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# **Are Police-led social crime prevention initiatives effective? A process and outcome evaluation of a UK youth intervention.**

## **Abstract**

Police-led interventions with 'at risk' young people, raise a number of debates around policing in society including the allocation of resources at a time of fiscal austerity, the extent to which the police should prioritise the safety and wellbeing of young people, and the role that the police should take in preventing youth crime. This article explores the impact and effectiveness of a police-led social crime prevention initiative in England. It adopts the QUALIPREV approach by Rummens et al (2016) on behalf of the European Crime Prevention Network to analyse the data allowing for a detailed and replicable analysis of core aspects including police engagement, risk management, offending rates and police-community relations. Drawing on comparisons between the UK case study and previous studies on police-led social crime prevention projects in Australia and Canada, the article identifies a number of common challenges for schemes of this nature including problems with multi agency working, developing a clear project identity, unequal resources across different locations, and the difficulty in recruiting and retaining volunteers. However, there were also significant benefits to such schemes, including positive impacts on offending rates, engagement of at risk young people, and wider benefits to the communities within which the young people live, including participation, volunteering and reduction in risks of community harm. A cost-benefit analysis also shows such scheme have the potential to offer significant savings to the criminal justice system as a whole.

**Keywords:** Social Crime prevention, Police-led intervention, Working for reward, Youth offending

# Introduction: Police engagement with young people

Weiler and Waller (1984) argue that persistent and serious criminals often come from socially disadvantaged backgrounds, and whilst this reflects a particular social reading of the nature of criminal activity (cf Garland, 2001), Weiler and Waller go on to claim that any attempts to respond to such actions with more coercive and punitive sanctions are likely to be ineffective. Instead, they contend that greater resources should be directed towards providing stronger, more accessible targeted social programs that focus on the underlying issues of family, school and life experiences for children and young people that so often predict future criminal behaviour (Weiler and Waller, 1984).

Police-led interventions with 'at risk' young people are at the centre of a number of debates around the nature of policing in society. These debates include issues such as the allocation of resources at a time of fiscal austerity (Barton, 2013), the extent to which the police should prioritise the safety and wellbeing of young people, and the role that the police should take in preventing youth crime (Bateman, 2014). Although youth crime in the UK has fallen in recent times, it is still recognised that young people are more likely to commit offences than adults and senior citizens (see for example, Loeber and Stallings, 2011). Therefore, the ways that police interact with young people are a vital component of police-community relationships. For instance, Hurst and Frank (2000) discuss the extent to which young people are over-represented in terms of police contacts and arrest; Herlitz and Hough (2016) demonstrate that suspects under the age of 18 are more likely to receive sanctions from local police officers than their adult equivalents; and Loader (1996) describes how young people are also more likely to come into contact with the police in heightened situations of conflict, in part due to their greater use of shared outdoor space.

Addressing issues of poor police-youth interactions requires a way of thinking about police-led interventions with young people that emphasises the experience of young people as members of communities, and also understands the unique social circumstances that they inhabit. Lyons (2015, p. 101), for example, outlines the role police can play in building an identity that can 'strengthen young people's ties to the community'. Similarly, Bradford (2012) discusses the role policing styles can play in encouraging positive views from the community towards those that police them. He argues that the 'police are a highly visible representation of the state, a concrete instantiation of its (often failed claim) to protect and represent all its citizens' (Bradford, 2012, p. 3). Despite this, Foreman Jr. (2004, p. 3) finds that young people are often excluded from police interventions at a community level, and argues that young people should be placed alongside other community members in police community-level interventions as this would 'increase law enforcement legitimacy in their eyes by increasing their respect for the process of police decision making'.

This article explores the impact and effectiveness of a modern police-led social crime prevention initiative that attempts to contend with such issues. There is a rich history of programmes that

seek to divert young people away from the criminal justice system, particularly in countries such as Canada and Australia (see, for example, Wood et al 2008; Grekul and Sanderson, 2011). However, evaluations of such programmes are limited. The example explored in this paper is a police-led scheme that works with what it deems to be 'at risk' young people in the United Kingdom. The data is organised and analysed through a series of key process and outcome review indicators taken from the QUALIPREV crime prevention evaluation tool, developed by Rummens et al (2016) on behalf of the European Crime Prevention Network. The process and outcome criteria used in this evaluation illustrate that, whilst there are some significant concerns over how such schemes are run, not least the role of 'Police as youth workers', there are potentially significant benefits to both the young people who are supported individually and encouraged to actively participate and engage with their communities. There are also potential cost benefits to such approaches which reduce the entrance of young people into the formal criminal justice system and which contribute time and energy into local communities.

# Social Crime Prevention Initiatives

In the UK, Crime Prevention discourses are often a reflection of what Garland (1996, p.454) terms the 'Responsibilization Strategy': an attempt to implement 'social' and 'situational' forms of crime prevention as a means of 'reordering the conduct of everyday life right across the social field'. Garland, however, notes that the success of implementing a responsabilization agenda quickly became constrained by issues with setting up effective multi-agency working. Even when sufficient capacity and willingness does exist questions have been asked about the validity of such approaches, particularly when they are used to hide deficits in front line policing and crime control (Crawford, 1994). Despite this, schemes of different varieties are relatively common. For example, Walker et al (2007) conducted a review of a Youth Inclusion Support Panel (YISP) scheme, a programme in the United Kingdom run by the Department for Education and skills which provided young people at risk of offending, and their families, with a range of support mechanisms designed to divert them from crime (Walker et al, 2007, p. xiv).

Rummens et al (2016) discuss the important distinction between situational and social crime prevention initiatives, citing the work of Ekblom (2010) and Tilley (2013) in making these distinctions. Broadly speaking, situational crime prevention initiatives focus on crime as varying combinations of Rational Choice theory and a "convergence in time and place of the following three elements: (1) a motivated offender, (2) an accessible target, (3) the absence of a capable guardian" (Rummens et al, 2016, p.14). Such approaches focus on the reduction in opportunity for such crimes and, they argue, run the risk of simply displacing crime or impacting on population groups more widely. In contrast, Rummens et al (2016, p. 17) describe social crime prevention initiatives as seeking to 'influence underlying social conditions and factors which lead to offending'. Social crime prevention approaches often focus on 'risk factors' as the key drivers of intervention. Such initiatives include structured interventions in the family life, education, health, work, and the neighbourhood of potential offenders (Grant, 2015). The rationale is that changing the social and physical conditions that impact on offending in local communities can have a marked effect on the behaviour of the potential offenders who live there (Tonry and Farrington, 1995).

The focus on 'risk factors' is not without criticism. For example, Kennelly (2011, p. 336) argues that modern attempts to police youth feature the constant re-circulating of notions of youth as 'risk'. These attempts to classify risk, she argues, are underpinned by what is essentially a fundamentally flawed 'dual-construction of youth' (2011, p. 342). Young people are not considered to be fully-formed citizens in the eyes of the law, yet they are considered to be ultimately responsible for their actions to the police and state. This carries 'specific implications for young people's treatment by state apparatuses, such as social service agencies, schools and police' (Kennelly (2011, p. 342). The danger therefore is that an over focus on risk indicators can lead to a preponderance of governmentality that prioritises 'efficient governance, control, monitoring and management of at risk populations' (Case and Haines, 2009, p5), often to the detriment of other important concerns such as welfare, justice or rehabilitation (See, for example, Case, 2006; Muncie, 2009; Muncie and Hughes 2002).

Nevertheless, social crime prevention schemes are relatively widespread in the UK, ranging from small diversionary schemes run by youth services to larger-scale programmes such as the local authority-led Youth Inclusion Support Panels (YISP). Police-led social crime prevention initiatives, however, are less common. There are international examples from several countries with similar cultural and policing contexts as the United Kingdom, including Australia and Canada. For example, Meyer and Mazerolle (2014) examined a police-led partnership programme in Brisbane, Australia that adopted a third-party policing approach to managing young offenders from high-risk families by engaging the families with the police and other partner agencies. Engaging in a multi-agency approach, the police attempted to coordinate the application of a number of services simultaneously. However, significant issues were identified by the authors, particularly the difficulty that the police had in maintaining partnerships between agencies from different organisational backgrounds. Most commonly, they found the challenges included '(1) a lack of philosophical fit between partner agencies; (2) a lack of clarity around the project's aims and objectives; (3) a lack of clarity around each partner's roles and responsibilities; and (4) a lack of understanding of each other's capacities and boundaries' (Meyer and Mazerolle, 2014, p. 246).

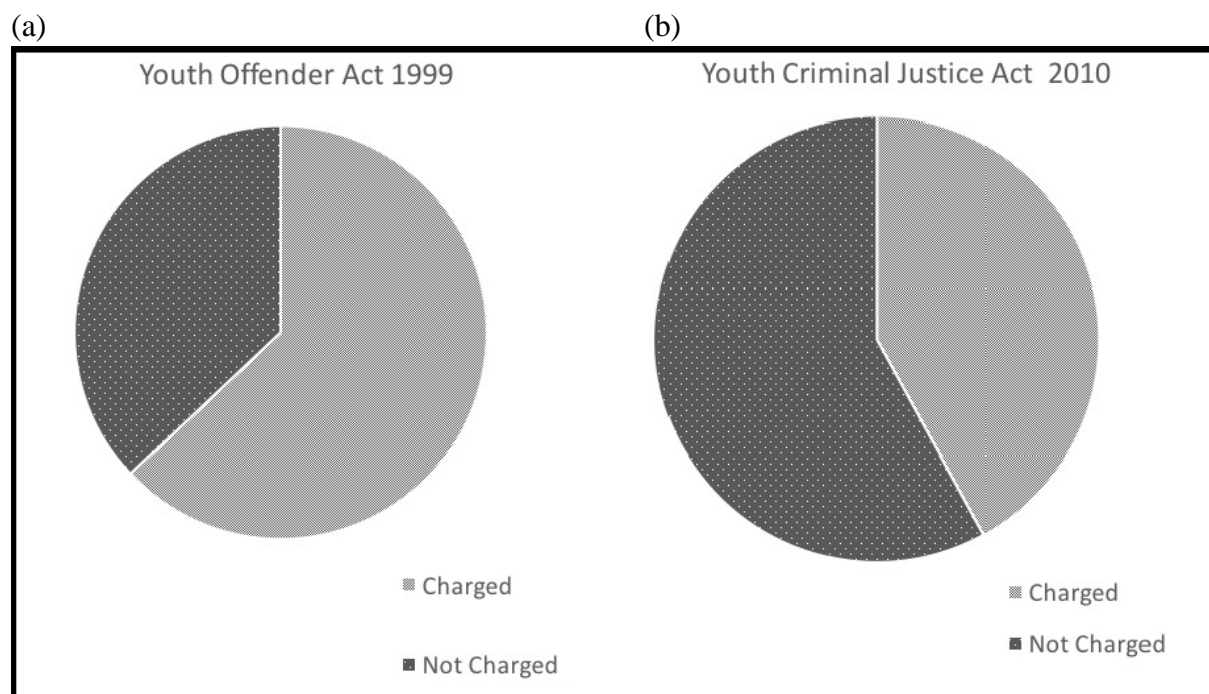
A study of the Nexus Policing Project in Victoria, Australia (Wood et al, 2008) explored the ability of police officers to become 'change agents' capable of altering their routines and practices to incorporate new methods targeted specifically at overcoming long term challenges around youth community safety. This work was based on the belief that police officers have the potential to challenge entrenched beliefs that often have a detrimental effect on their work with young people. They developed a new model of practice which drew on the work of Clifford Shearing (2001) and placed young people at the centre of a problem-solving process for identifying and targeting wellbeing issues in a range of youth contexts including home, schools and the wider community. For Wood et al (2008, p. 79), such a model 'has the potential to address a range of social and welfare issues relevant to young people'.

In the Hobbema area of central Alberta, Canada, Grekul and Sanderson (2011) explored an initiative run by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police that focused on those at risk of becoming involved in gang related activities. Started in 2005, the initiative aimed to tackle issues of 'socio-economic disadvantage, violence, family dysfunction, and substance abuse' that are particularly significant issues in the First Nation communities that live in the area (Grekul and Sanderson, 2011, p. 42-3). The initiative used a number of tools to build social bonds and increase opportunity, including positive peer relationships, regimented discipline (though military style parading), and an emphasis on school attendance and educational attainment. A 2015 review of the project by Public Safety Canada who contributed CAD\$2.8 million to its running between 2010-13, identified the project as largely successful, broadly meeting its commitments, and with a good level of satisfaction from the young people involved (Dunbar, 2015, p. 3).

More recently in Toronto, Canada, police have launched a Youth Pre-Charge Diversion Programme that aims to ‘identify young people who may be better served by community programs rather than criminal charges’ (CBC, 2017). The programme combines police and community agencies to provide alternatives to the criminal justice system when tackling criminal behaviour. This includes drug and alcohol counselling, community services, Restorative Justice solutions, volunteering, and paid work opportunities (Cross-Over Youth, 2017). Such diversionary programmes have become a greater part of the Canadian approach to youth crime. Developing from the 2003 Youth Criminal Justice Act, this approach emphasizes a commitment that ‘communities and families should work in partnership with others to prevent youth crime by addressing its underlying causes’ (Department of Justice, Canada, 2016). The impact of this approach has been powerful, and although it is hard to attribute all impact to this policy, the statistics shown in Figure 1 illustrate a marked decline in young people charged since the introduction of the Youth Criminal Justice Act.

□

**Figure 1: Young people charged (a) before and (b) after the introduction of the Youth Criminal Justice Act 2010 in Canada.**



(Department of Justice, Canada; 2016)

□

A more specific review of Pre-Charge Diversion programmes in Toronto conducted by the City Government found that they were, broadly, an effective means of reducing offending behaviour and increasing the resilience of young people (Scott, 2015). The report identified five characteristics of effective programmes: they should be: ‘1) community-centric, 2) child and youth-centered, 3) apply a positive approach, 4) have governance structure and integrated

funding, and 5) have a foundation of evidence-based research and evaluation' (Scott, 2015, p. 50). There were, however, several issues that were identified as barriers in the effectiveness of schemes. Most notably the need for determining 'clear, attainable and measurable goals for the program' (Scott, 2015, p. 50).

These examples highlight the potential of police-led social crime prevention programmes to offer a route to working successfully with young people, not just as a means for diverting them from criminal behaviour, but to also develop personal skills and support productive relationships with their communities and with the apparatus of the state. This research contributes to the international examples with a process and outcome evaluation of The Aston Project, a social crime prevention scheme in Gloucestershire, England. The Aston project works with young people between the ages of 9 and 17 who have displayed risk factors that might eventually lead to them becoming involved in nuisance or criminal behaviour.

Police agencies in England have recently suffered from an austerity driven reduction of services, which has had a significant impact on services provided by the state such as housing and social support, community projects, and local policing. The resulting residualisation of support has left marginalised groups vulnerable, with young people often at particular risk (Lynch et al., 2016). A report commissioned by the local Gloucestershire Constabulary in concert with the County's Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) indicated a range of concerns with respect to police engagement with young people (Restorative Engagement Forum, 2015). The OPCC Gloucestershire made the relationship between young people and the police a strategic priority within the Gloucestershire Police and Crime Plan, in particular 'examining how young people view the police and how they are policed, to try to improve relationships' (OPCC, 2016). The Aston Project is one mechanism through which Gloucestershire Police have been working with 'at risk' young people, and this process and outcome evaluation summarises the key considerations and benefits of such police-led social crime reduction initiatives

## Method

This article presents a process and outcome evaluation of the Aston Project. This approach was adopted to offer a more comprehensive analysis of the value of such a project, with the Process evaluation indicating how well the intervention was working, and the outcome evaluation appraising impact and sustainability. The criteria for this evaluation are derived from key indicators identified in the QUALIPREV process, which was developed by Rummens et al (2016, p5) on behalf of the European Crime Prevention Network as a tool for examining crime reduction initiatives. The QUALIPREV approach identifies a series of key indicators for evaluating the 'implementation, efficiency and effectiveness of a crime prevention programme' (2016, p5), scoring an initiative against each to provide an overall assessment of its impact. This work does not adopt the full QUALIPREV approach that assigns a score to the different indicators; it uses the evaluation framework of key indicators that are the foundation of

QUALIPREV. These key indicators are designed “to be flexible, by allowing the weights to be adjusted depending on the priorities set by the user of the tool” (2016, p53). Accordingly, for both the process and outcome elements of evaluation in this paper, we combine these indicators under master categories where applicable and all four researchers developed a consensus of the evaluation. Use of QUALIPREV key indicators affords this analysis a rigorous structure that is “determined by the relevant scientific literature and by a survey of practitioners in Europe” (Rummens et al, 2016, p53). Table 1, indicates the QUALIPREV key indicators used in this analysis, providing some description in each case.

**Table 1: QUALIPREV key indicators used in this analysis**

<b>Process evaluation:</b>	
<b>Key indicator</b>	<b>Description</b>
Implementation	These are costs in ‘a more absolute sense, i.e. whether the cost in money, resources or people is reasonable given the constraints or scope of the project’ (Rummens et al 2016, p. 21).
Accessibility, participation, and retention	Rummens et al (2016, p.21) group accessibility with fidelity, however here it is included with participation and retention as interconnected and related more widely to ‘engagemnt’.
Fidelity	A measure of ‘whether or not the crime prevention intervention was implemented as it was originally designed’ (Rummens et al, 2016, p. 21).
External Confounding factors	Other crime prevention initiatives, wider funding considerations, and local or broader societal issues (Rummens et al, 2016, p. 21).
<b>Outcome evaluation:</b>	
(Re)offending rates	Impact on offending rates for Social prevention schemes which can be very difficult to ascertain, are measured as ‘self reported’ (Rummens et al, 2016, p. 2).
Changes in attitude and development of social skills	A key indicator for success in Social prevention projects are indicators of ‘changing attitudes towards offending behavior. We also group here increased development of social skills that are ‘an important part of the intervention in social crime prevention projects to increase the normative barrier against offending’ (Rummens et al, 2016, p. 22).
Cost-benefit/cost-effectiveness analysis	This ‘compares the strengths and weaknesses of a prevention project against its cost,’ and although difficult in this instance we use a series of what Rummens et al (2016, p. 35) describe as ‘relevant outcome indicators.’

The data for this analysis comes from an evaluation of the Aston Project that was funded by the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) for Gloucestershire, and undertaken by the authors in 2016. This paper is an interpretive commentary rather than a straightforward summary of research findings. The original research report is also available (see: Hobson, Lynch, Payne, Ellis, and Hyde, 2017). In collecting the data, the research team engaged in discussion, observation and interviews with all principal stakeholders associated with the initiative. This included interviews with the senior police responsible for the project; the operational police management team; police officers who have managed the project in the past; the Police & Community Support Officers (PCSOs) working on the project; one retired PCSO who was involved in the project; and members of the steering group comprising individuals from the local and wider community. Table 2 details the interviews completed, in total, just under eight hours of interview material was collected across thirteen formal sessions).

**Table 2: Interview participant schedule and detail**

<b>Role [participant identifier]</b>	<b>Duration</b>	<b>Category of Participant</b>	<b>Details of interview questions</b>
Former Senior Police Strategic lead [Police manager 1]	27:46	Police Manager	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Role and overview of Aston</li> <li>2. Success of Aston</li> <li>3. Oversight (question to be asked depending on role and qs 2,3)</li> </ol>
Senior Police Strategic lead [Police Manager 2]	28:13		
Police Manager [Police Manager 3]	30:05		
Police Manager [Police Manager 4]	51:24		
PCSO Cheltenham [PCSO 1]	27:04	PCSO	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Frontline experience of Aston.</li> <li>2. Recruitment and management of the YP and activities</li> <li>3. How the Aston project is working generally</li> </ol>
PCSO Cheltenham [PCSO 2]	38:10		
PCSO Cheltenham 3 [retired, formerly involved with Aston]	48:00		
PCSOs Gloucester 4 & 5	43:00		
Stakeholder 1	38:10	Stakeholder	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Role and overview of Aston</li> <li>2. Success of Aston</li> <li>3. Oversight (question to be asked depending on role and qs 2,3)</li> </ol>
Stakeholder 2	26:32		
Stakeholder 3	39:59		

In addition to the interviews, the research team conducted two focus groups with young people participating in the project from the Cheltenham and Gloucestershire scheme, with seven young people between the ages of eight and ten years participating. Consent was obtained by the Aston Project team, who accompanied the young people to the focus groups. The focus groups were semi-structured conversations that allowed the young people to express their views on a number of aspects of the project. The topics directed the conversation around the young people's perspectives on the Aston Project; what they get out of their participation in the project and how it might have impacted on their behaviour; what activities, groups or organisations they are involved in through the Aston Project; and if they would recommend participation in the Project to their friends.

Finally, the research team were given access to activity sessions and to Aston Project documentation, including previous internal reviews. Observations were made of activity sessions run by the project in different locations across Gloucestershire. The observations, although not featuring heavily in the final analysis, did provide some important context on the workings of the project.

What follows is the process and outcome evaluation of the Aston Project. Each portion begins with a brief introduction on its content in relation to the QUALIPREV process, and then outlines the findings and analysis under relevant subheadings.

## **Part 1: Process evaluation**

Process evaluations indicate how well a programme or intervention has worked, or is working. For the QUALIPREV tool, Rummens et al (2016, p21) produce a series of process indicators common to many such evaluations, which they suggest provide a useful structure for such analysis. These are: the implementation of the preventative measure; fidelity of the measure (under which they group the implementation, accessibility, and feasibility of the project); Participation and Retention rate; and External confounding factors. The following process evaluation uses these headings combining for association where suitable, as the QUALIPREV approach allows.

### **Implementation**

Considerations of implementation involve what Rummens et al (2016, p. 21) describe as costs in 'a more absolute sense, i.e. whether the cost in money, resources or people is reasonable given the constraints or scope of the project'. Key to understanding this is the team involved with the delivery of Aston, and the aims and scope of the project. The Aston Project is funded

primarily by Gloucestershire constabulary, who provide the paid staff for the management and day-to-day running. At the time of review, this included a police management team that incorporated:

- A senior strategic lead officer with a portfolio for a range of projects including force licensing department for liquor licensing, more traditional crime prevention, integrated offender management, restorative justice and youth offending.
- A strategic lead for a range of projects around youth and gang crime.
- A police sergeant on a 0.8fte contract (working solely on the Aston Project)
- 4 Police Community Support Officers (working solely on the Aston Project)

At the time of review, the project was delivered across three locations in Gloucestershire: Gloucester, Cheltenham, and Newent. It has since expanded into a fourth area, Tewkesbury. The aim of the project is to provide a diverse range of support mechanisms and positive role models for the young people in Gloucestershire. Table 3 details the project's mission statement, aims and objectives.

**Table 3: Mission statement, aims, and objectives of the Aston Project and Great Expectations**

<b>Mission statement</b>	<i>Partners and communities working together to reduce harm, crime &amp; anti-social behaviour, by inspiring young people to meet their potential in a positive and rewarding environment.</i>
<b>Aims:</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To reduce harm, crime and anti-social behaviour involving young people, through an ethos of positive engagement, prevention and intervention.</li> <li>2. To increase the involvement of young people aged 16 and 17 in education, employment or vocational training.</li> <li>3. To achieve long-term sustainability and community ownership.</li> </ol>
<b>Objectives</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To target engagement at young people displaying a vulnerability to actual or future involvement in harm, crime or anti-social behaviour.</li> <li>2. To equip and inspire young people to make better life decisions.</li> <li>3. To utilise the skills and attributes of the individual young person and their community as part of the solution.</li> <li>4. To promote an ethos of ‘work for reward’ amongst young people.</li> <li>5. To develop relationships and break down barriers between young people, partners and communities.</li> <li>6. To support local businesses and communities by developing the future local workforce, using activities and work placement opportunities.</li> <li>7. Engage &amp; assess identified adults, young people, families &amp; communities, through information sharing with our partners, to determine levels of intervention &amp; support. For Great Expectations this will include monitoring and co-ordinating intervention for gang related activity.</li> <li>8. To recruit and utilise the knowledge and skills of community volunteers.</li> <li>9. To robustly evaluate the effectiveness of any prevention and/or intervention undertaken.</li> </ol>

The Aston Project shares a close association with a sister project, ‘Great Expectations’. The two projects share the mission statement, aims and objective shown in Table 1, yet where the Aston Project focuses on young people who have been identified as at risk of involvement with the criminal justice system, ‘Great Expectations’ focuses on young people that have some offending history.

The two projects are distinguished by a tiered system of engagement, with young people moving between the projects as suitable. Table 4 shows this relationship between the two projects, with Tier 1 representing the Aston Project.

**Table 4: The tiered structure for combining Aston Project (Tier 1) and Great Expectations (Tiers 2-4)**

	<b>Intervention Tier and description</b>	<b>Type of involvement</b>
<b>Aston Project</b>	<b>Tier 1</b> – has not been arrested but may be involved in anti-social behaviour or low-level crime, and/or are subject of one or more criteria indicating a future risk of offending.	Engagement only with the Aston Project.
<b>Great Expectations</b>	<b>Tier 2</b> – has received an out of court disposal for offending (for instance, Restorative Justice, Youth Caution) or involvement with an Acceptable Behaviour Contract, but they have not yet been charged or appeared at court.	Engagement is initiated by Great Expectations but following successful completion may revert to tier 1 and engagement with the Aston Project
	<b>Tier 3</b> – has previously been charged with offences and been dealt with at court, but has not yet received a custodial sentence.	Engagement entirely through Great Expectations.
	<b>Tier 4</b> – are involved in serious offending and would not be suitable for prevention or intervention.	Engagement with police or police-led task forces (particularly where gang related).

Note that the Aston Project deals exclusively Tier 1 participants who are at risk of offending. Great Expectations deals with Tiers 2-4 to reduce risk of offending and re-offending.

Source: adapted from Wood (2015).

There are several reasons for how this association has come about, including the sharing of facilities between projects and the process of project-accumulation and project-creep. There was some suggestion from interviewees that this conflation was causing confusion between the two projects:

[There is] a mission statement, a few aims and then more objectives. They link to the Aston Project and what was the Avenger Task Force, [what] is now called Great Expectations. [Police Manager 2]

Great Expectations which [...] in its own right, it has merit. I do think it's got merit but, actually, it doesn't fit the philosophy of Aston. It's not what Aston's about. [Police Manager 1]

One the key distinguishing features of the Aston Project as opposed to Great Expectations is the nature of the activities in which young people engage. Aston activities vary between the geographical locations, but are all focused on engaging the young people in sports, hobbies or positive-engagement tasks with the PCSOs, volunteers, and existing activity networks from the local community, often run by other youth organisations. For instance:

We're not a crèche for the younger kids. We've got to be threat, risk and harm based. We've got to be engaging with the right kids, always asking 'are we engaging with people who have either caused harm to our communities or are at danger of doing'. [Police Manager 2]

[the Aston Project] was set-up to work with youngsters that are, sort of, showing that they're starting to get tendencies to make the wrong choices and that may be going towards low level crime ... So the idea was to divert them from anti-social behaviour. [Police Manager 3]

In the delivery of activities, the Project has increasingly attempted to make greater use of its own community volunteers, as PCSO 'to share their knowledge and experience (PCSOs 4&5). Since volunteering was introduced in 2015, 34 volunteers have registered and over 500 hours of volunteer time has been contributed to the project. There are currently 23 'active' volunteers who typically contribute between 1.5 and 3 hours per week supporting activities such as football, coding, or Lego clubs. Despite this, the volunteering system is not always well integrated. One constraint on effective working practices was a reluctance to integrate volunteers into the key working practices of the project. For example, one officer described how volunteer participation is often viewed as additional support to activities led by the police:

I haven't had any [volunteers] come out with me. We just put it on the website to say what activities and trips that we're going on, and it's up to them whether they choose to come with us or whether they don't. [Police Manager 3]

Concerns were expressed by the police and PCSOs that once a particular initiative or activity became volunteer-driven young people on the Project might find the scheme becomes less relevant to them. There were also concerns that volunteers can be unreliable, which meant there was a reluctance to expand their use in some cases:

The kids need some continuity ... If it hits the fan in the middle of the week, one of us is always on duty and we can go and deal with that. If you have a volunteer, they may only do two hours a month, what happens to those kids? ... How can those kids build up a bond? [PCSO 3]

These issues resonate with experiences of using volunteers in police-led schemes elsewhere. For example, Dhami and Joy (2007) document how professionals such as police can be sceptical about the competence and reliability of volunteers, and may find it difficult to relinquish control of key aspects of a project to community representatives and other non-professional parties. Wood & Shearing (2007) describe how implementing an effective shared model of practice can require a fundamental shift in power relations between police and local communities, and in particular an acknowledgement of local 'expertise' and 'problem-solving skills'. This is compounded, in the UK at least, by austerity driven pressure on government-funded projects to slim down their operations and explore ways to cede functions to willing participants in an effort to cut costs and show value for money.

## **Accessibility, participation, and retention**

Rummens et al (2016, p21) group accessibility with fidelity, however in this analysis it is included alongside participation and retention as in this instance they are largely interconnected. For instance, in the Aston Project a young person's eligibility to participate is based on a framework of risk factors:

- Aged 9 to 17
- Is a young carer
- Is showing signs of engaging in anti-social or criminal behaviour, which may cause harm to a community
- Is the victim of anti-social or criminal behaviour
- Has an older sibling who is involved in criminality
- Is demonstrating an interest in fire
- Is in a family circumstance presenting challenges for the child, such as substance abuse, adult mental health, domestic violence, family conflict, bereavement, and/or sibling criminality
- There are child protection issues
- There are behavioural and/or attendance issues at school
- Is the victim or perpetrator of bullying
- Has a history of going missing from home
- Is vulnerable to gang related activity
- Aged 16 or 17 and Not in Employment, Education or Training (NEET)
- A strategic partner organisation makes a referral

As identified in the earlier analysis, the use of a risks framework to guide intervention for young people is controversial as it can lead to approaches that may ignore other key concerns such as welfare, justice and rehabilitation (Case and Haines, 2009; Case, 2006; Muncie, 2009; Muncie

and Hughes, 2002). However, the risk factors utilised in this instance incorporate a range of dispersed social factors underpinned by flexible responses, which the project workers believe ensure takes the best interests of participants into consideration.

Referrals to the Project mostly arrive from schools and social services in the county, however some referrals come from family members or through friends or family involved, some through the Project's online referral process, and some self-refer. However, as one interviewee described:

I find that it's a lot of word of mouth at the moment, where family members are encouraging others to apply. [Police Manager 3]

The use of a dispersed and flexible participation criteria, and a broad referral process have some implications for participation. UK national data on young people at risk of criminal or antisocial behaviour suggest that there is a need for greater accessibility for those with disabilities, mental health issues or other hard-to-reach groups (YJB/MoJ, 2017). There is therefore a need for greater clarity in the target groups for the Project. A reliance on word-of-mouth and a lack of strategic programmes for entry can lead to some groups becoming inadvertently excluded. Such exclusion was identified by interviewees:

I think probably, disability would be Aston's biggest challenge ... we don't exclude the youngsters ourselves, but very few come forward. And I don't know if that's because we're not set up, we haven't the links ... or the know-how, to look after someone who had a disability and needed a little bit more care. [PCSO 3]

In terms of retention and evaluation of progress, the Aston Project records a qualitative narrative for each of the young people who participate. These logs comprise a description of interaction with the Project and contact with project staff:

Every so many months a set of children are reviewed. Each officer has their own list of kids, they know what's going on. If there's anything that they're aware of, problems that they're experiencing, they're addressed immediately. Nothing now slips by. One child isn't left for three or four months with no contact. [PCSO 1]

This form of assessment is useful in documenting effectiveness and can create 'rich' examples of individual cases. However, it is time consuming, case-specific, and can be subjective and at risk of being anecdotal. They also do not offer a wider indication of the success of the Project. There is an awareness of the need to find other ways to measure outcomes.

From our observations during the research it was evident that the project was not using a defined or consistent approach to youth work and engagement. Clarity on the nature and type of programmes deployed, the approach to youth work, and the expectations on staff are important for providing structure and distinctiveness. One of the criticisms that can be levelled at police-led social crime prevention programmes, and discussed below further, is that they often

employ people in prominent roles who are not trained to a necessary standard in youth work approaches.

## Fidelity

For Rummens et al (2016, p. 21), project fidelity is a measure of 'whether or not the crime prevention intervention was implemented as it was originally designed'. In the case of the Aston Project, there were some significant concerns expressed by over the ways in which the project had developed. It was clear that, whilst the Aston Project retained a core set of principles across the three locations in Gloucestershire, each location takes a different approach to managing young people and the activities in which they engage. This has led to some criticism of the scheme as suffering from a lack of identity:

It feels like a very place based model. [Stakeholder 2]

I can certainly see a difference between Cheltenham, Gloucester and Newent.  
[Police Manager 3]

Some of the variations reflect local contexts and needs, and others are organisational and approach-based. For instance, in Cheltenham, the Project is predominantly a police-led initiative, in Newent where the establishment of the project is more recent, there was a much stronger community-driven element, while in Gloucester there were links with services provided by other agencies. There was some concern around the ability of stretched resources to deliver the same level of service, although differences in service provision are not necessarily problematic.

... what works as a delivery model in Cheltenham might not be the model that works for a delivery in Gloucester ... I think it's acceptable for the delivery model to be different in different places. [Stakeholder 2]

There was also concern amongst respondents that provision could become 'personality driven' suggesting that there needs to be a reflection on the core mission and the drivers for differences in service delivery. Tensions around identity and leadership extended to the governance of the Project, where there were at times disagreement over operational issues and job functions. For instance, there were concerns expressed by members of the stakeholder group about continuity in delivery:

There has been a constant stream of Sergeants and Chief Inspectors looking after the project. No continuity. [Stakeholder 3]

One area in which these were commonly expressed was in the relationship between the Aston Project and Great Expectations, which targets young offenders:

So is a parent gonna say, “Well, I’d like my son or daughter to be enrolled in Aston” when, actually, labelled them along with Great Expectations, so they must’ve been involved in crime. [Police Manager 1]

A consequence of the division in practices between delivery areas is a fragmentation of identity within the Project. For some, the focus was on the Project’s role as a supportive body, promoting positive behaviours for individuals at risk of antisocial or criminal behaviour. For others, the Project was a preventative body that was engaged in a more diversionary approach with a wider social remit.

A lack of clarity over the core purpose of the project was compounded by the association with Great Expectations, as identified under ‘Implementation’ section of the Process Evaluation. This confusion seems to be a common issue with police-led social crime prevention projects. For instance, the review of the police-led social crime prevention projects by the Toronto City Government found that programmes suffered from a lack of ‘clear, attainable and measurable goals’ (Scott, 2015, p. 50). Similarly, Meyer and Mazerolle’s (2014: 246) analysis of a police-led partnership programme in Brisbane, Australia, identified ‘a lack of clarity around the project’s aims and objectives’.

## **External Confounding factors**

Police-led interventions such as the Aston Project are often subject to wider issues of police funding and decisions on resource allocation. These issues are particularly pertinent in the context of Austerity politics, where restrictions on public sector funding has led police leaders to claim that they cannot longer maintain a full range of frontline policing despite having to contend with issues of rising crime and community tension (Innes, 2010). Such constraints play a significant role when it comes to decision making on community engagement and crime prevention work.

Fostering effective multi-agency working is an important component of providing young people with positive and community focused activities. In a UK context of austerity, where cost is a significant issue for police-led projects, it is important that the police embrace partners that can help to deliver an effective service. The schemes in Canada and New Zealand outlined earlier in this paper have managed this by incorporating elements of a restorative approach, for instance emphasising the importance of responsabilisation of the individual and the role of a strong local community in creating positive futures. Restorative justice approaches are increasingly popular as a solution to keeping people, particularly young people, out of the criminal justice system. This is reflected in the Gloucestershire context, where a police-led but community-focused steering group promotes restorative solutions across both statutory and social agencies (Payne, Hobson and Lynch, 2016).

Furthermore, there are concerns around what constitutes a suitable role for the Police, with some such as Muncie (2009), arguing that police officers are not youth workers. Similarly, Zhao and Lovrich (2002) used Rokeach’s theory of human values to determine the extent to which the

values and ideological perspectives of police officers differed from the citizens they policed in a medium sized city in the US, finding widespread differences in value orientations and ideology. Drawing on the work of Sadd and Grinc (1994), Zhao and Lovrich (2002, P 226) suggested that it was likely that innovative community policing initiatives would likely struggle to overcome operational resistance to change, 'particularly when police officers are asked to work with local residents and to promote social equality'. Such divergences lead to wider questions around the efficacy of police attempts to run community-orientated initiatives.

## **Outcome evaluation:**

Where a process evaluation identifies how well an intervention works, an outcome evaluation appraises impact and sustainability. This, Rummens et al (2016, p 22-23) argue, is particularly important in social prevention interventions which have 'an explicit aim to impact long-term structural economic and social factors'. As table 1 indicates, the QUALIPREV system, identifies a series of prevention indicators as a framework for such an analysis. For schemes based on social interventions, these include: self-reported offending rates; changes in attitudes towards offending behaviour; increased social skills; and often an indication of cost-effectiveness in a cost-benefit analysis. As with the process evaluation, we group these where appropriate.

### **(Re)offending rates**

Measuring the effect of a police-led social intervention such as the Aston Project is difficult as a lack of baseline data and problems with transposing police recorded crime figures to specific areas makes estimating impact of preventative measures problematic (See for example Homel et al, 1999). These difficulties are acknowledged in a QUALIPREV approach to social crime reduction initiatives, which accepts that analysis must rely on 'self-reported' data (Rummens et al, 2016, p. 23-4). In the Aston Project, this difficulty was compounded by the association with the Great Expectations project, which was acknowledged by Aston staff:

'it's one of those things that's really, really hard to actually prove' [PCSOs 4&5]

It is clear, however that the Aston Project has a relatively good reach within the country, as illustrated in Table 5.

**Table 5: Active and Live Participants in the Aston Project February 2015 to February 2016**

<b>Location</b>	<b>Active</b>	<b>Sleeping (12 weeks without engagement)</b>
Cheltenham	31	28
Gloucester	26 (launched)	0
Newent	12	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>28</b>

Source: Aston Project Data

In terms of offending rates for young people participating in the Aston Project, the figures were often conflated with the companion-project, Great Expectations, which deals with young people that already have offending histories. However, between the two projects 5.8% of active participants committed a recorded offence for the year to February 2016. In real terms, that is 4 young people. In the 2015 figures for England and Wales, the closest available time frame for which national data is available, within the 10-17 year old population there were 20,544 first time entrants into the Criminal Justice system, which represents 0.4% of that age group (Ministry of Justice, 2016, p 7; ONS, 2017). The Aston Project works with what it classes as at-risk young people, that is young people they consider at a higher risk of offending behaviour. Although it is hard to assess the impact of the intervention based on the figures available, and the conflation with the Great Expectations, we suggest it is reasonable to assume that the offending figures for those engaged in the project represent success.

## **Changes in attitude and development of social skills**

As well as reductions in (re)offending behaviour, the QUALIPREV process also acknowledges that social crime prevention schemes may also judge benefits in changes in attitudes as these are often 'an indicator of whether or not the targeted offending behaviour is less of a viable action alternative post intervention' (Rummens et al, 2016, p. 23). During the focus group sessions with young people participating in the Aston Project, it was clear that they were aware of the link between their behaviour or circumstances and their invitation to join the Project. When asked what they gain from their participation, feedback was almost always positive and

they described how the Project improved their lives and allowed them to engage with the local community. Examples of their responses to this question are presented in Table 6.

**Table 6: Views from the Focus Group for young people participating in the Aston Project**

<p><i>It keeps me out of trouble.</i></p> <p><i>You get to learn about the community.</i></p> <p><i>They are very supportive if you have something going on at home they will help you with it.</i></p> <p><i>They help you if you are worried about something at school.</i></p> <p><i>It gets me out of the house. I'm always on the iPad and I get really bored.</i></p> <p><i>I enjoy the activities. Like baking cakes!</i></p> <p><i>It gets you out. I'm fed up playing the PS4.</i></p> <p><i>I improved my behaviour and got to help a disabled boy. I was given an award, a £20 voucher and we all got to go skiing.</i></p>
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Source: Focus groups with young people participating in the Aston Project

The responses suggest that the young people came to depend on their weekly visits to the Project, and several attributed positive changes to their behaviour to the support they receive:

Yeah that was me, I used to put windows through, and then they showed me the good things you can get out of the community. [Focus Group participant]

One measure of outcome for the Aston Project is the value of volunteering and community-focused activity generated by the project. Each participant banks hours of engagement, which includes work in or with local communities as well as participation in clubs or events. Although this is a wide classification boundary, it does indicate the level of participation in activities that offer the opportunity for reinforcing positive behaviours. Table 7 shows the number of hours credited in the time-bank across 2016

**Table 7: Number of hours credited in the Time-bank by month in 2016**

<b>MONTH</b>	<b>HOURS CREDITED IN THE TIMEBANK</b>
January	480
February	461
March	308.5
April	370
May	201
June	254
July	217
August	1,389.5
September	200.5
October	291
November	83.5
December	123
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>4,379</b>

Source: Aston Project Data

Volunteering and community participation often form part of social prevention initiatives as they help young people develop interpersonal skills and can foster a sense of greater community membership and ownership. Rummens et al (2016, p 23) describe this as increasing ‘the normative barrier against offending’. This is hard to quantify, however the Aston Project uses a time-banking mechanism that operates on the ‘working for reward model’. Participants engaging

in a range of activities, earn credits that they can exchange for extra trips and fun activities. This approach aims to foster an interest that is socially positive and a diversion from crime.

Although largely successful, there were some issues with the working for reward model. A lack of distinction between an activity for 'credit' and an activity for 'reward' meant there was, at times, a disconnect between the concept and the practice. Such misgivings reflect wider views in the literature that the rewards for 'good behaviour' model could be counterproductive. For example, Kohn (1993) discusses the idea of being 'Punished by Rewards'. He drew on a critique of Skinnerian behaviourism to argue that influencing human behaviour through the offering of incentives and rewards was at best inefficient and at worst counterproductive. He argued that those rewarded could quickly come to see the rewards as a form of cynical social control where rewards are being used to maintain the status quo by controlling those whose actions or lack of obedience could constitute a threat. The provision of rewards can be viewed as exercising of power used to benefit the interests of those in power despite typically justified as being in the interests of those that are in receipt of them. Kohn (1993), therefore, argues that the success of such schemes has less to do with how well it is deployed, and more to do with the inadequacy of the psychological assumptions that ground all such approaches.

## **Cost-benefit/Cost-effectiveness analysis**

Putting an economic valuation on a crime reduction intervention is difficult, doubly so with social crime prevention initiatives that develop community-based interventions and seek to avoid future criminal behaviour. To achieve this, the QUALIPREV approach considers both the 'cost-benefit' of outcomes versus spend, and the 'cost-effectiveness' of ascribing a monetary value to each outcome (Rummens et al, 2016, p. 35). This broader approach makes it possible to provide an assessment of value for each element or activity. For the Aston Project, this is a consideration of the input in terms of money, time and resources, versus a calculation of saving in (re)offending and the wider community value from volunteering. These are calculations based on best available data and provides a broad characterisation of value that should be considered alongside the other dimensions of this outcome evaluation.

As the lead agency, Gloucestershire Constabulary provide the staffing for the operation of the project. Table 8 uses funding data from the public domain to present the financial estimates of the commitment for the year 2015-16 based on the staffing from the constabulary and the commitment from the OPCC for Gloucestershire, as detailed in the 'Implementation' section of the Process Evaluation. It does not account for the senior tactical management costs, which are shared across a number of different projects. The UK Home Office (2014) provides the full hourly cost of using a police officer, which includes 'not just the wage per hour actually worked but includes expenses, tax payable, pensions, premises, transport, training and other costs.' In order to achieve comparability, these figures have been multiplied by the 40 hours of a normal full-time week and then by 52 to bring the estimate up to an annualised figure. For the purposes of this exercise, the assumption is that these costs have remained stable, and the estimates are at the bottom of the relative pay scales. In this sense, it represents lower-order cost estimate.

**Table 8: Gloucestershire Constabulary and OPCC funding commitments to Aston Project 2015-2016**

<b>Category of Funded Support</b>	<b>2015/16</b>
Total OPCC additional support	20,000
PCSOs x 4	240,448
PS Supervisor (0.8 full-time equivalent)	60,752
Senior Tactical Management	N/A
<b>Total Constabulary/OPCC</b>	<b>321,200</b>

Source: OPCC (2017); Wood (2015 ; 2016); Home Office (2014)

Table 9 illustrates the level of engagement and offending of young people with the Aston Project for Tiers 1 and 2 of the project. Estimates for data are based on the available data from the National Audit Office (2011) and from data provided by the Aston Project, which we recognise as incomplete but which does offer a useful insight into the value of Aston interventions. Calculations of savings are based on all young people involved in the schemes that have not re-offended, and whilst we recognise that it is very hard to estimate future offending rates, in this instance we are taking the Aston Project at a value of their target demographic of young people *at risk* of offending. This makes the following a best-case scenario saving.

**Table 9: Aston Project potential savings based on engagement and offending rates for period March 2015- February 2016**

<b>Active participants in the Aston Project</b>	<b>Offended since engagement</b>	<b>Potential saving (based on 2009 National Audit office estimates of £8000 per young person)</b>
69	4	£512,000

Source: Wood, (2016) ; National Audit Office, (2011).

Table 10 shows the estimated value of the volunteer hours contributed as part of the Aston Project. The Aston Project provided information on the commitments of the participants and the adult volunteers, to which we attached figures from the ONS (2016) Annual Survey of Hours and Earning tables, as recommended by the National Council for Voluntary Organisations. These tables provide a mean 16-17 year old earnings rate and a mean adult rate. For the

purposes of this exercise we have assumed that there is an externality benefit that can be accounted for if the banked hours are counted as a contribution to the project. The adult volunteer rate is a mean, though the level at which the volunteers work is almost certainly higher than the £13.65 estimate, as these include sports coaching, youth club organisers, as well as the stakeholder/steering group members.

**Table 10: Estimated value of volunteering contribution**

	<b>Hourly value</b>	<b>No. hours</b>	<b>To val</b>
Value of adult volunteer contributions	£13.65	500	6,8
Estimated economic value of timebanking	£5.30	4,379	23,2
<b>Aggregate hours</b>		<b>4,879</b>	<b>30,0</b>

Source: Hours data: Nolan (2016) Pers. Comm.; Value data: ONS (2016) Annual Survey of Earnings (ASHE) Tables.

The combined cost-benefit analysis taking the data from Tables 8, 9, and 10 is presented in Table 11. It should be noted that this is a best-case scenario that is based solely on data that is either publicly available or provided as part of the research on the Project and financial, or data that can be easily converted. It does not take account of the wider community benefits of engagement of the participants and of the adult volunteers; the long term impact of reducing offending amongst children that have been identified as at risk of offending; and the social benefits of engaging the participants with positive adult role models in the professional and volunteer staff they encounter through the project, reducing the risk of community harm and contributing to their preparation for gainful employment. These things are hard to give a financial value to but undoubtedly contribute to creating safer communities and helping young people to live productive lives without coming into contact with the criminal justice system.

**Table 11: Cost benefit analysis for 2015-16: best-case scenario**

<b>Item</b>	<b>Cost</b>	<b>Benefit</b>
Total Police and OPCC investment	£321,200	
Total intervention savings		£512,000
Total contribution from volunteering		£30,034

(Based on estimates from aggregated data from Tables 6, 7 and 8).

# Summary

Although social crime reduction initiatives are relatively common, police-led initiatives of this type are less common. The process and outcome evaluations in this paper illustrate some of the benefits and drawbacks of such an approach. The key findings from each part of the analysis are represented in Tables 12 and 13, which are structured according to the suggestions in the QUALIPREV system of analysis (Rummens et al, 2016). These tables also serve as a guide for considerations when it comes to examining other such police-led social crime reduction initiatives.

The process evaluation identified a number of limiting factors for such police-led initiatives, and although in this instance they were specific to the Aston Project, they are issues that have arisen in the other cases.

**Table 12: Key findings from the Process Evaluation stages**

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<b>Implementation</b>	<p>There are problems in recruiting and maintaining volunteer contributions.</p> <p>Issues of identity arise in the conflation with other similar or associated projects.</p>
<b>Access, participation, retention</b>	<p>Although using frameworks for participation can be problematic, when a flexible approach is taken, as in this instance, it offers a useful tool for managing participants. There are, however issues with accessing hard-to-reach groups, who are underrepresented in the project.</p> <p>Police are often not trained as youth workers, or trained at managing youth-work projects. Consequently, organisational procedures and youth interventions may not be appropriate.</p>
<b>Fidelity</b>	<p>Inconsistent application of core strategy can have a detrimental impact on project identity. What constitutes key activities can vary in different locations, making it hard to identify the approach to youth-enjoyment and intervention. There is a risk that projects can become personality-driven in the absence of a core message. However, a flexible approach can provide benefits in responding to local need.</p>
<b>External confounding factors</b>	<p>In the UK context, there are pressures from Austerity politics and reducing police budgets.</p> <p>There are questions over whether the Police should be involved in a youth-intervention project.</p>

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Many of the issues outlined in Table 12 are not unique to this instance. The social crime reduction initiatives in Australia and Canada discussed earlier in this article (see: Mazerolle, 2014; Dunbar, 2015) also identified issues such as a lack of clarity on the aims and objectives of police-led schemes; difficulties with multi-agency relationships; problems with recruiting and retaining volunteers; and when using a dispersed model, differences between a project's areas of operation. Crawford and Evans (2016: 814) recognise many of the same issues:

The main barriers to successful partnerships include a reluctance of some agencies to participate (especially health, education and social services); the dominance of a policing agenda; unwillingness to share information; conflicting interests, priorities and cultural assumptions on the part of different agencies; local political differences; lack of interorganisational trust; desire to protect budgets; lack of capacity and expertise; and over reliance on informal contacts and networks which lapsed if key individuals moved on.

However, it is important to consider that the benefits of police-led social crime reduction schemes extend beyond the financial considerations and short-term approaches to crime control. There are many longer-term positives to be taken from improved police-community relationships, and from the life-long benefits of helping young people to stay out of the criminal justice system. Some of these benefits are clearly visible in the outcomes evaluation, summarised in Table 13.

**Table 13: Key findings from the Outcome Evaluation stages**

<b>Offending rates</b>	It is very difficult to show impact from social crime prevention interventions, however there are some successes evident particularly in figures relating to offending rates.
<b>Changes in attitude and development of social skills</b>	There can be a large amount of community-focused work involved in social crime prevention initiatives. This can be recorded, with young people and police officers able to ‘bank’ the hours they contribute with young people working towards rewards for their participation. There are concerns over the ‘working for reward’ model which can be seen as a manipulation of engagement.
<b>Cost-benefit analysis</b>	Although it is difficult to estimate a cost-benefit ratio, utilising available data for UK police costs and setting a value on the activity of young people suggests that the project in this case returns nearly 170% of investment. This does not include a value for community work carried out as part of the arranged activities.

This review of a police-led social crime reduction initiative raises some interesting questions around the use of such schemes. There are clearly difficulties in running activities of this nature, particularly around the role that police officers, regular or support, take as youth workers. Associated with this are issues of identity for such projects, and how to establish and maintain a core message. Furthermore, pressures on police budgets threaten non-core tasks and activities, which is certainly the case in the UK context and also for many other countries. Nevertheless, it is clear that there are benefits to such schemes, not least of which is the potential to achieve significant savings in the wider criminal justice context, although we appreciate these savings are often not realised at the point of expenditure.

Although not without issues, police-led social crime prevention initiatives do offer an opportunity for the police to become directly involved in supporting and strengthening communities. As Bradford (2012) argues, the police are ‘a highly visible representation of the state’. When done correctly, having the police central in supporting local communities can increase the legitimacy of the state. However, as Forman Jr. (2004, p. 3) argues, young people are often one of the most excluded groups when it comes to such interventions.

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