



UNIVERSITY OF
BIRMINGHAM

Breakfast Briefing Research evidence on VAWG and youth violence from the University of Birmingham to impact The Safer Streets Mission

Background

Police recorded knife crime in England and Wales has risen by 80% in the last 10 years. Violence against women and girls (VAWG) makes up nearly 20% of all recorded crime in England and Wales. The [Safer Streets Mission](#) aims to halve both knife crime and VAWG within a decade. Research done at the University of Birmingham's [Centre for Crime, Justice and Policing](#) has looked at the effectiveness of some interventions to reduce VAWG and youth crime, including knife crime.

This event has been organised in collaboration with the [Centre of Crime and Justice Studies](#).

Research Summary

Domestic abuse

Evaluation of The CARA (CAUTIONING and Relationship Abuse) Service

The CARA service is an awareness raising programme run by the Hampton Trust that promotes behaviour change for individuals (male and female) who are alleged first-time domestic abuse (DA) offenders. The intervention comprises two workshops that offenders attend as the core condition of the police caution.

The study was a retrospective impact evaluation in two police force areas (West Midlands and Hampshire) conducted with matched intervention and control groups.

Two key findings are:

- On average, the CARA service was associated with reduced offending by 81% in the first six months and by 56% in the first 12 months in the West Midlands. In Hampshire offences reduced by 39% in the first six months and by 41% in the first 12 months. Both were compared to a matched control group.
- The benefit-cost ratio is ranges from 3:1 to 11:1 meaning that for each pound invested in the CARA service, savings vary between £3 and £11.

The full report can be found [here](#) and updated analysis [here](#).

Evaluation of the WEPROTECT service

The WEPROTECT service seeks to provide DA survivors with swift access to legal information and support. It is provided via a free-to-use mobile app and website developed by the Domestic Abuse Alliance. DA survivors are referred, with their consent, by police officers and, in some locations, other frontline workers.

It builds on a [NIHR funded study](#) which aimed to understand how support services for people who experience DA changed during the COVID-19 pandemic, primarily through a move to providing services remotely rather than face to face. This study highlighted the key barriers and enablers to remote support intervention delivery for DA survivors. It has also found that there is a lack of formal evaluations of remote interventions.

The WEPROTECT team provides survivors with legal information and assistance through a team of call takers and case workers. This includes outlining the legal options of survivors, taking statements where survivors may wish to apply for a civil order (non-molestation and/or occupancy orders) and issuing warning letters to perpetrators. They also assess eligibility for legal aid and, where needed, refer to a network of solicitors for further support and signpost survivors to other specialist support services.

Our evaluation sought to estimate how effective WEPROTECT is at reducing revictimization of DA and improving mental wellbeing outcomes following experiences of DA.

Key findings (report under review):

- WEPROTECT encourages reporting to the police and may also prevent revictimization. Because of these opposing effects, police recorded incidents may increase, but overall survivors are helped through the service.
- There may also be some improvements in mental wellbeing.
- The process evaluation found that police officers were supportive of having access to the app to make referrals.
- Survivors interviewed had varying experiences, which depended on their personal circumstances.

Youth violence, prevention and diversion

Operation (Op) Divan Evaluation

The study for the College of Policing, evaluates the impact of an intervention for young people at risk of knife carrying and knife related violence. The Op Divan intervention involves a single, voluntary face-to-face meeting between the young person and a police officer or youth justice practitioner. During the meeting, a legally-non-binding official notice is issued describing the consequences and risks of carrying a knife/weapon. The model prioritises prevention, education, and safeguarding over enforcement, with the intention of diverting young people away from the criminal justice system.

The impact evaluation compared outcomes between young people who have participated in the intervention in North Yorkshire and a comparable group from a region where the intervention has not been implemented. Key findings (report under review):

- Op Divan was associated with a 60% reduction in crimes involving knife and weapons compared to a matched control group.
- The intervention is low cost, between £30 and £65 per person.

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