

An aerial photograph of London, England, with a semi-transparent green overlay. The overlay features a faint map of the city's streets and a darker green area representing the River Thames. Several people are shown walking across the map, appearing as if they are walking on the city streets. The people are dressed in casual clothing, and their shadows are cast on the map below them.

Violent crime in London – part one

Police and Crime Committee

LONDONASSEMBLY

Police and Crime Committee



Marina Ahmad AM
Labour



Susan Hall AM
(Deputy Chairman)
Conservatives



Shaun Bailey AM
(Chairman)
Conservatives



Sem Moema AM
Labour



Tony Devenish AM
Conservatives



Caroline Pidgeon MBE
AM
Liberal Democrats



Unmesh Desai AM
Labour



Nicholas Rogers AM
Conservatives



Len Duvall OBE AM
Labour



Caroline Russell AM
Greens

The Police and Crime Committee examines the work of the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC) and investigates issues relating to policing and crime reduction in London.

Contact us

Janette Roker

Senior Policy Adviser

Janette.Roker@london.gov.uk

Philippa Goffe

Senior Policy Adviser

Philippa.Goffe@london.gov.uk

Emma Bowden

External Communications Officer

Emma.Bowden@london.gov.uk

Lauren Harvey

Senior Committee Officer

Lauren.Harvey@london.gov.uk

Contents

Violent crime in London – part one report	1
Police and Crime Committee	2
Contact us.....	3
Contents	4
Introduction	5
Recommendations.....	5
Key findings	7
Violent crime trends in London	7
The Met's approach to tackling violent crime	8
Empowering local communities in the response to violent crime.....	9
Funding and support for voluntary organisations.....	11
Measuring the impact of violence reduction initiatives	13
Conclusion	13
Other formats and languages	14
Connect with us	15

Introduction

In response to growing concerns that violent crime would increase as lockdown restrictions were eased, the Police and Crime Committee launched an investigation of the issue in 2021. This short report is focused on the Committee's meeting on 9 June 2021, at which representatives from the Metropolitan Police (the Met) and voluntary organisations gave evidence on their professional experience of violent crime in London.

The Committee's report is part one of a continuing investigation into violent crime in London that draws on evidence from key stakeholders and data from the Met's Crime Data Dashboard. From this part of its investigation, the Committee has identified six recommendations for MOPAC and the Met to improve their approach, both proactive and reactive, to tackling violent crime in London.

Recommendations

Recommendation 1

The Committee recommends that, given the high level of under-18 homicides and involvement in serious violence, the VRU should consider expanding the ENGAGE pilot programme urgently. To start, it could look at delivering the programme in all seven London boroughs covered in the North and Central London Youth Panel. This would build on the existing collaboration among Youth Offending Services in this area and ensure a joined-up approach.¹ This should be done with a view to extending to other areas on a needs basis.

Recommendation 2

The Committee recommends that the Met should embed community engagement in the work of its Violence Suppression Units (VSUs) and Violent Crime Taskforce (VCTF), with clearer communication about operations on the ground to communities living in affected areas.

Recommendation 3

The Committee recommends that the Mayor's Violence Reduction Unit (VRU) should ensure that the learning from the MyEnds programme's eight borough initiatives is captured, to ensure this can be shared with other London boroughs and/or considered for early rollout.

Recommendation 4

The Committee reiterates its recommendation made in March 2020 that MOPAC should develop longer-term funding arrangements for its key delivery partners, to enable greater sustainability and evaluation of projects;² and the Mayor should press the Government to agree

¹ In addition to LB Camden and LB Islington, the five London Boroughs in this area are: LB Enfield; LB Haringey; LB Westminster; LB Kensington and Chelsea; and LB Hammersmith and Fulham.

² Included as a recommendation to MOPAC in March 2020 following a meeting on MOPAC commissioning.

multi-year funding for the VRU and the Met Police in the next Spending Review to support longer-term funding of programmes.

Recommendation 5

The Committee would like to see the Mayor work with London Councils to evaluate the provision and quality of early-years services in London. Dependent upon the evidence gathered, we urge the Mayor to then use this to lobby the government for an increase to early-years funding.

Recommendation 6

The Committee reiterates its recommendation made in March 2020 that MOPAC should publish an interactive and accessible map of its commissioned services in London so that Londoners have a better understanding of the provision across the capital, and voluntary sector organisations are able to identify potential funding streams.³

³ Included as a recommendation to MOPAC in March 2020 following a meeting on MOPAC commissioning.

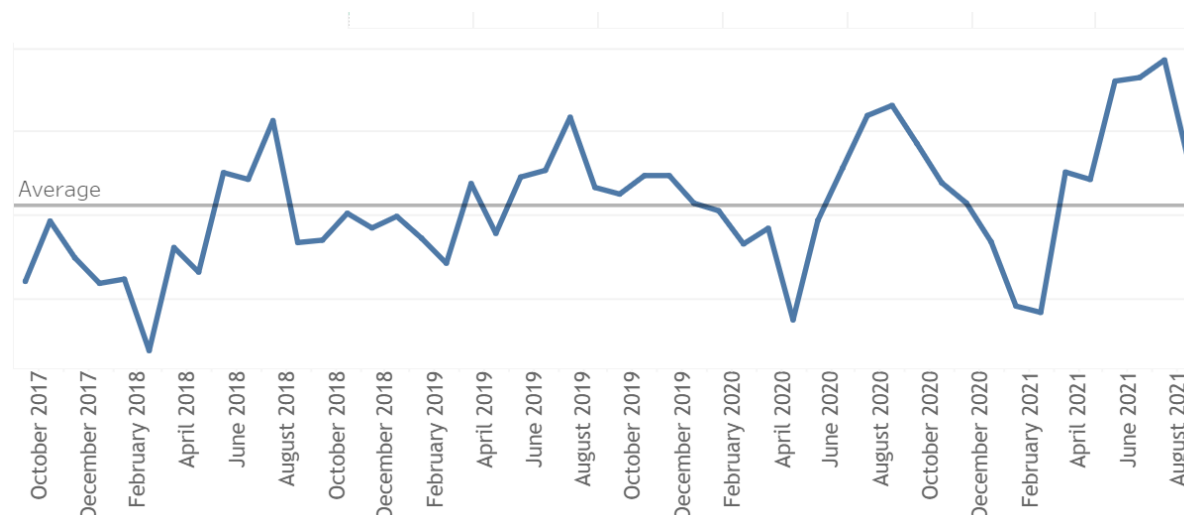
Key findings

Violent crime trends in London

Over the past year, there have been peaks and troughs in levels of violent crime across London. Of note, there was a significant increase in violence against the person offences during summer 2020, coinciding with the easing of lockdown restrictions. Violent crime subsequently fell as restrictions were reimposed later in the year.

With levels initially increasing following the easing of restrictions early this year, over the last few months violent crime has begun to fall.

Figure 1: Violence against the person offences⁴ in London, September 2017 to August 2021



	Sept 2017	March 2018	Sept 2018	March 2019	Sept 2019	March 2020	Sept 2020	March 2021	August 2021
Violence-against-the-person offences	16,401	17,211	17,386	18,741	18,488	17,670	19,698	19,014	19,195

Source: Metropolitan Police, [Crime Data Dashboard](#)

Youth homicide is having a disproportionate impact on young Black Londoners. The Met has said that London could be on course for the highest number of teenage homicides since 2008 this year, with 21 such homicides up to 9 July 2021. As at 9 June 2021, there was a total of 56 homicides committed in 2021; 23 involved Londoners under the age of 25, and, of those 23

⁴ Violence against the person offences include homicide, violence with injury and violence without injury – see Metropolitan Police, [Crime Data Dashboard](#).

cases, 17 were young Black Londoners.⁵ The Committee is deeply concerned about the disproportionality of this impact.

The ENGAGE programme – which works with young people in custody centres with the aim of helping them into education, employment and training – is a good example of partnership working that tackles youth offending. At present the programme only takes place in the boroughs of Camden and Islington.⁶

The Committee recommends that, given the high level of under-18 homicides and involvement in serious violence, the VRU should consider expanding the ENGAGE pilot programme urgently. To start, it could look at delivering it in all seven London boroughs covered in the North and Central London Youth Panel. This would build on the existing collaboration among Youth Offending Services in this area and ensure a joined-up approach.⁷ This should be done with a view to extending to other areas on a needs basis.

The Met's approach to tackling violent crime

The Committee acknowledges the Met's more targeted and systematic approach to tackling violent crime across London, through the deployment of VSUs within Borough Command Units, and the VCTF. We recognise the role that VSUs and the VCTF are playing in tackling this issue.

However, we have heard through our investigation that there is not always sufficient resource to respond to every request for additional support. At the Committee's meeting in June 2021, the Met's Violent Crime Lead, Commander Alex Murray, informed the Committee that the Met's Basic Command Units (BCUs) often request the support of the VCTF. However, the Committee also heard that the VCTF is required to prioritise the areas it visits in order to respond to the highest demand. He stated:

*"Demand outstrips supply. It would be great to have a bigger VCTF or bigger VSUs, but that central coordination that I lead on will be driven by where we are seeing a peak in violence."*⁸

Commander Alex Murray OBE, Violent Crime Lead, Metropolitan Police Service

The Committee recognises the severe financial pressure facing the Met, but we also recognise that VSU and VCTF deployment remains insufficient to respond to demand, given that London is facing a likely return to pre-pandemic levels of violent crime.

In trying to tackle violent crime, some of the Met's operational activity on the ground has attracted negative attention, including from local communities. This has been identified in the deployment of stop and search as an operational policing tactic. The Independent Office for

⁵ London Assembly, [Police and Crime Committee meeting](#), 9 June 2021.

⁶ Camden Council, press release, [£500,000 for projects to help keep Camden young people safe](#), 18 June 2019.

⁷ In addition to LB Camden and LB Islington, the five London Boroughs in this area are: LB Enfield; LB Haringey; LB Westminster; LB Kensington and Chelsea; and LB Hammersmith and Fulham.

⁸ London Assembly, [9 June 2021 Police and Crime Committee meeting](#), 9 June 2021.

Police Conduct investigated a small number of the Met's stop and searches that had been referred to them, and published their findings in October 2020.⁹ It found no evidence of wrongdoing but, the report identified significant disproportionate use of stop and search on Black men; and found that confidence in Black communities was affected by perceived discrimination. It identified five key areas for improvement for the Met:

- a lack of understanding about the impact of disproportionality
- poor communication
- consistent use of force over seeking cooperation
- the failure to use body-worn video from the outset of contact
- continuing to seek further evidence after the initial grounds for the stop and search were unfounded.

The 11 recommendations in the report were all accepted by the Met.

The Met Commissioner, Cressida Dick DBE QPM, has spoken about how stop and search is used to protect the public and remove weapons from London's streets. She also told the Committee in February 2021:

*"We will work as close as we can with local groups, local monitoring groups but also local communities, to try to explain and to try to hear and listen properly to people's experiences."*¹⁰

In February 2021, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) published a report on the disproportionate use of police powers.¹¹ HMICFRS identified that disproportionate use of police powers can cause suspicion that some communities are being unfairly targeted. This can then undermine police legitimacy and the core tenet of policing by consent.

The Committee believes the Met could prevent potential tensions by communicating and engaging with the local community about the rationale for any given local operation.

The Committee recommends that the Met should embed community engagement in the work of its VSUs and VCTF, with clearer communication about operations on the ground to communities living in affected areas.

The Met must be open and transparent with the community about why it is deploying additional resources in a particular area, while balancing the need to maintain operational integrity.

Empowering local communities in the response to violent crime

The role of the local community – including parents, carers, schools and voluntary organisations – is vital to tackling youth violence in London successfully. Throughout its investigation, the Committee has heard that where there are strong relationships between the Met and the

⁹ Simmons & Simmons, [Legitimacy of stop and search continues to be undermined](#), 29 October 2020.

¹⁰ London Assembly Police and Crime Committee, [Meeting transcript](#), 24 February 2021.

¹¹ HMICFRS, [Disproportionate use of police powers](#), 26 February 2021.

community, violence prevention initiatives can flourish, but these partnerships require continued support from the Mayor.

There are examples of effective partnership working, where trust in the Met is high and the community is actively involved in the Met's violence prevention work. At the Committee's meeting in June 2021, we heard about targeted engagement that is taking place in Croydon, where senior Met officers, voluntary organisations and young Black men meet on a weekly basis to discuss issues that affect them. Anthony King, Partnership Chair, MyEnds Programme, Croydon stated:

"We have tremendous organisations like DIVERT that work in the Borough of Croydon too, which also highlighted that we need to get everybody around the table, not only the children from the Boys Brigade backgrounds and the affluent areas of Croydon where they have Cadets and things like that, but to the grassroots of the community, the areas where children are hanging around outside chicken and chip shops and barber shops, and start to understand their truths and understand why they feel that they have to carry knives for protection.

*"Because we have a hub in the heart of the epicentre where the crime is, we have been able to invite young people who would never have a conversation with the MPS to come into the room. The power of being in the room is that the BCU now has the ear of the young people and vice versa. It had to take some really challenging conversations with leadership in the MPS to say, 'Listen, here are some of the challenges that we as Black people face with policing'. We had to have real conversations."*¹²

Anthony King, Partnership Chair, MyEnds Programme, Croydon

However, it is not clear that this practice is consistent across London and there is no framework in place to capture the learning from 'best practice' boroughs. The Committee recognises that best practice cannot be immediately replicated in every borough because it requires deep and mature partnership relationships. Nevertheless, the Mayor has an important role to play in helping boroughs to develop and strengthen those relationships by capturing the learning from areas where partnerships are succeeding.

The VRU is funding the MyEnds programme which now operates in eight London boroughs, including the one the Committee heard from in Croydon. The programme is designed to provide support, capacity and funding for locally designed interventions in neighbourhoods affected by high and sustained levels of violence. The funding also covers evaluation of the individual initiatives.

The Committee was impressed with the MyEnds initiative in Croydon where young Black men have been involved in Met Police officer training; it noted the good relationship built up with local officers. This fits well with the ambitions in the Mayor's *Action Plan to build transparency*,

¹² London Assembly, [9 June 2021 Police and Crime Committee meeting](#), 9 June 2021.

accountability and trust in policing. But it will be important for the programme to be evaluated to assess its real impact.

The Committee recommends that the VRU should ensure that the learning from the MyEnds programme’s eight borough initiatives is captured, to ensure this can be shared with other London boroughs and/or considered for early rollout.

The Committee looks forward to seeing emerging findings and, in due course, evaluations from all eight initiatives.

Funding and support for voluntary organisations

Steering Londoners away from violence and crime towards an alternative course of action requires long-term interventions that tackle deep-rooted issues. At the Committee’s meeting in June 2021, we heard from representatives of the voluntary sector that longer-term funding arrangements were needed to provide sustainability.

“I do wonder to myself what is going to happen in the next couple of years. We have given so many people this lifeline of support, and to have that pulled from under their feet is going to be so damaging to the community and to our young people. They are our future and we need to invest in them as much as possible, and we can only do that through long-term funding”.¹³

Ann-Marie Willison, Deputy Head of Operations, DIVERT

When asked by the Committee what the Mayor should do to support violence reduction initiatives, Steve Phaure, Chief Executive, Croydon Voluntary Action, said:

“Enable us to carry that conversation on with other funders. You are absolutely right, we have to show results if we are going to get sustainability, but when it is short-term that is the frustration. Funders do a fair amount to join up their programmes, but maybe not enough. We need to be able to look at ten-year investments.”¹⁴

Steve Phaure, Chief Executive, Croydon Voluntary Action

In order to respond to this challenge effectively, community and voluntary sector organisations need more sustainable funding from the Mayor, so that they are able to plan their work over a five to ten-year period.

The Government has also been pressed recently to consider a longer-term approach. Among a series of recommendations from the National Audit Office on how the government can increase efficiency – defined as trying to achieve the same or better outcomes with fewer resources – was the call for the Treasury to take a longer-term view.¹⁵

¹³ London Assembly, [Police and Crime Committee meeting](#), 9 June 2021.

¹⁴ London Assembly, [Police and Crime Committee meeting](#), 9 June 2021

¹⁵ Civil Service World, [End short term focus to unlock efficiencies](#), 14 July 2021.

The Committee reiterates its recommendation, made in March 2020, that MOPAC should develop longer-term funding arrangements for its key delivery partners, to enable greater sustainability and evaluation of projects.¹⁶

The Mayor should press the Government to agree multi-year funding for the VRU and the Met Police in the next Spending Review to support longer-term funding of programmes.

Long-term interventions can form part of an approach to violent crime which include early years support. In its 2018 letter to the Mayor of London, the Committee highlighted the need to prevent the root causes of violence and called on the Mayor to tackle adverse childhood experiences. When asked by the Committee about the importance of preventative work which supports young Londoners who are at the start of their lives, Rosaline Holsborough, Custody Intervention Coach DIVERT, said:

“You talk about Sure Start and all these initiatives that had so much funding in the beginning. They were not just about providing quality childcare, they were about looking at those social and economic issues, looking at the families, looking at the unemployment and all the rest of it. It is much wider, obviously, than just educating the children but yes, I believe that there needs to be something in curriculums and in initiatives for early years that addresses some kind of prevention of risk of getting into particular areas. That, to me, is a public health concern.”

Rosaline Holsborough, Custody Intervention Coach, DIVERT

Research by leading children’s charities found that local authority spending in England on crucial services that help stop children reaching crisis point was cut from £3.6bn in 2010 to £1.8bn in 2020.¹⁷ **The Committee would like to see the Mayor work with London Councils to evaluate the provision and quality of early-years services in London. Dependent upon the evidence gathered, we urge the Mayor to then use this to lobby the government for an increase to early years funding.**

Voluntary organisations would also like to see more support from MOPAC in sourcing and sustaining funding over the longer term. This can often come from different funds and a central resource identifying these would be of great assistance to community and voluntary sector organisations with limited resources.

The Committee reiterates its recommendation made in March 2020 that MOPAC should publish an interactive and accessible map of its commissioned services in London so that Londoners have a better understanding of the provision across the capital and voluntary sector organisations are able to identify potential funding streams.¹⁸

¹⁶ Included as a recommendation to MOPAC in March 2020 following a meeting on MOPAC commissioning.

¹⁷ Nursery World, [Funding for early intervention ‘cut by half’ over ten years – analysis](#), 15 July 2021.

¹⁸ Included as a recommendation to MOPAC in March 2020 following a meeting on MOPAC commissioning..

Measuring the impact of violence reduction initiatives

Although it is recognised that measuring outcomes in this area is, by its nature, difficult, it is vitally important that Londoners can see the impact of MOPAC-commissioned services through robust performance management systems. In practice, this means publishing measurable key performance indicators regularly in an open and accessible way.

The Committee is keen to see robust evaluations of violence prevention interventions so that Londoners can see what is working and why. At the Committee's meeting, we heard that DIVERT, a custody suite initiative to support 18-25 year olds into education, employment or training, was being evaluated by the College of Policing but the report was overdue. This has now been published with inconclusive outcomes, although the longest-running programme, running for one year in Brixton, showed a fall in subsequent arrests.¹⁹ Further assessment over a longer period will be required to establish effectiveness.

Conclusion

As lockdown restrictions have now been lifted, it is of the utmost importance to Londoners that MOPAC and the Met get a grip on reducing violent crime in the capital.

The recommendations contained in this report are designed to enable MOPAC and the Met to tackle violent crime more effectively, by sharing the learning and best practice across London and using data to inform outcomes.

The Committee looks forward to receiving a response to its findings and recommendations from the Met and the Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime **by 5 November 2021**.

¹⁹ College of Policing, [Findings from the serious violence diversion programmes](#), 28 July 2021.

Other formats and languages

If you, or someone you know needs this report in large print or braille, or a copy of the summary and main findings in another language, then please call us on: 020 7983 4100 or email assembly.translations@london.gov.uk

Chinese

如您需要这份文件的简介的翻译本，
请电话联系或按上面所提供的邮寄地址或
Email 与我们联系。

Hindi

यदि आपको इस दस्तावेज का सारांश अपनी भाषा में
चाहिए तो उपर दिये हुए नंबर पर फोन करें या उपर दिये
गये डाक पते या ई मेल पते पर हम से संपर्क करें।

Vietnamese

Nếu ông (bà) muốn nội dung văn bản này được dịch sang
tiếng Việt, xin vui lòng liên hệ với chúng tôi bằng điện
thoại, thư hoặc thư điện tử theo địa chỉ ở trên.

Bengali

আপনি যদি এই দলিলের একটা সারাংশ নিজের ভাষায় পেতে চান,
তাহলে দয়া করে ফো করবেন অথবা উল্লেখিত ডাক ঠিকানায় বা
ই-মেইল ঠিকানায় আমাদের সাথে যোগাযোগ করবেন।

Greek

*Εάν επιθυμείτε περίληψη αυτού του κειμένου στην γλώσσα
σας, παρακαλώ καλέστε τον αριθμό ή επικοινωνήστε μαζί
μας στην ανωτέρω ταχυδρομική ή την ηλεκτρονική διεύθυνση.*

Urdu

اگر آپ کو اس دستاویز کا خلاصہ اپنی زبان میں
درکار ہو تو، براہ کرم نمبر پر فون کریں
یا مذکورہ بالا ڈاک کے پتے یا ای میل
پتے پر ہم سے رابطہ کریں۔

Turkish

Bu belgenin kendi dilinize çevrilmiş bir özetini
okumak isterseniz, lütfen yukarıdaki telefon
numarasını arayın, veya posta ya da e-posta
adresini aracılığıyla bizimle temasa geçin.

Arabic

الحصول على ملخص لهذا المستند بلغة
فرجاء الاتصال برقم الهاتف أو الاتصال على
العنوان البريدي أو عنوان البريد
الإلكتروني أعلاه.

Punjabi

ਜੇ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਇਸ ਦਸਤਾਵੇਜ਼ ਦਾ ਸੰਖੇਪ ਆਪਣੀ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿਚ ਲੈਣਾ
ਚਾਹੋ, ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਇਸ ਨੰਬਰ 'ਤੇ ਫੋਨ ਕਰੋ ਜਾਂ
ਉਪਰ ਦਿੱਤੇ ਡਾਕ ਜਾਂ ਈਮੇਲ ਪਤੇ 'ਤੇ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਸੰਪਰਕ ਕਰੋ।

Gujarati

જો તમારે આ દસ્તાવેજનો સાર તમારી ભાષામાં
જોઈતો હોય તો ઉપર આપેલ નંબર પર ફોન કરો
અથવા ઉપર આપેલ ટપાલ અથવા ઈ-મેઇલ સરનામા
પર અમારો સંપર્ક કરો.

Connect with us

The London Assembly

City Hall
The Queen's Walk
More London
London SE1 2AA

Website: www.london.gov.uk/about-us/london-assembly

Phone: 020 7983 4000

Follow us on social media

