- A baseline report was produced in Spring 2008

- A survey with young people engaged in the projects to examine experience of, and attitudes towards, knife crime. The survey was designed by Clear Plan in discussion with the Funders Group. The questionnaire was posted on a website and made available in hard copy and each of the projects identified young people to complete it. Seventy-one completed survey questionnaires were analysed and findings were reported in the baseline report.

- Follow-up field work with staff and stakeholders helped each project to consider the implications of the baseline report analysis.

- Support to project staff, where required:
  - to refine and develop interventions
  - to build on outcome-led planning and evaluation processes
  - to develop partnership working
  - to increase the effectiveness of interventions.

- An evaluation seminar September 2008 to identify progress on the opportunities, issues and challenges associated with practice and to consider key issues for the evaluation

- End of year 1 report produced in Spring 2009 provided detailed analysis of progress made by projects and raised issues to be addressed for the planned delivery focus for the remaining life of the projects

- Further field work with each individual project with a particular focus on: generating a greater understanding of the context in which projects worked; how this context had changed since the conception of the Fear and Fashion programme; and the implications of this changing context for the projects.

- Seminar with funders group to consider the impact of the programme and the implications of the evaluation to date for the funders response to issues of knife crime and young people in London.


Specific evaluation activity with the projects has varied according to the features of the individual projects and has included:

- Review of documentation, including funding applications, reports to funders, internal management documents, etc

- Meetings with project staff, manager, project steering groups, local partners etc
• Engaging directly with young people who have participated in project activities
• Observation of practice
• Support to projects to develop monitoring tools

Whilst the number and frequency of meetings with each project has differed, the nature of the engagement with individual projects has been characterised by a consistent approach and knowledge base. An evaluation approach with a strong emphasis on creating supportive working relationships with the projects has been applied. Throughout the evaluation process the Clear Plan evaluators have sought to establish a relationship with projects as ‘critical friends’; offering a package which includes elements of support; challenge to reflect and learn; consultancy; supporting projects to drive their own enquiry; and brokering knowledge. The knowledge base applied to this evaluation combines a detailed understanding of the complexity of designing and delivering youth work initiatives with strategic insights into the support structures, relationships and processes which support that delivery.

In discussion on the findings of the Interim Report findings, the funders group further reviewed the work being asked of the projects. The priorities set out below were identified for the evaluation of the Fear and Fashion projects during 2009:

In light of the Fear and Fashion investment in the project localities, projects and the evaluation team were to engage with relevant stakeholders to determine:

• to what extent could the benefits / impact from the projects’ contributions be attributed to good youth work practice rather than to specialist knife crime related knowledge or skills?

• If there has been a particular knife-crime related input and subsequent impact, what has that been?

• How much of a priority is knife crime in the locality now? Is it more or less important than previously? Is it likely to become more or less important in future? What are the reasons for this?

• How equipped are local stakeholders to address the knife crime issues they describe?

• How can project stakeholders ensure continued community engagement in identifying solutions?

• How should continued Fear and Fashion investment be best used to address these issues for the future? What could be the particular focus of that investment?

• What are the implications of using the investment in the ways identified? Implications for existing project structures, staffing, management etc.

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9 National College for School Leadership, “Network Leadership In Action: What does a critical Friend Do?”
4. Project Evaluations

4.1 Fear Or Fashion (Kickstart)

i. Aim of the Project
The Kickstart Fear & Fashion project (branded by Kickstart as Fear Or Fashion) aimed to test methods of engaging with young people on issues associated with knife crime with a view to establishing a set of methods and tools that are proven to be effective in attracting the interest and participation of young people and in effecting behaviour change. Key to this is the practical principle of involving young people as fully as possible in the process of considering the specific nature of knife crime issues for them and their peers, and then designing and implementing responses.

ii. Nature of the Interventions
As a result of the experimental nature of the project approach, the actual activities delivered have shifted regularly over the course of the project as ideas have been raised, explored and tested. At the time of writing this report the project had moved on from this initial period of experimentation and settled on three main areas of activity:

- Flexible Response Activity
  As part of a responsive, flexible approach to delivering anti-knife-crime work Fear Or Fashion often delivers activity in response to approaches from other agencies or opportunities identified by staff. These take the form of one-off educational sessions and more regular commitments to groups which are recreational in nature, but with an element of knife crime education and discussion introduced in a subtle fashion. Regular sessions include Brandon Estate Community Hall Knife Crime Forum, Waterloo Football group (including the Drop your Knife, Live your Life tournament in summer 2009) and Rockingham Estate Community Centre. The Waterloo men’s 5-aside football attracts 30 to 40 young people a month.

- Circle Programme
  The Circle Programme is a flexible toolkit containing a number of workshop style sessions. The aim of the Circle Programme is "To raise awareness of knife crime issues to young people in their community and to look at the consequences of carrying knives, peer pressure and alternatives." It was initially designed as a six week programme to be delivered to PSE classes in secondary schools, however in response to demand, the number of settings in which the Circle Programme is applied, both in its full version and as a one-day taster version has increased in the last year. Kickstart have recently adapted the Circle programme for primary schools and for secondary school Pupil Referral Units. No two circle programmes are delivered in exactly that same way, a typical one-day programme would however involve the following elements.
  - Information on Stop and Search and on knives and the law
  - Discussion on attitudes and perception of police and young people towards each other
  - Discussion on the role of peer pressure in carrying knives.
  - Role play on situations around knives and how to deal with them.
  - Discussion on decision-making.
  - Creation of ‘golden rules’ for safety, avoiding involvement in knife crime and seeking support.
• Expressions
Expressions is a relatively recent development but has proven to be popular with young people. The Expressions work supports young people to plan and deliver performances in front of their peers. All performances have some link to knife crime, and are designed to raise awareness of the issue; create a culture where knives are regarded as unacceptable; and provide alternatives to carrying weapons by testing innovative ways to reach out to other young people and the wider community. Performances are followed by group discussion and generation of new ideas for further Expressions events and other activity to address knife crime. A notable learning point from staff reflections on the Expressions events to date is the extent to which young people respond positively to the performing arts, including drama, dance, music and comedy.

In addition to the established activity, work with ‘secondary victims’ of knife crime, i.e. young people who have witnessed a knife crime incident or who are close to someone else who has been a victim of knife crime, is emerging as a priority. Since the early days of the project, Kickstart staff have provided limited support to individual young people directly affected by knife crime. Demand for this form of support appears to be growing and Victim Support has asked Kickstart to consider developing a specific service. This is an innovative area of work, and one that no other agency in Southwark appears to be addressing at present.

The baseline survey conducted by the evaluators backs up the notion that a large number of young people have witnessed a knife crime related incident or have had a close friend or relative involved in a knife crime-related incident. The Fear & Fashion report, and a large volume of subsequent learning from practice, has identified that fear of knife crime is a major factor in motivating young people to carry a knife. Therefore work with secondary victims may could have preventative benefits in addition to the direct benefits to the young people who are supported to manage their fears.

iii. Which young people?
Kickstart use a complex matrix of informal intelligence received from partner agencies and from their position within the communities where they work to target young people that are more likely to be involved in or at risk of being involved in knife crime. Kickstart staff assert that because of their access to this kind of informal knowledge, they are able to target their community-based work in ways that are more nuanced and up-to-date than would be possible through the use of any formal data. Despite this, the majority of the Young People who participate are not known to have had any particular association with knife crime. They are considered more likely to be at risk of association with knife crime by virtue of their age and the geographic areas targeted. The Knife Crime review10 identified that children and young people suffer much higher rates of victimisation and “people living in poor neighbourhoods also stand a far greater chance of finding themselves at the wrong end of a knife.”

The Circle programme is beginning to be delivered to Pupil Referral Units, rather than to whole year groups. Staff report that although work with Pupil Referral Units reaches a smaller overall number of young people – generally around 10 –a far higher proportion of these young people claim to have actually carried a knife, to have been held at knife point or to have witnessed a knife attack than in mainstream school classes.

iv. What has actually been delivered?
The Circle programme has been delivered in 9 schools to a total number of 411 young people. This number of young people who receive the Circle programme may reduce in future as it becomes targeted more fully and more intensively on Pupil Referral Units and young people who are more at risk than a more general population, however this is viewed as a positive development that makes better use of existing resources. The Circle programme has been written up and contains a number of tools and exercises for working with young people which may be delivered by other staff, ensuring that the learning and legacy of the Fear Or Fashion project is available to other practitioners.

Since the Expressions nights begun in September 2008 there have been 7 nights, all planned and delivered by young people. These have engaged with a total of 320 young people as participants and 60 young people have taken part in either planning or performing at the events.

A notable achievement in October 2009 was Project Worker Simon Grant winning a national Justice Award in the Tackling Youth Crime category.

v. Key lessons from the Kickstart Fear Or Fashion project
- The major success of the Kickstart project has been in the extent to which it has established credibility as a provider of specialist knife crime services with both partner agencies and with young people. Key to this success have been the skills and personal qualities of the delivery staff. Credibility with partners and other stakeholders is dependent on the how staff are perceived by partners and on being able to evidence success in engaging with young people. Perceptions of expertise in issues of knife crime is important but perceptions of skill in engaging with young people on issues of knife crime is more important. However, much of the success of the Kickstart work can be attributed to good youth work practice rather than any expertise or specialism in knife crime. The visible identity of staff engaging with young people can have a significant effect on how young people respond to them. Young people wish to engage with workers who have a visible identity that is recognisably similar to their own, therefore when working with, for example, young black men, it is useful to have black male staff who are not a great deal older than the young people they engage with.
- Close working with young people is essential to the development of fresh ideas and interventions that will attract and sustain the interest of other young people. Achieving this requires a significant investment of staff time to support maintain a functioning group of young people, and an acceptance that young people will move on as they mature and the group loses relevance for them.
- Young people respond very well to opportunities to creatively express their views to their peers in a performance format. The impact of these opportunities can be maximised by facilitating discussion and follow-up activity with young people who observe performances, thus creating a snowball of activity among young people and a commitment to creativity that may be sustained, albeit in a different form, with lower levels of intervention from paid staff.
- It is difficult, if not impossible, to evidence the impact of preventative work with young people. While this does not imply that preventative work should not be undertaken, where projects are set up to test out innovations, it does prevent a significant challenge to establishing criteria to inform decisions on which ideas to take forward and which to leave behind.

11 www.justiceawards.clsonline.gov.uk
4.2 Tackling Knife Crime Project (Rainer)

i. Aim of the Project
The aim of the Rainer Tackling Knife Crime Project is very simply to provide a casework service to support young people known to the Brent Youth Offending Service as having been involved in, or at risk of becoming involved in knife crime.

The service is provided through a single member of staff, employed by Rainer, but based within Brent Youth Offending Service. In early 2009 the worker who originally filled the post moved on, resulting in a period of several months where the post was vacant, or filled by a locum before the current post-holder came on board. As the project was essentially planned and delivered by a single post-holder this change in staff has had an impact on how the project has developed.

ii. Nature of the Intervention
The service provided is largely a one-to-one casework service, however opportunities are sought and taken where staff time allows to involve young people in group activities, often delivered by other organisations in community based settings. There is not a set programme that all young people undertake, instead the project intervention is tailored to each young person. There is however a five-stage process that broadly describes the key elements of young people’s engagement with the project:

- Stage 1 – Initial Referral
- Stage 2 – Initial Assessment Plan
- Stage 3 – Programme of one to one meetings
- Stage 4 – Group Work (if available)
- Stage 5 – Exit meetings

The intervention focuses on the young person’s knowledge and understanding of knife-crime law and the consequences of being involved in knife-crime for the young person. This is measured through the application of a questionnaire when the young person commences work with the knife crime project which is repeated, along with a more informal exit interview, at the end of their work with the project. Exit points are decided by the period of the young person’s attendance order rather than through any measured change in their attitudes or behaviour.

Young people are referred to the project through the Brent Youth Offending Service. In the first year of the project there were no formal referral mechanisms in place and this resulted in fewer referrals and an inconsistent pattern of referrals. The combined introduction of a formal referral system within the service and the statutory Knife Crime Prevention Programme in Brent has required the Tackling Knife Crime project and the Youth Offending Service to consider the additionality of the Fear & Fashion service and to introduce greater clarity about how it complements other work undertaken by the Youth Offending Service and partners. The combined resources of the Tackling Knife Crime project and Knife Crime Prevention Programme have created an opportunity to work with greater numbers of young people, and to stream young people into two different levels of service. Young people classified as having an offence which is less serious and at lower risk of re-offending are referred into the Knife Crime Prevention Programme. Young people who have committed a more serious offence or who are at higher risk of re-offending are referred into the Tackling Knife Crime project. This is a clear change from the situation in the first years of the Tackling Knife Crime project where the majority of the young people seen by the service were not considered to be high-risk offenders – most had been referred into the service for simple offences of possession of a sharp instrument in a public place, and most were already motivated to stop carrying knives before they reached the Tackling Knife Crime project.
Since the introduction of the Brent Youth Offending Service referral system and Knife Crime Prevention Programme, the opportunities to develop group-work activity become more limited, partly as a result of the increased demand on worker time arising from the greater number of referrals. The Knife Crime Prevention Programme also provides a group-work intervention and this may have affected the demand for group work activities and the priority placed on developing this as part of the Tackling Knife Crime project.

The fact that the young people are referred for a period corresponding to an attendance order meant that, when the worker caseload was smaller, some young people are present for a sufficiently long period to exhaust discussion on knife crime and to cover other issues that may have been contributing to the young person’s offending behaviour.

"With some of the Young People who had been with me for quite a while, I had started doing some work on self-esteem, power, masculinity. Talking to the boys, we found that at the root of conflict there was usually a female – you know the sort of thing. We may have to find ways to support young people to understand where conflicts arise and avoid them or defuse them”

The present worker reports that, due to the different nature of the young people that the project now deals with, this approach has not been developed in any great detail and interventions focus more specifically on knife crime, aggression and the specifics of the offence. However if time allows there is an intention to shift the work conducted with individual young people towards a broader framework of emotional literacy.

iii. Which young people?
Unlike the other Fear and Fashion projects, the Tackling Knife Crime project works exclusively with young people known to the criminal-justice system, most of whom have been convicted of a crime in which a knife was a factor. This means that Tackling Knife Crime project work differs from that of the other Fear and Fashion projects in that it is exclusively ameliorative, i.e. seeks to reduce or prevent young people who are known to carry (or have carried) knives from doing so. The service also works with young people who have not been convicted of a knife-related offence but who are considered at high risk, either because they are known to be gang associated or because they have disclosed to case managers that they are involved in knife crime.

iv. What has actually been delivered?
Within Brent, there appears to be a growing demand for interventions that address wider weapons-related offences and lifestyles. This has been reflected in the growing number of referrals from the Youth Offending Service to the project. The original proposal was for the Tackling Knife Crime project to work with a caseload of 15 young people, however this has been significantly exceeded and the service now works with an active caseload of 25-30 young people, with a waiting list and a system for prioritising the young people who receive support from the Tackling Knife Crime project according to the nature of the offence and the risk of their re-offending.

In the period June to November 2009 the Brent Youth Offending Service recorded 76 offences that could have triggered a referral to the Tackling Knife Crime project. Since October 2009 there have been 20 new referrals to the knife crime project, a sharp increase on the number of referrals which had been received by the project in the previous year. This increase is attributed to a combination of factors, including the establishment of a formal referral system and an ‘explosion’ in knife crime offences related to a few significant incidents in the borough. During 2008/09 the project supported 32 young people through key working and structured group work.
programmes. The Catch22 performance management system highlights that 100% of young people entering the project had a risk assessment, 73% did not re-offend whilst engaging with the service and 68% were referred on to education, training or employment.

v. Key lessons from the Rainer Tackling Knife Crime project

- Working effectively with young people who are at a post-contemplative stage, i.e. are seeking strategies and opportunities to stop or reduce their association with knife crime requires a different set of skills and tools from working with young people who are actively engaged in carrying or using knives and see no reason to stop.
- Strong referral routes and criteria are essential to establishing a caseload of the most appropriate young people for a one-to-one service.
- A casework service should be seen as one part of a broader range of interventions. Young people who are associated with knife crime should be streamed into the intervention that is most appropriate for them.
- Groupwork can be difficult to establish with young people who do not already know each other, and who are not a natural group. It can be an effective means of supporting young people to move on from a one-to-one service and to focus on other issues not directly associated with criminal behaviour.
- Success in working with young people on issues of knife crime is largely a result of the interpersonal skills of the worker involved rather than their expertise in knife crime.
- 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. In the longer term there may be a role for the project utilise its knowledge and its ‘expert’ position to support external partners to work effectively with young people on knife crime issues.
4.3 Leap Confronting Conflict

i. Aim of the project
Leap Confronting Conflict is a national voluntary organisation that specialises in conflict resolution and mediation with young people. The aim of the Leap Fear and Fashion project is to reduce violence, weapon carrying and fear of violence for young people in schools. A Fear & Fashion local steering group made up of Leap Confronting Conflict, the Youth Offending Team, Positive Activities for Young People, the Metropolitan Police, the Youth Inclusion Support Panels and Westminster Council’s Education Directorate meets regularly. Attendance of officers at an appropriate level from each partner is consistent, indicating that the project is valued by the partners.

ii. Nature of the Interventions
The Leap Confronting Conflict Fear & Fashion work has taken three main forms, a schools programme, intensive group work and Youth Work placements.

To deliver the schools programme Leap Confronting Conflict have been working closely with three secondary schools in Westminster, St Georges School, Paddington Academy and Westminster Academy. Leap Confronting Conflict’s work in schools is based on a development of their proven model of conflict audit and tailored programme of interventions to the findings of that audit. The conflict audit is a planned process to gather baseline data on levels of safety/fear of violence and levels of conflict and violence within the school, including the carrying of weapons. Working with schools on issues of knife crime has proven to require some sensitive and close management. In more than one school, plans to address conflicts identified through the audit had to be negotiated with schools management.

Young people are recruited to the intensive group work programme through a process managed by the local steering group. The process includes a combination of the following:

- Positive Activities for Young People and Youth Offending Team staff identify young people who are known to them, who may have been involved in offending behaviour, but who have expressed an interest in changing their behaviour.
- Some participants are referred in through word of mouth by previous participants.
- The Youth Offending Team has identified some young people who have recently been released from Young Offenders institutions.

The data held by partners on each potential participant in the intensive group work is supplemented by a detailed interview form assessing the young person’s involvement in, and understanding of, the issues around carrying and using knives and other weapons.

The intensive groupwork takes place over a number of sessions, in most cases including at least one residential event. The intensive group work course is intended both to address young people’s attitudes and behaviour in relation to knives, and to train them to become peer trainers who will help to cascade their learning to other young people in subsequent intensive group work courses. A certificate presentation for young people completing the intensive group work programme is given a high level of importance by Leap Confronting Conflict and it provides an opportunity to formally recognise the achievements of the young people and prepare them for the next stage of the programme, undertaking a youth work placement.
Youth work placements are the opportunity for graduates of the intensive group work programme to practice the skills developed through the course in real life youth work setting. In the early stages of the project it proved difficult to identify sufficient suitable placements for graduates, however following awareness raising work by Leap Confronting Conflict staff and the steering group, demand from local youth providers for graduates now exceeds supply. Data on the impact of youth work placements on graduates, or the views of youth providers was not available at the conclusion of the evaluation.

**iii. Which young people?**
As the programme has developed, a clearer focus on delivering targeted work has emerged as a key element of the Leap Fear and Fashion project. The recruitment process for the intensive groupwork means that this project has been able to engage with young people at greater risk of involvement in knife crime with a greater degree of certainty and focus than many other interventions may have been able to. Similarly the schools work, being based on a conflict audit and the knowledge of schools staff and young people is also able to identify young people from these groups, although delivering interventions which target then has proven to be more difficult.

**iv. What has actually been delivered?**
By December 2009, 54 young people had completed an intensive groupwork course, and 4 had moved into Youth Work placements with 3 different youth work providers. Of those 54 young people 6 have been regularly delivering workshops exploring the consequences of knife crime, so far 24 sessions have been delivered to approximately 450 young people and 5 sessions have been delivered to 94 adults. In addition there are 14 graduates ready to begin delivering workshops. The number of young people who have benefited indirectly from the work of the graduates within the youth work placements is not known but clearly presents a greater ‘ripple effect’ as a result of the project.

Within the three schools the Leap Confronting Conflict project worked with a total of 119 young people and 15 teachers. In addition 126 young people and 40 adults responded to the 2 conflict audits. Of those 119, 5 are now trained and ready to deliver sessions to year 7 students.

**v. Key lessons from the Leap Confronting Conflict project**
- Working in schools can be difficult for an external agency as the power to allow work to continue remains in the hands of the school. Even in situations where formal agreements have been produced with the school, external agencies have no power to enforce these agreements. This means that external agencies are at a disadvantage should they wish to develop work which challenges school practices or presents a risk of negative publicity for the school.
- The local steering group have been invaluable in all stages of the project from referring young people into the intensive groupwork, to identifying and creating opportunities for them to move on into youth work placements.
- The priority placed by Leap Confronting Conflict on evaluating how young people perceive the interventions and their effect on their attitudes and behaviour allow Leap to amend the nature of the interventions in a subtle and detailed way.
- Challenges remain in evidencing any long term impact on behaviour, partly because of the absence of longitudinal tracking, partly because when working with his group there is a strong potential for recidivism once young people move on are exposed to other negative influences.
4.4. Uncut (Paddington Development Trust/Working With Men)

i. Aim of the project
Paddington Development Trust successfully applied for Fear and Fashion funding to establish an initiative to tackle knife culture amongst young people in North Westminster and South Brent: a subsequent decision was taken to focus the work exclusively on North Westminster. Working with Men (WWM) were contracted to deliver the work. WWM is a charity (since 1985) that develops work with boys and young men in schools, youth services and probation settings and includes programmes on sex, violence, literacy and other gender related issues.

WWM set up the Uncut project with two main aims:
- To impact on young people’s attitudes and behaviour towards carrying and using knives and other weapons (target group - young males aged 10-17)
- To develop, deliver and evaluate a range of initiatives and integrate those that work within existing mainstream services.

The Paddington Development Trust was identified as the lead agency for the Partners Advisory Group which intended to meet four times per year. Original partners identified were:
- Pupil Referral Unit
- Youth Offending Team
- Civic Watch
- Youth Inclusion and Support Panel (13-19 year-olds)
- PAYP
- Westminster Youth and Connexions Services
- Victim Support Westminster

A full-time dedicated Project Manager was recruited in March 2007 and was based in office space at the Amberley Youth Project (another WWM project in the area). The Project Manager was line-managed by a WWM Manager.

ii. Nature of the interventions
Following initial needs analysis consultation, the practical focus of Uncut was to deliver three key programmes, plus additional one-to-one work:
- Conflict management Programme
- Mock trial programme
- Fatal Stabbing Assemblies

Programme delivery was tailored to the particular needs of agencies / settings and varied and evolved each time it was delivered. Below is a basic description of the key programmes:

**Conflict management programme** - typically 4 X 1.5 hours sessions for 12 participants:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Session</th>
<th>Description</th>
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</thead>
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| 1       | Defining conflict – and examine participants’ experience of conflict  
|         | Open up discussions related to weapons and violence |
| 2       | Focus on communication  
|         | Examine communication in conflict-type scenarios |
| 3       | Understand the dangers of carrying a weapon  
|         | Spotting and avoiding danger |
| 4       | Examine why young people carry knives  
|         | Explore aspirations and motivations |

**Mock Trial Programme** - typically 5 X 1.5 hours sessions for twelve participants:

<table>
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<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Support young people to develop insight into what can happen in a knife situation – what are the processes through to an outcome</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Lawyer – insight into the law: joint enterprise; conspiracy; re-occurring factors familiar in such cases</td>
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<tr>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Session 3</td>
<td>Police perspective: stop and search policy and practice; Possession; Hotspots; Community safety</td>
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<td>Review and learning</td>
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**Fatal stabbing assemblies**

One-off sessions to explore the medical and criminal justice issues in knife crime situations delivered to whole school year groups.

**iii. Which young people**

Over 1500 young people aged 11-17 participated in Uncut activities. This includes whole school years participating in school assemblies, as well as participants selected to take part in intensive 4-6 week programmes or one-to-one work with Uncut staff.

Processes for working with schools and the Youth Offending Team to select young people for the more intensive opportunities have increased in sophistication over the life of the project. Being included in the menu of YOT-related court disposals is another significant indicator of the local credibility being afforded Uncut’s work. School-based partners report that young people were selected on the basis of ‘behaviour’

One to one work developed as a result of the Uncut project manager engaging with Pupil Referral Units connected to schools where other Uncut programmes were delivered. Informal relationships between the Uncut project manager and individual teachers has evolved into more formal agreements, including more formal identification of young people to be engaged in one to one work by Uncut.

**iv. What has actually been delivered** (at the end of 2009)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Programme</th>
<th>Participants and Settings</th>
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<tr>
<td>Conflict Resolution - Primary</td>
<td>Four programmes delivered to 120 young people in 2 primary schools</td>
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<tr>
<td>Conflict Resolution - Secondary</td>
<td>Six programmes delivered to 275 young people in 5 Secondary schools / YOT / Pupil Referral Unit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mock Trial</td>
<td>Two programmes delivered to 60 young people in 2 Secondary schools / YOT / Pupil Referral Unit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fatal Stabbing Assemblies</td>
<td>Eight delivered in 2 Secondary schools / YOT / Pupil Referral Unit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One to one work</td>
<td>12 young people in Secondary schools / Youth Offending Team / Pupil Referral Unit</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A second Uncut worker was appointed in November 2008 following a successful funding bid to Westminster Council by Paddington Development Trust with a specific focus on work with parents.

At the end of 2009, two years of practice had been distilled into three specific training materials (see appendix):

- Conflict Management Year 6 Pack
- Conflict Management Key Stage 3 and 4
- Uncut Parents Training pack
WWM have plans to sell the pack and training on how to use it. Training will be available on an open access basis as well as tailored to specific services.

Uncut services have recently been commissioned by two London boroughs: Lambeth and Lewisham.

**v. Key lessons for Uncut**

Uncut was developed from scratch in North Westminster. Collaboration, and offering experience rather than expertise, were key ingredients to building the work. Methods were trialled and the subsequent training materials were developed in partnership with local practitioners.
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. Trying to influence teachers became a priority for the Uncut work.

Working with schools generated a range of lessons for Uncut and more broadly for Working With Men. Much care was taken around relationship-building with schools. Uncut allowed schools to select young people and to define the shape and length of sessions. Two years down the line, project workers report feeling confident about being more proactive and prescriptive in what they have to offer and how they approach schools. They are now able to go to partners with materials which are tried and tested.

As part of the evaluation process, Uncut were supported to devise monitoring tools for generating data to help assess the impact of activities they delivered. These tools were valuable for Uncut and have been embedded into the training materials they have produced. The data generated was used to reflect on practice and to consider the value of project activities. Further development would have included using the data generated to influence local partners’ decision-making.

The importance of branding and how interventions are introduced to partners was highlighted as a key lesson. Uncut 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. Local credibility also led to Uncut presenting to a House of Commons Select Committee.

Being a part of to the Fear and Fashion programme had profile-raising benefits for the project:

Lemos and Crane started to do more towards the latter end of the project. People listened to what they say. That raised the profile so that had an impact on the last year.

Other programme benefits did not fully materialise. Uncut had limited contact with the other three Fear and Fashion projects. The value of Action Learning Sets and Advisory Group sessions were not readily apparent to project staff.
5. Lessons and conclusions

5.1 The Fear and Fashion projects have delivered strong youth work interventions with a dedicated focus on knife-crime issues. Significant achievements have been made by the funded projects during the three years they were funded by Fear and Fashion: skilled staff have been invested in and have worked effectively with local partners; specific awareness-raising programmes have been developed; high quality training materials have been produced to help others engage with young people and with parents. Projects have engaged significant numbers of young people in positive youth work and have raised awareness of knife related crime.

5.2 One of the four projects, Rainer’s Tackling Knife Crime, worked with smaller numbers of young people using an intensive individual case-work model. This approach demonstrated the impact of individual tailored interventions with young people already identified as already having engaged in knife crime. This project reports that re-offending rates have reduced for the young people they worked with however the management information available does not allow a robust comparison with young people who have not had access to the service.

5.3 For the other three projects, the nature of the work undertaken is inherently difficult to measure (how much knife crime has been prevented). In the absence of academic research based on longitudinal studies with control groups, it is very difficult to generate conclusions about specific impacts on young people’s behaviour from analysis of issue-based informal education.

5.4 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. Whilst falling some way short of directly demonstrating changes in knife-related behaviour, this evidence has value in suggesting some influence on local and peer-group culture. What young people say in evaluations of knife crime interventions, and what they do once they return to their peer group may not always be the same thing, however. As one young man interviewed for the Uncut consultation with young people offered:

"It wouldn’t work, people would come and be like, yeah I’m gonna stop carrying knives. Guaranteed when their back on road they will be like, I’m gonna jock this one, I’m gonna murk that one."

5.5 Stakeholders in the Fear and Fashion project boroughs increasingly see knife crime as part of a wider range of social problems. Activity to address knife crime is increasingly placed alongside broader cultural action at community level and with emotional literacy at individual level.

5.6 Effective youth work-based interventions work to tackle the issues young people themselves perceive and raise as priorities. Generic youth workers in the Fear and Fashion project localities would be likely to address knife crime at some point within their overall programmes of activity. Schools-based interventions for the Fear and Fashion projects have placed knife crime within a more general notion of conflict resolution. Overall, 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’ related knowledge or skills.
5.7 Project partners and stakeholders acknowledge that making a difference to levels of knife crime requires more strategic impact and influence, beyond what is easily achieved by a single project. This is most usually characterised as a strong, consistent and coordinated partnership at local level, focused not just on knife crime, but on broader issues of aggression, conflict, youth-on-youth violence, as well as on broader societal agendas of inequality and poverty. The original intention for Fear and Fashion was to generate such holistic partnership-based interventions, but this was deemed to be overly ambitious prior to the projects being commissioned.

5.8 Impressive partnership work with schools and Youth Offending Teams has been developed by Fear and Fashion projects, some partnership work has become increasingly sophisticated, and projects’ contributions to partnerships has begun to receive recognition e.g. through Fear and Fashion project activities being included in the formal diet of disposals available to courts. For the most part, these partnerships have been focused directly on the projects, rather than on locality-wide coordination of resources and interventions to address knife crime and broader issues.

5.9 Fear and Fashion projects have all established credibility with local partners: they are recognised as delivering effective practice with young people. To date there has been limited success in transforming this credibility into sustainable influence for change within the localities the funders have invested in.

5.10 In a significantly changed context for responses to knife crime, it is important for funders to re-assess the contribution their investment can make. The Fear and Fashion programme has achieved much in contributing to strategic policy debate on knife crime issues through the Lemos and Crane work. Projects report limited benefits for their practice, or for influencing local partners from this successful aspect of the overall programme. Being able to influence local responses will rest on funded projects being supported, and expected, to play a more ‘influencing’ role within the localities. Funders could further drive this through placing more explicit emphasis on requiring evidence of supporting / creating change to be generated within the monitoring processes they require projects to engage in.

Fear and Fashion Legacy

5.11 The evaluation team contributed to discussions with the funders which immediately preceded their decision to cease funding the four projects. The rationale for this decision was that the ‘very limited funds [of the funders] would no longer be likely to make a strategic difference using the current model’. Investment in small scale, localised projects may not produce the scale of impact, on knife crime or on the development of practice, that the funders originally envisaged.

5.12 Options for ensuring a legacy were identified during the evaluation:

- Focused investment to develop and support good quality practitioners could have had a more effective and cost-effective approach and could have created a more lasting legacy for the investment made by Fear and Fashion. Dedicated strategies for knowledge exchange or practitioner to practitioner partnering/mentoring schemes would have helped ensure effective return on funders’ investment. Arrangements for managing and
hosting these practitioners would clearly influence their ability to impact on localities.

- Could projects could have been supported to play a more strategic influencing role? A programme of intensive coaching / learning / capacity building with project staff could have resulted in the lessons learned from Fear and Fashion project practice being applied to locality strategic decision making to influence local responses to knife-crime issues.

5.13 Having made the decision to cease funding existing projects to continue beyond April 2010, funders still have opportunities to ensure a significant legacy:

- The materials and programmes completed at the end of the three years’ funding need to be reviewed. Practice tools and materials could be presented in a dedicated publication or in a dedicated showcase opportunity / conference.
- Discrete pockets of activity could be further funded to ensure that investment to date is fully exploited to produce greater social benefit
  - Commission training programmes to embed the Uncut materials in Youth Offending Teams and schools across London
  - Publish and disseminate Circle programme materials
- A detailed review of the funders’ original ambition and how this has shifted over the life of the projects – partly in response to a changing context, partly in response to lessons from the projects – could reveal important lessons about the role funders can play to influence local and national agendas on the issues they seek to make a difference to. Lessons identified by the funders themselves have been attached to his report – see appendix 2.

Lessons learned from the evaluation process

5.14 Challenges for evaluating the Fear and Fashion projects were clearly articulated in the earliest stages. The dissonance between the desired outcomes set at programme level and the desired outcomes expressed by projects created challenges for the evaluation, for funders and for projects themselves.

5.15 In order to generate a clear understanding of the extent to which the funded projects achieved the impacts designed by the funders group, the evaluation itself should have been commissioned and designed at an earlier point in the development of the overall programme. A clearly articulated evaluation process could have helped better define criteria for selecting projects to be funded.

5.16 In practice, the evaluation encouraged reflection and learning throughout the process of developing the activity and consequently had an impact on practice development. The approaches to this evaluation sought to engage delivery staff in the evaluation process. More formalised engagement bringing funders together with delivery staff (and indeed service users) to assess the impact of the project could have helped design shifts required to create bigger and better impacts.

5.17 Some of the key lessons from evaluating the Fear and Fashion projects apply to the role played by funders in the process. Outcomes-focused evaluation needs an explicit outcomes-focused monitoring process. Delivery
expectations were reviewed by considering the monitoring data and management intelligence generated from project activities, coupled with knowledge about the changing policy context.

5.18 The Fear and Fashion programme attempted to combine knowledge development/policy intelligence and influence through the work delivered by Lemos and Crane with lessons generated by project evaluations. Opportunities were created for project staff to engage with the Advisory Group. Project staff reported that these were not a valuable use of time and offered little practical guidance in helping to develop the project work or to extract key lessons from the experience. Action learning sets were delivered for projects by Lemos and Crane. Project staff reported that these felt less valuable to them in terms of practical learning about project delivery. The real value of the Action Learning Sets appears to have been to strengthen the Fear and Fashion policy-influencing work through having theories and ideas validated by practitioners.

5.19 Action learning sets should have been more explicitly linked to the evaluation process – to ensure lessons from the project evaluation were used to drive forward the projects’ development. For example, there may have been benefits in using the action learning sets to introduce perspectives and expertise on knife crime from elsewhere to the Fear and Fashion projects.
Appendix 1: Training materials

Conflict Management Pack

Key Stage 3 & 4
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Appendix 2: Funders lessons

The funders group identified the following key lessons from their experience of funding and developing the Fear and Fashion programme:

1. Be realistic in your expectations of what can be achieved in the resources available.
2. Appoint the evaluators at the start and clarify the anticipated outcomes of both the programme and project level.
3. Be explicit the challenges of being able to attribute behaviour and attitudinal change to the funded projects, and the limitations of the evaluation.
4. Invest in monitoring and evaluation training for the projects at the start of the programme to improve their data collection methods.
5. Make sure the evaluation team is involved in, ideally running, the learning seminars and establish closer links between the evaluators and website managers.
6. Establish systems to capture policy-related work and to monitor policy changes which may be affecting the work.
7. Ensure there is clarity amongst the funders about roles and responsibilities, and make sure there is in-house capacity to manage these.
8. Make sure that the advisory group members are clear about their role and their expected contribution to the programme.
9. Liaise more closely with the senior managers within the funded projects to ensure that co-ordination at local level is being undertaken and that good management support is in place.