



The Knife Crime Prevention Programme

Process Evaluation

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Summary

The Knife Crime Prevention Programme (KCPP) is an intervention which aims to reduce the prevalence of knife carrying and use by young people. Young people are referred to the programme if they are aged between 10 and 17 and have been convicted of an offence where a knife or the threat of a knife is a feature.¹ The programme is based on a national delivery framework, with flexibility for local adaptation. It was rolled out as part of the Home Office 'Tackling Knives Action Programme' (TKAP).²

Research objectives

This process evaluation was commissioned to:

- provide a picture of the implementation and delivery of KCPP
- explore participants' knowledge, perceptions and attitudes to knife crime before and after the programme
- explore staff attitudes to the programme.

Methodology

The methodology adopted was as follows:

- an electronic survey of 67 youth offending teams (YOTs) delivering KCPP³
- a paper-based survey of 96 young people from 13 YOTs at entry to and exit from the programme
- site visits to eight YOTs, where interviews were undertaken with 33 staff/partners and 12 young people, and one focus group was undertaken with seven young people.

¹ Sections 139 and 139A of the Criminal Justice Act 1988 apply to any article which has a blade or point, except a folding pocketknife unless the cutting edge of its blade exceeds 7.62 centimetres (3 inches).

² Phase I started in June 2008 and then expanded to Phase II: Tackling Knives and Serious Youth Violence Action Programme (though still abbreviated to TKAP) in April 2009. Phase II ended in March 2010. For more information, see Ward and Diamond (2009), and Ward, Nicholas and Willoughby (2011).

³ The survey was sent to all 97 YOTs delivering KCPP, and 67 (69%) of these responded.

Limitations

This is a process evaluation, and, as such, it does not attempt to provide insight into the impact and effectiveness of KCPP on participant behaviour or in reducing reoffending. It has a number of limitations which need to be kept in mind when interpreting the findings:

- the sample cannot be considered representative of the national KCPP participant population and it is not known whether it is fully representative of the local KCPP population
- the selection of young people for interview was undertaken by YOT staff and included only young people who were visiting the YOT on the day of the site visit and were willing to participate, which introduces further bias
- the KCPP framework gave YOTs the scope to design and tailor programme content and delivery to best suit local circumstances. As such, the programmes examined in this study vary across YOTs and the findings should not be generalised.

Key findings

YOT staff who were surveyed reported that the majority of young people who started KCPP in their local area completed the programme. Non-completion was reportedly most often due to the young person being taken into custody (named by 24 of 67 YOTs), being disruptive in sessions, or failing to attend.

KCPP respondents spoke highly of the use of personal accounts of the consequences of knife crime from victims, families, ex-offenders or professionals. However, YOTs found this challenging and resource-intensive to arrange and, in most YOTs, case studies and recorded media were used in place of personal delivery. Where achieved, some young people felt they had increased empathy for victims' families and health professionals as a result of the programme.

By the end of the programme, the majority of those young people completing the survey upon entry and exit to the programme demonstrated a correct understanding of the law. YOT staff surveyed felt that the greatest learning points for young people from the programme were 'recognising the dangers of carrying a knife' and a perceived increase in 'understanding of the consequences of knife crime'.

Group work provided challenges to staff in terms of risk management and appropriate grouping of young people. The importance of appropriately skilled facilitators was emphasised by YOT staff. Staff did feel, however, that the group setting provided an opportunity for positive social interaction between young people.

The majority of YOT staff surveyed (40 out of 67) said that they believed KCPP was effective. The qualitative interviews indicated that YOT staff thought that the programme was more likely to be effective for young people with a low risk of reoffending.

The need to carry a knife 'for protection' was considered by young people and staff to be a key reason why some young people would continue to carry a knife.

The KCPP framework did not stipulate any formal follow-on activity for those who completed the programme. Only a few of the YOTs surveyed (six) provided organised follow-on activities, depending on local availability and funding, and even when follow-on activities did take place, they were not explicitly linked to knife crime.

1. Context and methodology

KCPP was designed by the Youth Justice Board for England and Wales (YJB) in collaboration with YOTs and other stakeholders to reduce the prevalence of knife carrying and use by young people. It was initially piloted in 12 YOTs between June 2008 and April 2009, as part of Phase I of the TKAP.⁴ After April 2009, KCPP was rolled out to 97 YOTs,⁵ all of them in areas where knife crime was seen as a significant problem, also known as 'TKAP areas'.

Any young person aged 10–17 years, convicted of any offence where a knife, or the threat of a knife,⁶ is a feature, could be referred to KCPP as part of a court disposal or Youth Rehabilitation Order (YRO).⁷ KCPP could also be used with young people who are deemed to be at risk of knife carrying, for example, through association with young people convicted of knife crime.

The programme is based on a national delivery framework, with flexibility for local adaptation. The national delivery framework suggests that KCPP should be comprised of at least eight broadly defined modules:

1. **Attitudes to knife carrying:** exploring attitudes to carrying knives and the 'rules' young people apply to their lives, including fear of crime, territoriality and gangs.
2. **The law:** legal implications of the use of knives.
3. **Health:** medical implications of using a weapon.
4. **Social implications:** impact on family and community from weapon carrying.
5. **Managing conflict:** helping young people understand their experience of youth violence, and mediation skills.

⁴ Phase I started in June 2008 and then expanded to Phase II: Tackling Knives and Serious Youth Violence Action Programme (though still abbreviated to TKAP) in April 2009. Phase II ended in March 2010. For more information, see Ward and Diamond (2009), and Ward, Nicholas and Willoughby (2011).

⁵ There was a total of 157 YOTs at the time of this fieldwork.

⁶ Sections 139 and 139A of the Criminal Justice Act 1988 apply to any article which has a blade or point, except a folding pocketknife unless the cutting edge of its blade exceeds 7.62 centimetres (3 inches).

⁷ The Youth Rehabilitation Order (YRO) was introduced in November 2009. For more information see www.justice.gov.uk/youth-justice/courts-and-orders/disposals/youth-rehabilitation-order

6. **Victim interaction:** testimonies from victims of knife crimes.
7. **Public space awareness:** enabling young people to keep themselves safe in their community.
8. **Peer education:** ex-offenders presenting their own experiences and learning.

The following recommendations were made by the YJB to guide local implementation:

- YOTs were encouraged to develop programmes that align with the YJB framework for the eight modules
- YOTs were encouraged to target all young people eligible for participation
- delivery style was not stipulated, but was required to meet the needs of the young people and give equal weight to the modules
- the duration of the intervention was recommended to be no less than 6 hours in total.

Questions for this study

This study was commissioned to answer the following questions:

1. Which young people are being referred to the programme?
2. What does the programme look like across the 97 YOTs, including:
 - programme design process
 - length, frequency and location of delivery
 - sequencing of delivery of the modular programme
 - format of delivery – group versus one-to-one sessions
 - role of partners, victims, and ex-offenders within delivery?
3. Is there any follow-up programme or process for offenders graduating from KCPP?
4. Are young people completing the whole programme of eight modules? If not, what are the reasons behind non-completion?
5. Are there any changes in attitudes observed between entry to and exit from the programme?
6. What are young people's and staff perceptions of the programme?

7. What aspects of the programme appear to be particularly helpful or unhelpful?

Methodology

The methodology is summarised in Table 1 below. Further detail on the design and sample can be found in Annex A.

Table 1: Summary of methodology

Stage	Method	Result
Stage 1	Electronic survey of all YOTs delivering KCPP.	67 of the 97 YOTs delivering KCPP responded.
Stage 2a	Paper-based survey of KCPP participants (closed response) who started and finished the programme between October 2010 and June 2011. Survey was completed on entry to and exit from the programme.	96 entry and exit survey pairs were matched from 13 YOTs who agreed to participate. An additional 36 entry surveys were returned without a matching exit survey.
Stage 2b	Site visits to eight YOTs. Semi-structured interviews and one focus group with young people who had completed KCPP 1–6 months previously.	Eight YOTs were chosen from those that participated in Stage 1. Qualitative interviews with 12 young people. Focus group with seven young people.
Stage 2c	Analysis of YJMIS (Youth Justice Management Information System) data on demographic and offending characteristics.	Of the 96 KCPP graduates who completed the entry/exit survey, 45 were successfully matched to YJMIS. Due to the low number of matched records, this analysis was discontinued.
Stage 3	Site visits to eight YOTs (staff). Semi-structured interviews with staff and delivery partners.	Carried out as part of the YOT visits described at Stage 2b. 33 staff and/or delivery partners were interviewed.

Partners included: the police, health professionals, victims, ex-offenders and court representatives.

Limitations

This is a process evaluation, and, as such, it does not attempt to provide insight into the impact and effectiveness of KCPP on participant behaviour or in reducing reoffending. It has a number of limitations which need to be kept in mind when interpreting the findings.

- The response rate for the entry/exit surveys was low. Only 13 of the 97 YOTs chose to participate in this part of the research and 96 young people from these YOTs completed both entry and exit surveys. The sample cannot be considered representative of the national KCPP participant population. It is not known whether the sample is fully representative of the local KCPP population in the 13 YOTs that participated, nor whether any self-selection bias was introduced. Findings presented on participant attitudes, perceptions and knowledge before and after the programme should be interpreted with caution.
- The issues pertaining to the entry/exit survey impacted on the validity of the data matching exercise. Data for only 45 young people was successfully matched to YJMIS data. The intention for this stage was to undertake analysis of demographic and offending data, but due to the low match rate and potential level of bias, data was not analysed or included in the study.
- Eight YOTs were selected for qualitative research with young people and staff. This sample was chosen to reflect different programme approaches and geographical areas, but depended on the agreement of the individual YOTs. However, the selection of young people for interview was undertaken by YOT staff and was based on the young people who were visiting the YOT on the day of the site visit and were willing to participate. This introduces further bias.
- The KCPP framework gave YOTs the scope to design and tailor programme content and delivery to best suit local circumstances. As such, the programmes examined in this study vary across the YOTs included, and the findings should not be generalised to all programmes that are in use.

Structure of the report

The report is structured according to the seven questions the study was commissioned to answer, with the final question forming the conclusion.

2. Findings

Referrals

Question 1: Which young people are being referred to the programme?

This section presents findings from data collected in the survey of the 67 YOTs who responded, together with interviews with YOT staff.

Of the 67 YOTs who responded to the survey, around half (33) indicated that all, or nearly all, referrals to KCPP were a result of a young person being convicted of an offence where a knife, or a threat of a knife, was a feature. This referral formed part of the YRO, which came into effect in November 2009. The majority of the remaining YOTs indicated that referrals were also received for other reasons, such as:

- where intelligence suggested a young person had an association with knives and others weapons
- possession of other weapons such as a knuckle duster
- the young person being convicted of group offences such as robberies (not necessarily involving a weapon)
- concerns over the young person's wider behaviour such as gang involvement, bullying and their inability to control their anger and emotions
- where it was believed by YOT workers that participation in the programme would provide benefit to the young person.

This was confirmed by the site visits to eight YOTs, which found the programme being delivered to a wide range of young people, including those that had not been convicted of an offence.

Programme delivery

**Question 2: What does the programme look like across the 97 YOTs?
Including:**

- **who delivers modules**
- **ordering of modules**
- **contact time**
- **method of delivery (1:1 versus groups).**

This section presents findings from data collected in the survey of 67 YOTs who responded, together with qualitative research carried out with YOT staff.

The national guidance allowed for flexibility in how individual YOTs implemented KCPP. In line with this, a variety of approaches were reported.

Design

The majority of YOTs surveyed (42 of 67) had used internal resources to develop KCPP materials. Twenty YOTs reported commissioning materials from an outside training provider or buying in programmes from other YOTs. Commissioned materials were felt to provide a useful foundation, but required significant resources to tailor to local issues, and to suit the capacity and skills available. Over half of the YOTs (36 of 67) indicated that they had collaborated with partners to develop materials.

Forty of the 67 YOTs reported that the design and development process had taken less than three months. The survey suggests that this development work was generally achieved within a moderate budget: 18 YOTs estimated that they had invested less than £500, 37 YOTs invested £500–£2,000, and 12 YOTs invested £2,000 or more.

Involvement of young people in the development process

More than half of the YOTs (39 of 67) reported that they had consulted with young people on either the design or development of KCPP materials. However, only seven YOTs indicated that young people were closely involved. YOTs were more likely to use post-programme feedback sessions with participants as a way of involving them in programme development. Involving young people in the development process was reportedly challenging to achieve, particularly for those areas experiencing low levels of knife crime. However, staff interviewed indicated that where this was achieved it was valued and ensured that the materials were relevant, which was believed to increase interest from participants.

Delivery

Around half (34) of the 67 YOTs surveyed started new programmes at regular intervals; the rest indicated that new programmes commenced when they had sufficient referrals to run the programme. Within the YOTs surveyed, KCPP was delivered in four to 10 sessions. Those that extended the programme to 10 modules (11 YOTs), often added practical sessions such as first aid training or community arts and sports programmes.

YOTs varied as to whether they delivered the programme in group sessions or a one-to-one format, with some using a mixture of both, according to demand and local factors. The research found that groups were typically small, with 23 of the 67 YOTs reporting an average of four to six participants. Only seven of the 67 YOTs were running groups of 10 or more participants.

YOT staff interviewed reported several benefits of group delivery: it was felt to build participants' social skills and confidence as the members of the group started challenging and learning from each others' experiences. However, perhaps unsurprisingly, the survey highlighted complexities in managing risk, including:

- ensuring the young people were suitable for group work in terms of the risk of violence they presented or learning difficulties they may have had
- in areas where gangs were prevalent, ensuring that rival gangs were not mixed within the same groups
- ensuring the age range of the group was appropriate: not mixing younger, vulnerable or first-time offenders with older offenders.

Managing the risks associated with group work was said to require strong, experienced facilitators with an understanding of the programme. More broadly, it was noted how the skills, confidence and experience of facilitators impacted on the quality of discussion within groups – and that this was key to the programme's success.

Programme materials

A range of KCPP materials are available and several programmes that broadly follow KCPP guidance were commonly purchased: BeSafe,⁸ and programmes from Lancashire, Liverpool, and Reading YOTs. However, staff reported having spent significant time identifying appropriate resources at the project outset and some cited the lack of signposting as a key frustration.

⁸ BeSafe provided the initial theoretical base on which KCPP was built.

Location

The majority of YOTs delivered KCPP sessions on their own premises. Some also used partner or community sites, such as libraries, youth centres or local school facilities. Some YOT staff interviewed felt that engaging young people outside the YOT provided a valuable experience and sometimes added an element of reality to their understanding of the dangers of knife possession. Some YOTs expressed concerns that future resource constraints may hinder use of external sites for delivery.

Victim and ex-offender involvement

The 'victim interaction' and 'peer education' modules of KCPP encouraged YOTs to provide testimonies from victims of knife crime and ex-offenders. Achieving personal input from either of these groups was reported to be very challenging and only attained by the minority of surveyed YOTs (17 of 67 had personal input from victims and nine of 67 had input from peers or ex-offenders). Where the sessions were delivered personally by victims and ex-offenders, staff and young people interviewed in the qualitative research spoke highly of these sessions. Young people said that it brought an element of reality to the programme.

Only 17 of the 67 YOTs surveyed stated that victims (or relatives of victims) were personally involved in supporting the delivery of KCPP. The remaining YOTs used recorded media, case studies or role plays to deliver these victim awareness sessions. Challenges which prevented more YOTs from including actual victims in sessions included:

- managing risk to victims and young people
- availability of victims who were willing to participate
- the process of preparing and supporting the victims.

Only nine of the 67 YOTs surveyed were able to arrange for peers or ex-offenders to support delivery of sessions personally. The rest used recorded media, case studies and/or role plays. Cited challenges were:

- managing risks to young people
- availability and locating suitable ex-offenders
- the process of Criminal Records Bureau⁹ checks.

⁹ On 1 December 2012, the Criminal Records Bureau was merged with the Independent Safeguarding Authority to become the Disclosure and Barring Service. The Disclosure and Barring Service performs the functions previously carried out by the Independent Safeguarding Authority and the Criminal Records Bureau.

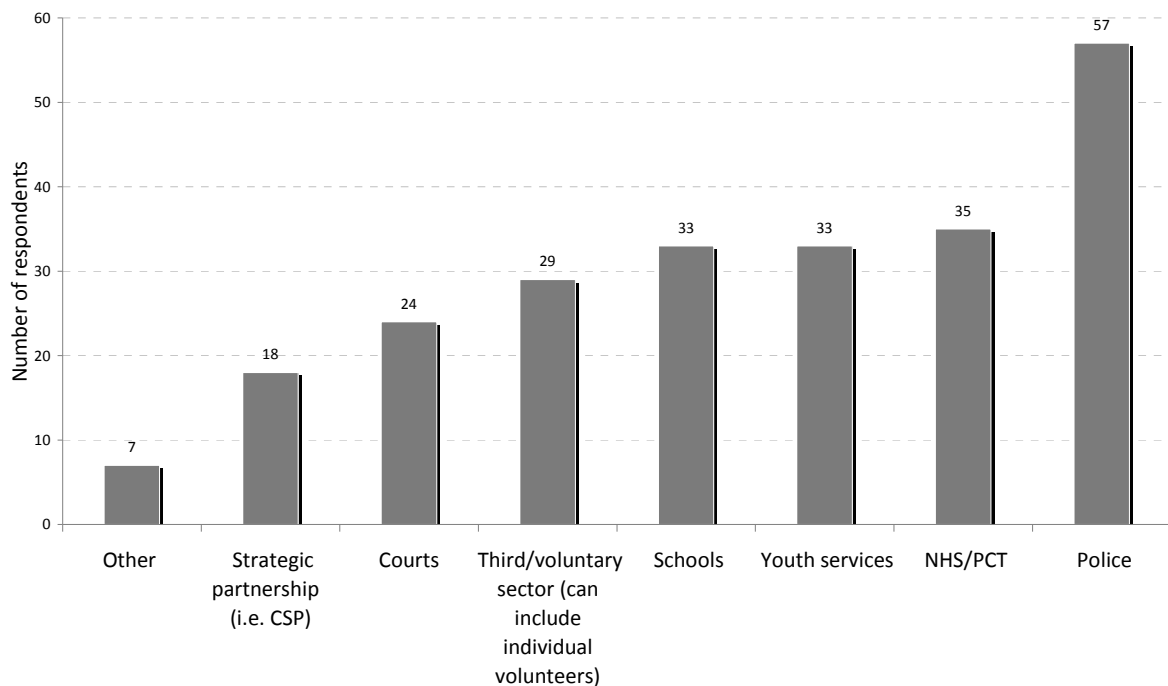
Partnership working

Most surveyed YOTs indicated that partner agencies were also delivering their own interventions to tackle knife crime. However, most reported that:

- partners were now working closely together to tackle knife crime
- KCPP had become part of a cross-agency strategy
- they had not had any problems getting input from partners to tackle knife-related crime.

While YOTs valued partner contributions, many were challenged by the resources required to initially engage partner input and manage the relationship. The police were reportedly the most challenging partner in terms of finding the right person to provide input into KCPP. Victim groups and the health service were said to be the least challenging in this respect. As shown in Figure 1, the police were perceived as a key delivery partner by the large majority of YOTs (57 of 67). Around half mentioned health services, youth services and schools as key delivery partners.

Figure 1: YOT staff views on who the key partners were in delivering KCPP



Completion and follow-up

Question 3: Is there any 'follow up' programme or process for offenders graduating from the KCPP?

Question 4: Are young people completing the whole programme of eight modules? If not, what are reasons behind non-completion?

This section presents findings from data collected in the survey of staff from the 67 YOTs who agreed to participate, together with qualitative research carried out with YOT staff.

YOT staff who were surveyed believed that the majority of young people who started KCPP completed the programme.¹⁰ Non-completion was reportedly most often due to the young person being taken into custody (named by 24 of 67 YOTs), being disruptive in sessions, or failing to attend. Other reasons mentioned were: learning difficulties, sickness, lack of motivation, family and personal circumstances, clashes with educational commitments, or being moved to probation or out of the area.

The KCPP framework did not stipulate any formal follow-on activity for those who completed the programme. Only a few of the YOTs surveyed (six of 67) provided organised follow-on activities, and they said that these were dependent on local availability and funding. However, the majority of YOTs stated that *some* form of follow-up process and activity takes place. Almost all YOTs (60 of 67) indicated that they updated the young person's details on their case management system.¹¹ Most YOTs (53 of 67) reported that they would debrief with the young person, who would complete an evaluation form.

Of the few YOTs that did provide organised follow-on activities, none of them were explicitly linked to knife crime. They included:

- a sports mentoring programme with a local basketball team
- a community-based martial arts programme
- community arts, music and drama programmes.

YOTs that arranged such activities felt that these helped young people with confidence and positive thinking.

¹⁰ Due to the low response rate for the entry and exit survey, it is not possible to estimate the completion rate.

¹¹ Youth Offending Information System (YOIS), Careworks or ChildView.

The qualitative research also found that some YOTs enhanced modules with practical activities. One YOT added sessions on anger management to strengthen the learning outcome of the managing conflict module, while another YOT had engaged with accident and emergency trainee doctors to run a practical first aid session, building on the health module.

KCPP participants' perceptions

Question 5: Are there any changes in attitudes observed between entry to and exit from the programme?

Question 6a: What are young people's perceptions of the programme?

Due to the low response rate, it was not possible to measure changes in attitudes observed between entry to and exit from the programme. The perceptions of young people and staff are presented separately in the next two sections. This section presents findings about the young people from:

- qualitative research with 19 young people several months after completion of KCPP¹²
- the entry and exit survey for 96 KCPP participants (quantitative).

The interviews with a small number of KCPP participants post-completion found that most participants thought highly of sessions that included input from the police, health services and victims. These were described by KCPP graduates as bringing an element of reality to the programme:

... you know it's all true as it's their stories and not just someone telling you a bunch of facts, or telling you off for carrying a knife.

Awareness of the impact on victims and families (of both the participant and victims) was also evident through the interviews with KCPP graduates:

Understanding the effects and seeing the mums tell their story – I wouldn't want that to be my mum, sometimes seeing your mum cry hurts more than being stabbed.

It really helps you think through and understand the damage you can do, not just to the person that gets stabbed but to the families and others, including my own family.

¹² Young people were interviewed between one and six months after they completed the programme.

Young people who had participated in sessions delivered directly by health practitioners said that these sessions had made an impact. Throughout their interviews, these young people discussed with confidence their understanding of the health impacts of knife wounds. Some KCPP graduates also demonstrated levels of empathy for health professionals dealing with knife incidents:

I think the doctors are brave, and they get a lot of respect from me for doing what they do.

I didn't realise how quickly you can die from getting stabbed, if you hit an artery you'll lose blood really quickly.

Some young people interviewed stated that, while they themselves already had knowledge about issues relating to knife possession prior to KCPP, they felt that the programme was useful for their peers:

I knew a lot of the stuff, but for some of the others they need to be told and made aware of what they are doing is foolish and dangerous.

Attitudes to knife carrying

Many of the young people interviewed stated that, although they no longer carried a knife on a regular basis, issues of 'protection' continued to be a key motivator for knife carrying:

If you live around a rough area you need to carry a knife for protection [...] protection is the biggest reason people carry a knife, but you don't realise you could end up hurting yourself.

I've been stabbed a couple of times so I used to carry a knife for protection, and for some people you don't have a choice as you're mixed up in all sorts [...] but I realise now that you don't need to carry a knife to protect yourself; being a man doesn't mean you have to be tough, avoiding the situation makes you stronger.

This echoes findings from previous studies, for example, Barlas and Egan (2006).

KCPP graduates interviewed commonly stated that the possibility of receiving a custodial sentence for knife possession was an incentive for not carrying a knife:

No one wants to go to jail for looking hard [because they're carrying a knife].

Knowledge and attitudes at the end of the programme

Data was collected from 96 young people in 13 YOTs who completed a survey upon entry to and exit from the programme. This sample size was low and subject to possible selection bias at YOT and young person level. As such, the findings are indicative and should be treated with caution. Headline findings were as follows.

By the end of the programme:

- a large majority of young people stated that there is no safe place to stab someone on the body
- the majority demonstrated a correct understanding of the law; however, less than half (37) of the 96 young people were able to identify the length of blade that can be carried with lawful reason
- participants thought the victim's family and friends were the most affected when someone dies as a result of a knife attack
- around a quarter (26) of the young people still reported that carrying a knife was a useful way to protect themselves.

Staff perceptions

Question 6b: What are staff perceptions of the programme?

This section presents findings from:

- qualitative research with 33 staff, undertaken during eight site visits
- the survey of 67 YOTs.

Due to the small and potentially unrepresentative sample sizes, the following findings should be treated with a degree of caution.

The national KCPP framework was perceived as helpful by YOT staff. Staff felt that the learning themes complemented each other and provided a range of perspectives. The flexibility of the framework enabled them to reflect local issues and integrate delivery into existing provision. In at least one area, the programme had been tailored for schools and community groups and was being delivered as a preventative activity.

The majority of YOT staff surveyed (40 out of 67) said that they believed KCPP was effective. Staff from YOTs and partner agencies consulted in the qualitative research expressed a strong commitment to seeing the programme continue, where possible.

Staff surveyed in 29 of the 67 YOTs felt that the majority of young people that had completed KCPP were likely to stop carrying a knife. When asked about key motivators for future knife carrying, staff in most YOTs (50 of 67) said 'for protection' was a motivator for young people and around half (34 of 67) mentioned 'status amongst peers'.

Staff felt that the programme is more appropriate for offenders with a perceived low risk of reoffending. Most YOT staff surveyed (54 of 67) believed the programme had a high impact for this group, but only around a third (24 of 67) thought that it had a high impact for those at high risk of reoffending.

One issue that emerged as important and challenging was the need to balance a punitive and informative approach. Court representatives interviewed welcomed the informative nature of the programme, but they felt that without a strong punitive element to the programme, it may not be appropriate for prolific offenders or those young people who had committed serious offences.

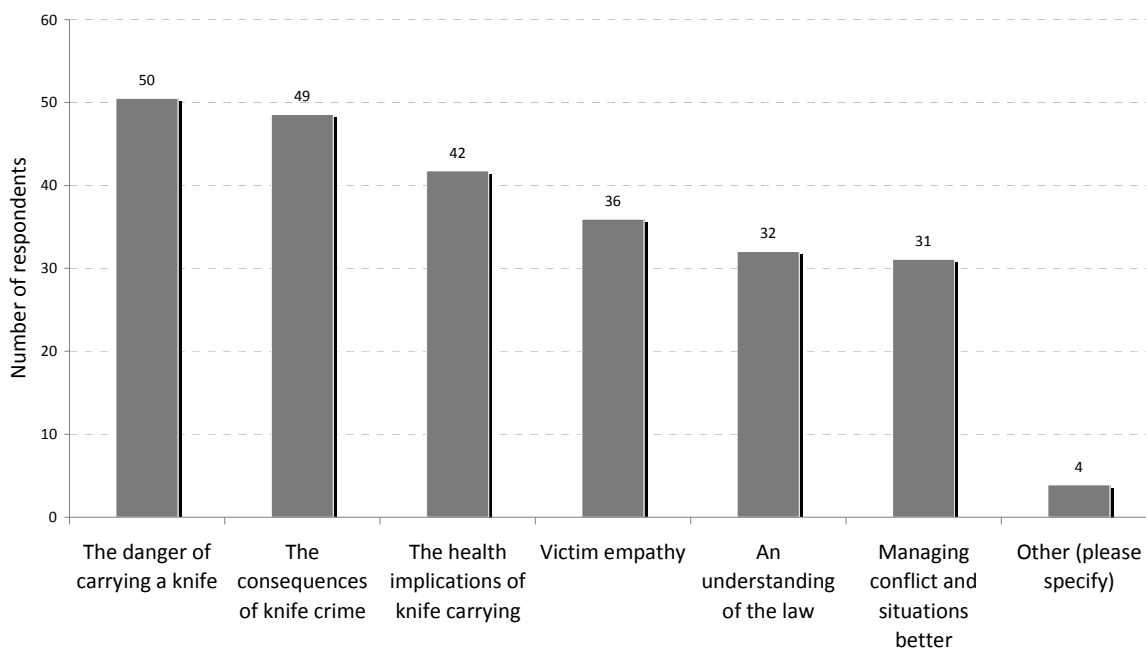
In keeping with the interview findings from young people, YOT staff felt that the use of external speakers was valuable and provided participants with a perspective that had credibility. Delivery of activities by service professionals was felt to give young people the opportunity to develop a relationship with service professionals and gain an insight into their experiences of responding to knife crime. In some cases, such input was described by partners and YOT staff to inspire participants to change their behaviour. Providing the opportunity for young people to work with police officers in a safe and educational environment was felt to help change the negative perceptions held by young people about the police. However, involving these professionals required resources to coordinate and manage.

Where victim sessions were delivered with personal input from victims, YOT staff described these sessions as 'emotive and powerful', and as enhancing the overall impact of the programme. However, only a few YOT staff interviewed said that they had been able to find appropriate victims/family members of victims.

Learning outcomes

Three-quarters of YOT staff (50 of 67 YOTs surveyed) felt that the biggest learning point for young people from the programme was recognising the danger of carrying a knife. This was followed closely by an increased understanding of the consequences of knife crime (49 of 67 YOTs). All of the results are shown in Figure 2.

Figure 2: YOT staff perceptions of what young people learned from KCPP



During the qualitative interviews with YOT staff, the learning outcomes most frequently mentioned were that participants:

- were more informed about the law on knives
- better understood the dangers of knife possession – to themselves and others
- had a better awareness of the dangers of knife crime, and the often serious medical nature of wounds
- recognised the emotional impact on victims and their families, as well as on the perpetrator’s family and friends.

The modules most frequently rated by YOTs as having ‘high engagement’ from young people (meaning that the young people were actively participating, not just attending) were ‘health’ and ‘attitudes to knife crime’. ‘Victim interaction’ and ‘managing conflict’ also scored highly in this area.

The future of the programme in YOTs

From interviews with YOTs, it was clear that the nature and extent of knife crime and possession would influence the future direction of the programme in each area.

These were the main findings:

- YOTs that described high levels of reported and 'known but unreported' knife possession saw a clear future demand for the programme; however, they acknowledged that the delivery approach may evolve to reflect available resources
- smaller YOTs without high demand saw the programme continuing to form part of their portfolio of interventions, but expected only to run the programme when a sufficient number of participants were available. Most of these YOTs used a one-to-one format because of the small numbers
- YOTs that perceived knife possession to be a symptom of wider problems for young people, such as bullying and peer pressure, would continue to provide the programme, but thought they would work more closely with schools
- YOTs where knife possession was associated with other criminal activity such as gang association, substance misuse, and gun crime saw value in evolving the programme to cover a wider variety of issues, but would use the modular approach and learning framework as the foundations of the design.

When asked, YOT staff highlighted a number of challenges to the future of the programme:

- availability of trained and skilled staff to run the programme
- availability of staff to manage and coordinate the programme – keeping materials up to date and supporting partner input
- the sustainability of working with other professionals (e.g. health services, police), given the current pressure on resources in all public services
- continued funding to engage with community sport and arts organisations.

3. Conclusion

Question 7: What aspects of the programme appear to be particularly helpful or unhelpful?

This section draws on indicative findings from across the research. It summarises material already presented within this report highlighting aspects of the programme perceived by staff and/or young people to be helpful or unhelpful.

Helpful aspects of the programme

- Personal accounts of knife crime by victims, their family members, and ex-offenders.
- Opportunities to interact with and learn from service professionals, e.g. police and health professionals. This was reported to have led to increased empathy for professionals among some young people.
- Materials on the health implications of knife wounds.
- Learning themes and content of the programme, providing a range of perspectives.
- Group work, which was felt to build participants' social skills and confidence.
- Flexibility in programme design.

Unhelpful/challenging aspects of the programme

- Addressing attitudes to knife carrying for protection.
- Engaging and arranging input from external speakers: victims, family members, ex-offenders and service professionals. Managing the risks this involved to victims and young people.
- Resources required to engage partners.
- Balancing an informative and punitive approach.
- Managing risks relating to group dynamics (e.g. appropriate grouping of rival gangs and different age groups).

- Time taken to investigate the diverse range of materials available.
- Availability of suitably skilled facilitators.
- Sustainability of the programme, in terms of future funding.

References

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Annex A: Detailed methodology

Stage 1: Survey of YOTs

An electronic survey was sent to KCPP leads, who were asked to pass the request to complete the survey to the most appropriate individual within their team at all YOTs participating in KCPP. Several follow-up requests were made. Sixty-seven YOTs positively responded and completed the survey. Forty per cent of individuals who completed the survey identified themselves as an intervention/group work coordinator; the remainder were completed by other staff involved in the programme.

Stage 2a: Entry/exit survey for young people

A paper-based closed-response questionnaire was administered by participating YOTs and completed by KCPP participants before and after the programme, typically as part of the first and last sessions of the programme.

Only 13 YOTs chose to participate in this stage of the research. The following survey responses were received:

- 132 pre-KCPP surveys
- 96 post-KCPP surveys.¹³

The limitations of this data are recognised and discussed in the main report.

Survey data was collected during the period from October 2010 to June 2011. Participation in the survey was not compulsory and parental consent was requested for those aged 16 years and under.

To encourage participation in the survey, materials were designed to be quick and straightforward to complete, with a focus on impulse answers. The pre-programme survey contained 10 multiple-choice questions focused on the young person's knowledge of the law on knives and their perceptions of the danger and impact of knife crime. The post-programme survey comprised identical questions, but it also included additional questions to gather participants' views on the programme.

¹³ Further geographical details on the YOTs which were given in the survey responses cannot be provided due to the data-sharing conditions stipulated regarding the use of the survey responses.

With the return of the second questionnaire, YOT staff were asked to supply demographic details of the young person, for matching purposes.

Stage 2b: Qualitative interviews with young people post-completion

Qualitative research was undertaken with KCPP graduates who had completed the programme up to six months previously; this comprised semi-structured interviews with 12 young people and one focus group of seven young people.

These interviews sought to understand how young people perceived the programme several months after they had finished it. The interviews explored aspects of the programme that young people found most and least helpful, and whether they felt it would be useful for other young people. The interviewers also asked about their knowledge of the law on knives, their perceptions about the dangers of possession, and what they would do if an incident occurred. This latter section was designed to give an insight into what young people had learned from the programme.

Sample size

Eight YOTs were identified to participate in this stage, based on the following factors:

- participation in Stage 1 of the evaluation, to ensure that researchers had an understanding of the KCPP delivery approach at that particular YOT
- delivery model: ensuring that a range of programme delivery approaches were selected (group/one-to-one/both and delivered with or without input from partners and external facilitators)
- geography: selecting a mix of geographical regions
- willingness to participate.

Across these eight YOTs, a total of 19 young people participated in the qualitative research, through 12 interviews and one focus group of seven young people. The interviews formed part of site visits during which the qualitative research with staff was also undertaken.

Selection of young people for interview depended on their availability and whether they were visiting the YOT on the day of the site visit. The limitations of the selection process are acknowledged.

Stage 2c: Analysis of YJMIS data

For each young person that completed the entry/exit survey, identifying information was requested from the YOT worker/programme facilitator. This information was used to match with YJMIS administrative data. However, only 45 young people were able to be matched with YJMIS data. This data was not considered to be representative of the KCPP cohort, and therefore was not used for data analysis.

Stage 3: Understanding the views of staff and partners

Site visits to eight YOTs were carried out. Semi-structured interviews were undertaken with a total of 33 staff and delivery partners across the eight YOTs, all of whom were involved in the delivery of KCPP locally. The process used to select the YOTs is described in Stage 2b. The range of interviews undertaken at each site was dependent on the delivery model and approach adopted by the individual YOT and the availability of interviewees. Interviews were conducted with the following:

- six KCPP leads (those managing and coordinating the programme)
- seven KCPP delivery practitioners (staff actively involved in the delivery of KCPP modules)
- four YOT managers
- 13 partners involved in delivery of KCPP (police and health professionals, victims and ex-offenders)
- three court representatives/magistrates.

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