



CASE STUDY: West Midlands Police Community Initiative to Reduce Violence (CIRV)

Background

CIRV is a Community Initiative to Reduce Violence (CIRV) in the West Midlands, with referral modules currently in both Coventry and Wolverhampton. Both areas have two encrypted referral forms (one for professionals and one is self-referral), which maximises the number of referrals received.

The case management system that CIRV use is an ECINS solo. This means that it has all the functionality of the national system but is designed specifically for this project. ECINS also supports CIRV through its referral module; professionals involved in the scheme can send project feedback forms that assist CIRV in improving the programme.



CIRV received 800 referrals through this system in its first 3 months and is currently the largest and most intensively evaluated piece of crime prevention activity in the country. Its evaluation currently sits at 1 million pounds across a 3-year programme.

What is CIRV's Approach?

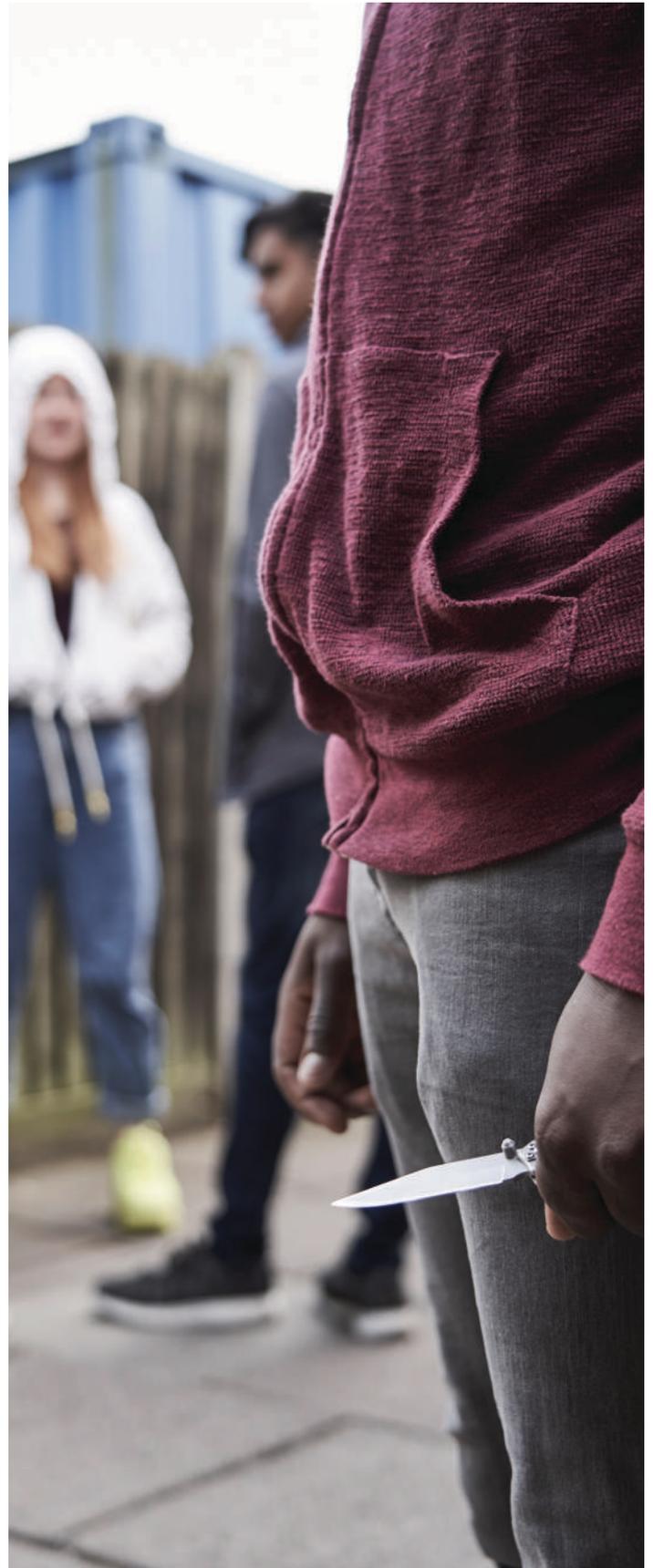
CIRV is unique to England in the way that it is deployed.

Each programme adapts to its local context: for example, the local context for Northamptonshire was lots of county lines (transportation of illegal drugs) and young people committing acts of violence.

The initiative identifies the complex drivers behind violence in each case and implements a system that addresses that complexity. As opposed to dealing with the symptoms of youth violence, CIRV addresses root causes which creates a meaningful difference to the community.

Many young people aspire to be successful, so CIRV utilise this desire for success and repurpose it by offering funding and resources to help youths achieve success in healthy ways.

This is especially effective for young people who have not been damaged by exposure to the system.



Accessibility

It is vital for CIRV to always be accessible and respond quickly. The window for engagement is often slim but must be capitalised on whilst the young person is willing to accept help. 'As soon as we cannot respond we have failed', stated CIRV Programme Lead Chief Inspector Daryl Lyon from West Midlands Police.

There are 2 admin staff on the programme and a 24-hour phone line in operation, which enables callers and referrals to receive responses within an hour of them reaching out. This enhances CIRV's accessibility, and therefore its success rate, as the service is readily available to those requesting help.

'The phone line is a slick and effective mechanism which ECINS supports with in terms of software.'



From the perspective of the person making the referral, a call within an hour from CIRV is considerably more convenient than filling in a lengthy report that goes into the local authority. Equally, referral forms can be found at the registered domain CIRV.co.uk which offers longer, detailed forms for professionals and partner agencies; simplified referral forms for parents and non-professionals are also available, so as not to deter anybody.

The central referral system is hugely beneficial, which Sally Scales praises 'the ability to collate the sources of referrals, the numbers of referrals and the demographic around those referrals.' Regardless of where a referral comes from (e.g., self, public, professional, police etc.) it hits the same system in live time, and family support workers monitor the system. If a referral is urgent, they can act immediately and get support in place. Within this system, CIRV can record their activities, decision making and whether they have consent. Various levels of access to this information can be provided so that members of the team can only see what is relevant to them.

An increase of referrals is expected in the coming months as CIRV incentivises schools to input more referrals. CIRV's family support officers go into schools and use direct language to produce results. They get to know Dedicated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs) and identify families that are showing concerns. DSLs are then taught how to put these names into the referral system so that they can do this in future. CIRV's use of direct language that focusses on the specifics of what they want DSLs to do garners a large number of referrals.

Engagement

To address concerns about reaching saturation point, CIRV builds a distinction between the family engaging and the individual that is being referred engaging.

Families are easily engaged by the programme because they often share professional's desire for the individual to have a positive future. They have statutory involvement and do not have to engage with the programme; they can choose to be taken off at any time which creates a non-threatening environment, encouraging co-operation.

Young people typically have no interest in engaging. To combat this, they are placed onto a system which monitors national police, local intelligence, and hospital systems. When CIRV sees a changes in the young person's environment, they visit the individual and re-engage each time.

The psychology behind change states that people do not change if their situation is tolerable, but they will change if their suffering is great enough; CIRV's monitoring of changes in environment therefore gains them good engagement. The programme is unique in its ability to respond with a credible offer during the young person's moment of vulnerability.

Consistent non-engagers are put on an 'at risk list' because even hardened OCG (Organised Crime Group) members will reach a point where they want help. Their situation is fluid, and CIRV must move in real time whilst the individual remains vulnerable.

'Good communicators on the programme are essential to engagement in this situation, as they deliver advice using the young person's language'.

What is the process of helping an individual?

Consent prevents CIRV from addressing complexities behind violence, as the sharing of information and the progression of the case is prohibited without consent. Some form of consent is required to do anything for a family, which is a massive blocker in relation to enabling families to access support.

It is typical for an officer to go out to an address, identify the problem and put in a referral. The family concerned is asked whether they would like to engage in the service and they commonly decline, meaning that the case is closed, and time has been wasted.

CIRV endeavours to unblock this avenue, as those that decline help often require the service most. To overcome the consent barrier, CIRV deploys family support workers within 24 hours of a referral landing.

'A similar UK project had a 7% success rate in getting people to engage with help services. Conversley, CIRV had a 85% success rate in getting people that were referred to the programme to consent to engage'



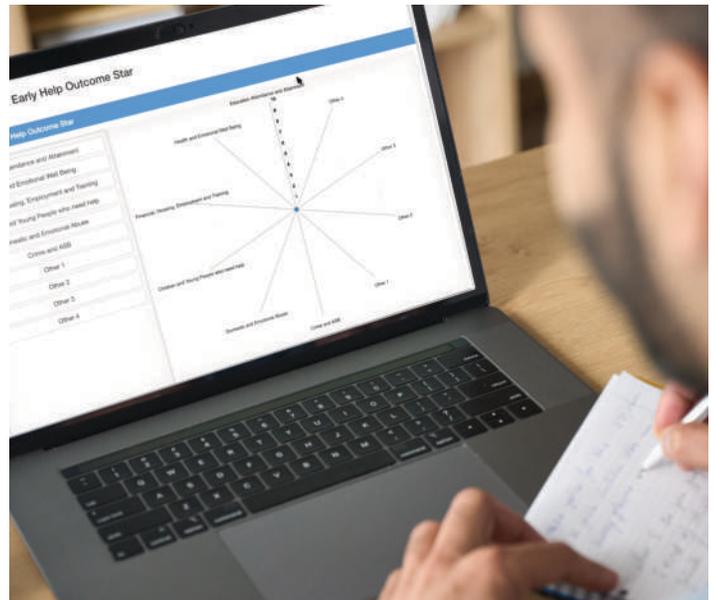
Once consent is gained and the individual's situation has been assessed, a triage meeting is held. Reports are drawn from the system to present in the meeting so that a rich picture around current situation is gained. This helps CIRV to consider whether they are the most appropriate form of support for that individual going forward, or whether they need to collaborate or refer the young offender elsewhere. Within 24 hours of a referral dropping, the triage meeting ascertains whether CIRV is required in the case.

If it is decided that CIRV can help the individual, it is necessary to build and garner the trust that has been developed with the family and the individual. The navigator (coordinator of activity) must know the family well and sequence interventions to sit around them. They make sense of the complex environment that the young person sits in.

Rather than simply offering mentoring or therapy, CIRV enable the young person to order and understand how factors will help them achieve their destination point; this goal could range from a job to be integrated back into school, but it needs to be defined by the individual so that they see value in the help that they are being provided.

ECINS' case management system and assessment tool

All CIRV's activity is recorded on the case management system which provides an audit trail. CIRV also utilises a radar chart assessment which is built into ECINS case management system (also known as a wheel assessment).



This feature allows CIRV to monitor, store information and overlay assessments to track progression; the ability to review assessments provides a better structure for case management and therefore better outcomes for individuals.

'ECINS' programme provides secure areas for both the police side and CIRV partners to store information' accord to CIRV Consultant Sally Scales. With Excel sheets there is potential for corruption and information being shared in the wrong places, but ECINS prevents this.

The system can be locked down so only certain people can access it and there is no possibility of printing. Daryl Lyon states that 'CIRV has absolute assurance that their information is being managed in the proper ways with ECINS' software'.

In addition, the referral system that ECINS provide feeds directly into the case management system. 'Referrals can now feed directly into case management system as opposed to emails and paper', optimising the efficiency of the programme.

In Northampton, CIRV fed the information from the police and ECINS into an analytical tool. This process enables CIRV to see correlations between their work and the impact that it has on an individual's criminal behaviour. The tool revealed a 50% reduction in offending behaviour after individuals had engaged with CIRV; without ECINS' case management system and built-in assessment tools the retrieval of this data would not occur.

'ECINS assessment tools are the key to the future of CIRV as they provide evidence that CIRV does work'.

Deploying CIRV in other areas

Wolverhampton. An external charity did community warm up, light-hearted events as well as engagement events with specific communities and independent advisory groups. These groups were all part of the operational board discussions for children’s services in Wolverhampton and Coventry, making decisions as the programme progressed.

A branch in the programme also looked to engage local people to do delivery with CIRV. Local people with lived experience history or people who wanted to give back to their community were trained, security vetted and connected to local people on CIRV programme who needed support. This gave an undercurrent of natural information sharing.



‘The case management system offers a number of benefits; it offers transparency.’

Three CIRV programmes exist, and they've been replicated across several places. It is vital that the correct people are recruited to run the programme, and they must see their role as a vocation. Special people are required to dedicate themselves to being available constantly, but equally there is risk in hinging a programme around one person. Each individual programme requires a strong governance of good programmers, and somebody at assistant chief officer level in policing or the equivalent in the local authority. There are no set rules, as developing relationships with people cannot be operated by following a list.

CIRV is about subtleties: training staff about psychological elements of engaging with people, being there at teachable moments, responding quickly and the aggregation of marginal gain. Beating margins enables good engagement. CIRV understands the issue, deploys appropriately to it, and never rests; they constantly grow and learn. ECINS' issue log supports this as it enables problems to be identified and resolved.



CIRV is attainable yet complex to deploy, with skills around project management and coordination being vital. It is vital for the multi-agency team to mesh; family support workers, careers advisors, police, disruption teams, support teams, administration teams, and analysts all sit within the build of CIRV and communicate efficiently. CIRV delivered two of these projects in the West Midlands within 6 months.

The process of refining this practice was made possible with ECINS issue log because problems with the programme were docked using the ECINS software. CIRV then provide management oversight over these problems so that the programme has maximum efficiency.

'There are hopes for CIRV to become a national programme due to the overwhelming evidence in support of its success'.