

ANTEBELLUM PROGRAMME

An evaluation of a health-based response to serious youth violence



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This report presents the key findings and recommendations of an evaluation into the pilot of Antebellum, a programme designed by Eastside Young Leaders' Academy (EYLA) with the aim of tackling serious youth violence using a health-based approach.

EYLA is a leadership development organisation established in 2002 to directly tackle underachievement, school exclusions and the relationship of young black males with the criminal justice system.

EYLA commissioned this evaluation to assess the impact and value for money of Antebellum, and to capture what was learnt through the delivery of the programme.

Launched in June 2019, the Antebellum Programme was piloted by EYLA as an intervention for 31 young people deemed at high risk of or known to be involved in gang activity and serious youth violence. To deliver the programme, EYLA commissioned five other partners to deliver a health-based intervention across six London Boroughs. A health-based approach to eliminate serious youth crime has reportedly delivered outstanding results for individuals and communities around the world, including a reduction of the costs associated with hospital admissions, policing and social welfare. Our research indicates that EYLA is one of a small number of community-based organisations in the UK to adopt this alternative approach.

This evaluation presents a formative assessment of the evidence generated throughout this intervention and is based on research work consisting of a review of literature relating to serious youth crime, health-based approaches to serious violence, and evaluation frameworks for small community organisations. It is also

based on primary research consisting of interviews with all the key stakeholders in the Antebellum Programme, and a quantitative review of psychometric assessment questionnaires completed by the young people who participated in the pilot. For this evaluation, value for money was not considered due to Covid related prohibitions.

The key conclusion of this evaluation is that programme participants in receipt of support from one of the service providers demonstrated evidence of a median reduction in negative behaviours. It should be stated, however, that it is not possible to attribute changes in the behaviour and attainment of young people solely to the interventions commissioned by EYLA.

The key aim of this programme was the reduction of violence and associated negative behaviours. This leads to four key recommendations for the future:

- EYLA should make use of the new intermediate outcomes toolkit for future evaluations.
- The programme should be extended.
- EYLA should utilise the strengths that exist within its main offering and finds ways to embed the assertive leadership traits it fosters within the Antebellum Programme.
- For the main programme, it is recommended that if EYLA wishes to include educational attainment as a measure, any intervention would need to last a minimum of one academic year.

Middlesex University is pleased to present this evaluation report of EYLA's Antebellum Programme (henceforth called Antebellum). Commissioned by EYLA in June 2019, the report provides a synthesis of the findings over the life of the intervention.

The evaluation was commissioned to run parallel to the intervention and was designed to address three principal aims:

- To assess the impact of the programme in supporting behavioural and attainment improvements, and to reflect on what this can tell us about the approaches that are most effective in meeting the needs of young people at risk of perpetrating serious violence.
- To assess what could be learnt through the process and implementation of Antebellum.
- To consider the value for money of the programme.

Serious violence as a health concern

Antebellum was designed to deliver a health-based intervention for young people deemed to be at high risk of or known to be involved in gang activity and serious youth violence. It was triggered in part by the fact that in 2018 there were almost 40,000 knife related offences in England and Wales, the highest number of cases ever recorded in a single year. Around 20% of those offences were committed by children, including children aged as young as ten years old (ONS 2019). The publication of the Ministry of Youth Justice statistical bulletin (2020) states that in the year ending March 2019 there were just over '60,200 arrests of children (aged 10-17) by the police in England and Wales (excluding Lancashire) with 30% of the 58,900 proven offences committed by children in the latest year involving

violence against the person. It also states that black children are more likely to be arrested than white. The UK's serious crime strategy reports the following key figures:

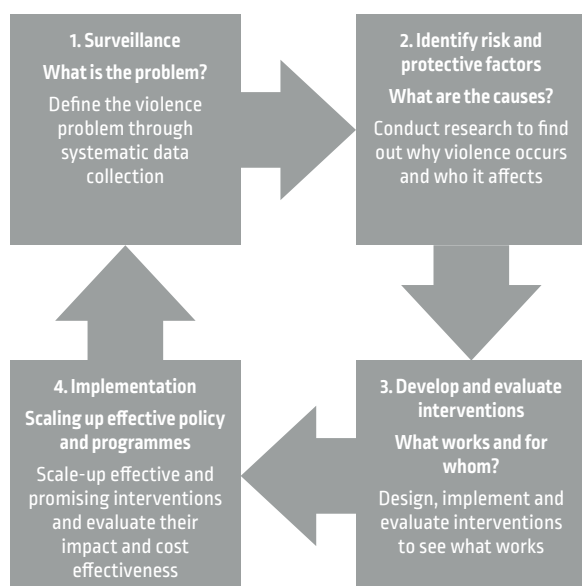
- 14,987: the number of knife offences committed in London during the twelve months ending June 2018, the highest on record (Source: Office for National Statistics).
- 4,459: the number of knife offences committed by 10-17 year olds during the same period (Source: Home Office).

It is against this backdrop that in June 2019, as an extension of its mission, EYLA partnered with five other community organisations to pilot Antebellum, an intervention focused on tackling serious youth violence as a health concern. Each one of these organisations was based in at least one of London's 'priority' boroughs, deemed to be at high risk due to the prevalence of gang activity and serious youth violence in their constituencies.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) has been advocating a public health approach for over a decade, suggesting that 'public health provides a useful framework for both continuing to investigate and understand the causes and consequences of violence and for preventing violence from occurring' (WHO 2020). In the UK, based on the evidence from the Bellis Report (2014), the London Borough of Lambeth has already adopted this new lens as the basis for its response to serious violence stating that 'the public health model of violence reduction

has strong applicability in Lambeth, a borough with traditionally high levels of violence and victimization'. Using the available evidence base, it suggests that many of the associated risk factors which lead to greater predisposition towards violence exist within Lambeth's communities (LCS 2015).

Through this lens, a public health approach to serious youth violence traditionally follows four steps:



WHO (2019)

Much has been written about steps one and two; however, a considerable challenge remains in developing, evaluating and scaling up interventions, especially within the non-statutory sector, whose primary focus is on delivery rather than measuring impact. Mark Lipsey (2009) identifies some of the factors that contribute to programme effectiveness.

What we learnt while designing Antebellum

Following an organisational visit to Chicago, EYLA selected the Slutkin model to form the framework for Antebellum on account of two factors: first, its robust ability to demonstrate outcomes; second, its therapeutic approach to supporting victims and 'at risk' individuals, grounded

in community engagement. According to Slutkin (2018), 'violence is like an epidemic disease ... and it can be effectively prevented using health methods'. Informed by Slutkin's professional background in epidemiology, initial application of the model saw a 67% drop in Chicago shootings and killings. The Slutkin **Cure Violence** model (2018) uses methods and strategies associated with disease control:

- Detecting and interrupting conflicts
- Identifying and treating the highest-risk individuals
- Changing social norms

The Cure Violence approach focuses on changing the psychology both of the individual and the community. Extrapolating from its literature, we would argue that it appears to apply a single-system approach. It uses available statistics and data to hone in on where the 'disease/conflict' is taking place and then sends trained local violence interrupters and outreach workers into the community to prevent violence occurring. At the same time that this is taking place, they work with those considered to be the most 'at risk', building a community narrative that explicitly states that they do not support the use of violence.

However successful and exciting the outcomes of the Cure Violence model might be in the US context, its ability to measure impact remains an issue in the UK: 'UK early intervention programmes have not been designed with such evaluation in mind or have not been readily amenable to evaluation' (Ross *et al* 2010). A key issue here was the use of a control group so that differences between programme participants can be measured. Instead, interventions still tend to rely on evidence that lacks rigour due to the fact that any change could be attributed to factors unrelated to the particular

intervention under review. Although this was recognised a decade ago, it has only been since 2019 that toolkits have been made available to evaluate the ‘intermediate outcomes’ (Maguire *et al* 2019) that smaller, community-based organisations facilitate. In the absence of alternatives, there appears to be a heavy reliance on psychometric type testing and the use of secondary data (such as improvement in educational attainment) to measure the impact of an intervention. For Gilga, ‘psychology is crucial to the understanding of the complex social phenomenon hidden under the “knife crime” umbrella’ (2009).

Mark Lipsey (2009) identifies some of the factors that contribute to the development of a programme’s effectiveness. Key findings from his report suggest that:

- programmes should employ a therapeutic philosophy for changing young people’s behaviour
- programmes that target high-risk populations are more likely to succeed than those delivered to general populations
- ‘therapeutic’ programmes that use cognitive behavioural techniques are especially likely to be successful

In light of these findings, the Antebellum pilot targeted young people aged 10-17, reflecting the aforementioned research evidence highlighting the high number of arrests of young people in that age range. A number of strategies were identified as suitable for use in the UK, ranging from group strategies to intensive, tailored interventions for specific individuals following the visit to Chicago by key EYLA personnel. As a result, EYLA sought partnerships within targeted boroughs on the basis of a number of key criteria, including:

- educational attainment of its young people
- proportion of persistent absentees

- proportion of children and young people in receipt of a permanent or fixed-term exclusion
- proportion of children in poverty
- boroughs most affected by the 2011 riots
- number of knife crime offences committed by young people

As a result, the following partners were chosen:

Gangs Unite

Gangs Unite is a social action group created for high-risk inner-city youths to divert their energies and frustrations into positive experiences which can improve their futures. It utilises a mentoring model alongside providing diverse opportunities for young people to reach their full potential, without allowing their past experiences to limit their growth.

Penificent

Penificent uses media methodologies to engage and affect the mindset of young males said to be on the trajectory of criminality. It is run by a leadership team with direct experience of criminal justice and incarceration.

Reel Talk

Reel Talk uses film and the creative arts alongside a mentoring scheme to help young people overcome challenging issues and a drift into criminal behaviour.

South London Leaders

SLL is a philanthropic organisation based in South London which helps at-risk young men to break the cycle of school exclusions.

Westside Young Leaders’ Academy

Westside Young Leaders’ Academy is a leadership development organisation created in the mould of EYLA.

Partners worked with their own referral agencies to recruit young people for a programme of targeted support, setting out to



recruit a total of five young people each. They were asked to collect administrative data from referral agencies covering indicators such as school attendance and fixed-term exclusions. By collecting information relating to the number of behavioural incidents in the year prior to the intervention and then in the year in which the intervention took place, it was intended that this would provide a proxy for increased engagement in learning and a reduction in negative behaviours that could potentially stand in the way of academic achievement. Once the information was received, each partner was granted a total of £7,500. Over the course of the programme, they committed to collecting a further £5,000 in matched funding. Outreach/youth workers were recruited and assigned to the programme and the planning process began.

What we learnt through Partnership planning and design of the monitoring process

In order to undertake a programme-wide assessment of impact, we recognised that any such approach is predicated on an assumption of direct comparability

between projects. Over the course of the scoping phase it became clear that a number of the conditions required to support a programme-wide assessment were not fully met. For example EYLA placed a greater emphasis on academic support than WYLA, while GU focused on vocational and employment-related interventions. To support an assessment of participant outcomes, Middlesex University developed a common monitoring process to keep track of the programme. This included stakeholder meetings, output reports and programme reviews, as well as opportunities for partners to collate performance and characteristics data for all participating young people against a range of agreed indicators. These included proxies for economic deprivation and educational disadvantage, alongside information pertaining to prior academic attainment and behaviours. Periodically over the course of the intervention, partners were required to reassess the performance made by participants against these key indicators.

Prior to the beginning of the programme, the monitoring process was introduced to all the partners during the orientation

programme. Sessions were provided for the outreach/youth workers, partner organisations and EYLA according to needs and roles. For outreach/youth workers, as well as providing them with the opportunity to share their stories as a starting point for demonstrating what was possible, session leaders introduced the Slutkin model alongside workshops focused on mediation. The whole team participated in sessions on evidence-based practice before conducting a review of the orientation programme and collaborating on the delivery plan presented in *Table 1*. It was created by the team at the end of the orientation programme as a way of sustaining a common understanding of the health-based approach that underpins Antebellum.

In a review of the orientation programme, evidence emerged to suggest that the projects did not share the same aims and objectives. It indicated that different organisations would adopt different approaches, and that they would support

intervention groups with differing characteristics and levels of need. Furthermore, due to the way in which the programme was set up, it was not possible to establish a robust counterfactual scenario. Instead, the team decided to use the academic performance of participants relative to the national expectation for a young person of their age, alongside the rate of exclusions and other behavioural factors. It was clear that young people in receipt of support from partner organisations could also expect to access a range of other interventions. As a result it was recognised that it would not be possible to accurately measure the contribution of the project to achieved outcomes.

Methodology used to evaluate the Antebellum Programme

In order to apply academic methodology to evaluate this intervention within a community context, the author sought to increase efficiency, validity and reliability of the process using a qualitative phenomenological approach, and systematic

Intervention	Agreed explanation/input	Anticipated Outputs
Interruption	The deployment of trained outreach/youth workers with the cultural competence and credibility to engage directly with those young people at greatest risk with workers who often have 'walked in the shoes' of the young people they seek to engage with. The difference we (the outreach workers) bring is that we have successfully turned our lives away from violence and crime. We hope that this enables us to offer persuasive testimony to the young people we reach to begin the process of influencing them away from crime.	School and home visits Hanging out with young people on housing estates, community centres and other recreational contexts Residential weekend focused on an examination of lifestyle on offending behaviours vs aspiration Signposting appropriate to the need of the young people One to one counselling and mentoring
Coaching for mindset change	We, as outreach workers will act as coaches and mentors to help change the norms and behaviours of at-risk youth. We see the coaching approach is transformational, and where possible non-directive – the goal is to enable young people to 'own' their choices, as this is considered to be the optimal route to long-term adoption.	One to one coaching Workshops on: law and order, stop and search, drug awareness, mediation, revenge and reconciliation, restorative justice, drama workshops, out of school tuition, art therapy, sex education and masculinity, meditation and mindfulness, educational recovery, music, sport and employability skills
Peer approbation	Slutkin's approach advocates the changing of group norms, this being made possible where sufficient numbers of people within the community are modelling the new, constructive behaviour.	Weekly workshops on: joint enterprise, peer pressure, team work 12-steps programme

Table 1 Shared vision for the Antebellum Approach

text condensation (STC) was selected as a relevant strategy (Malterud 2012). This phenomenological approach proved to be beneficial to the evaluation, since it is a method that ‘attempts to extract the most pure, untainted data’ (Chambers 2013) from those experiencing the intervention. Meanwhile, STC was chosen because it is an accepted ‘descriptive and explorative method for thematic cross-case analysis of different types of qualitative data, such as interview studies, observational studies, and analysis of written texts’ (Malterud 2012).

To obtain rich information on the experiences of both participants and youth workers, the data was collected by conducting semi-structured individual interviews with youth workers, focused on the three modes of practice Antebellum has adapted from the Cure Violence programme: ‘Interruption, Coaching for a mind shift, and Peer Approbation leading to constructive engagement (outcome)’ (EYLA 2019). This was supplemented by regular reviews of the participants’ reflective diaries. Data about the young people was gathered from their evolving responses to the Goodman’s Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ), which participants completed at the beginning, middle and end of the programme. Youthminds provided support in terms of capturing and analysing the questionnaire data.

The questionnaire was chosen because several studies have examined the reliability and validity of the different versions of the SDQ. Goodman *et al* generated the five-factor structure model of the SDQ, including the five subscales (Goodman, Meltzer, & Bailey 1998). The SDQ is an appropriate measurement tool for this evaluation as it is internationally validated, can be used in initial screening, and can be applied after an intervention to track levels of change (and hence the

success of an intervention). It can also be used to generate key performance indicators linked to educational attainment, such as the percentage of young people who have improved on before/after scores. The reliability for the Total Difficulties score, Impact score, and five subscale scores is satisfactory (Goodman 2001). There is conflicting research on reports of internal consistency as well as cross-informant correlations. Both interrater reliability and test-retest reliability have been found to be satisfactory (Goodman 2001).

There are several practical reasons for choosing to use the SDQ. One is the fact that it is accessible and affordable. Initially young people completed the questionnaire offline but the mid- and end-of-programme questionnaires were completed online. Another reason was the manageable size of questionnaire, making it easy to complete in a short span of time. Added to this, and in contrast to many other behavioural measurements, the SDQ focuses on strengths as well as difficulties, an approach that fits with EYLA’s solution-focused philosophy. The results of the SDQ provided helpful information for youth workers across multiple subscales, which they were encouraged to use to inform areas of risk and future intervention. Lastly, considering the limited experience of those running the programme, the fact that there is no training required for administration of the SDQ made this an ideal option, especially with the support of the Youthmind organisation, which holds the UK licence for the online version of the questionnaire.

Semi-structured interviews and the review of secondary data were used to gather information from the programme designers (EYLA) and its partners. This was primarily undertaken to monitor the espoused versus practicable application of the Cure Violence Model, and to evaluate



the experiences offered as part of the programme. This included the Youth at Risk referral pathways, service level agreements and the completed EYLA referral proforma.

Although all partners worked using the same model, including external facilitators, there were some marked differences (for example, the range of age groups with whom they worked and the intensity of the interventions to which young people were exposed). Ultimately, these variations had little impact on the way in which the intervention could be evaluated, or on the extent to which comparable and generalisable lessons could be learned. All of the programme participants participated in the monitoring and evaluation process. To obtain a rich description of the context of the experiences (Malterud 2001), five subgroups were created to represent the different partner locations. Each of the 31 'at risk' young people were referred and allocated to one of the six youth workers assigned to the programme. All of the 31 young people had been involved in acts of violence toward other young people and/or authorities, while fulfilling at least one of the criteria previously listed.

The total number of interviews was considered sufficient to draw valid conclusions from the collected data (Dahlberg et al 2008). The tally of these interviews can be summarised as follows:

- 6 youth workers x 3 interviews = 18;
- 5 partner leads x 3 interviews = 15;
- EYLA x 3 interviews.

Total = 36 interviews

When it came to forming the subgroups, the selection process was determined in large part by location. One has to take into account the so-called 'postcode wars', as this factor could influence any attempt to randomise a sample in future applications.

Data collection

For the youth workers, the first and mid-programme interviews took place at their base venues to mark the end of each step in Antebellum. This was in line with Malterud's recommendations for analysis as described below (Malterud 2012). However, with the onset of Covid-19, the final interviews had to be conducted via Skype. The interviews were carried out at intervals between June 2019 and May 2020.

An interview guide with three topics representing the three steps of the intervention (interruption, coaching, appropriation) were used and interviews lasted between 30 and 65 minutes. Each interview began with a friendly catch up before the recorded interview, to help to create a more open and trusting environment, and to increase the possibility of gaining rich descriptions of the participant's experiences of working with the Antebellum approach (Kvale and Brinkmann 2009). The first question in the interview related to the key themes emerging in their work with the young people. This was used to gain a sense of what was foremost in their mind. Then the formal opening question was framed as follows: *Can you tell me how you think your work is supporting the young people to learn new behaviours and habits?* The other three interview topics concerned types of intervention used, challenges faced and next steps: *Can you tell me what interventions you have used during this period and why? Can you tell me about some of the challenges you faced and how you dealt with them? Can you tell me three things you hope to see before we speak again?* The participants were asked to tell the interviewer about different experiences and to provide concrete examples through the use of follow-up questions, for example: *Can you give an example? Do you remember an event when you experienced this? How does this differ from your previous work in this area? How easy has it been to keep your reflective diary up to date?*

After the interviews, reflective diaries were reviewed. The first two interviews were transcribed by the author, the rest by an administrator, and all material was recorded verbatim. A quality control was performed soon after the transcriptions by having the author listen to each interview and compare the recording with the transcribed text (Kvale and Brinkmann

2009). The purpose for reviewing reflective diaries after the first two interviews was to monitor engagement with the process rather than to scrutinise the content of individual diaries. For the evaluation, the living documents were kept, analysed and returned to the respective youth workers.

The same process was used to interview the partner organisations, with interviews lasting between 20–40 minutes. The first question in the interview was about the key themes emerging from their involvement in the Antebellum programme. This was used to gain a sense of what was foremost in their mind. Then the formal opening question was framed as follows: *Can you tell how you think your organisation benefits from being part of the Antebellum programme?* The next three interview topics concerned challenges faced, communication between partners, and lessons learned: *Can you tell me what challenges your organisation has faced in delivering Antebellum? Can you tell me how you are sharing your experiences with your other partners? Can you tell me what lessons you have learned during this stage of the programme?*

Again partners were asked to tell the interviewer about different experiences and to provide concrete examples through the use of follow-up questions, for example: *Can you give an example? Do you remember an event when you experienced this? How does this differ from your previous work in this area?*

Questionnaire

The Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) is a brief behavioural screening questionnaire with several versions available to meet the needs of researchers, clinicians and educationalists. Initially developed for use by mental health professionals, improvements now mean that it is applicable for other uses. As a self-completion tool, it has the

capability to support young people to identify their own potential needs (interruption) and to facilitate their interactions with youth workers (in coaching sessions) to create the experiences within the intervention plan (appropriation). Although it would have been useful for the youth worker, parents and other appropriate adults to have completed questionnaires to capture their perceptions of the young person, taking into account the time constraints and allocated funding this was not possible for the pilot. In addition to helping the youth workers in their intervention plans, the author suggested the use of SDQ as a tool due to its reputation and acceptance as a meaningful way to evaluate outcomes.

As part of their initial assessment, participants completed the initial SDQ in the presence of an allocated worker, and the results were forwarded to the author. Having identified the SDQ analytical tool provided by Youthmind, the initial SDQ results were uploaded and then subsequent questionnaires were completed and uploaded. Each questionnaire consists of 25 questions assessing the following areas, with five questions pertaining to each individual area:

- Emotional symptoms
- Conduct problems
- Hyperactivity
- Peer-relationship problems
- Prosocial behaviour

An overall Total Difficulties Score is produced, along with five subscale scores: Emotional Symptoms, Conduct Problems, Hyperactivity/Inattention, Relationship Problems, and Prosocial Behaviour. Optional Internalising and Externalising scales may also be produced. Once the questionnaires have been filled out, the SDQ assessment is then scored to show the level of difficulty on a numerical scale. Each psychological attribute is scored on a

0–10 scale. A score of 0 is the best outcome concerning the emotional, conduct, hyperactivity, and peer-relationship fields (note that these four attributes add up to a total difficulties/overall stress score scored on a 0–40 scale). This scoring reverses for the prosocial field, where a score of 10 shows the least amount of difficulty and a propensity for kind and helpful behaviour.

No analysis was undertaken by the author of the resulting reports until the end of the intervention, in order to remain focused on the overall impact of the intervention and its ability to change habits and behaviours in line with its stated outcome, rather than being diverted by the details of individual participants.

Analysis

The analysis followed the guidelines for strategies in systematic text condensation (STC) (Malterud 2012). The data analysis started after the final interview had been conducted, and proceeded according to these guidelines. During the analysis process, a bridling of the process of pre-understanding was practised through reflection and discussions between the author and project director while analysing the material (Dahlberg *et al* 2008). The four recommended steps in STC were followed:

- Preliminary themes connected to the phenomenon of having work ability emerged. In this first step, both author and project director listened to and carefully read the interviews several times to obtain an overview of the participants' experiences of Antebellum.
- Meaning units related to the three steps, participant habits and behaviours were identified in each interview and sorted into groups of themes and subthemes, representing different aspects of the SDQ results. This generated an enormous amount of data that is still being analysed using the computer program

nVivo (Edhlund 2011). For the purpose of this pilot, it has not proved possible to present these results, though we have tried to mitigate this with step (3), detailed below.

- Youthmind were consulted to identify the main themes emerging from the SDQ. This support derived from the organisation's extensive experience and perspective, and added to the transcription of the final interviews. These were manually condensed and abstracted into themes within Antebellum. In this third step, new terms for the themes and subthemes were also described.
- The meanings were manually condensed, and descriptions and concepts were developed and recommendations made (Malterud 2012).

Throughout these analyses, the themes and subthemes were changed several times until we arrived at three final themes. The author conducted her analysis in close collaboration with EYLA and Youthmind. Finally, to review the process and the results in terms of intelligibility and credibility, the report was circulated to a number of external partners for review.

Ethics

To secure the integrity of the participants, written and oral information was given before the interview and sharing of questionnaire results in line with the latest data protection and ethical considerations. This information included an explanation of the study's aims and procedures and its approach to the issue of confidentiality. It emphasised the voluntary nature of research and the possibility of withdrawing from participation without explanation. After this, the participants gave their written consent to participate. At no point did I meet with the young people as part of this intervention and although they were made aware of my role and how I would manage the results

of their questionnaire, each young person was given an individual ID in order to maintain confidentiality.

Findings and recommendations

EYLA commissioned this work to help it assess the impact of the intervention and its modes of delivery in supporting the improvement of the behaviour and educational attainment of 'at risk' youth. As stated earlier, a lack of time has meant that we are unable to present a detailed analysis of all the data collected. Nevertheless, initial analysis of the findings would suggest that the intervention did have an impact on the behaviour of the participants, although it is not clear what modes of delivery worked best due to the individualistic nature of the interventions that were used. This made it difficult to assess the value of the intervention for educational attainment, even though there was an increase in educational gains seen from CAT4 results at the end of the programme. For the main programme, it is recommended that if EYLA wishes to include educational attainment as a measure, any intervention should ideally last a minimum of one academic year and be recognised as a value-adding service aligned with the gold standard of research (Gilga). At a minimum, EYLA should integrate the use of the new intermediate outcomes toolkit within the design of Antebellum.

The evaluation of the experiences of the youth workers also suggests that the programme needed to be extended; this represents one of the key findings of this evaluation. Five out of the six youth workers made reference to not having enough time in their interviews and reflective accounts. Several diary entries state that their authors felt that the issues that were emerging during the interruption and coaching steps required more time. This theme was echoed in the interviews with the partnership lead, who stated that

some of the feedback they received from their assigned youth worker made some of the issues seem insurmountable and that more time was needed to make a substantial difference in the community.

Table 2 provides an overview of the anticipated versus actual outputs across the range of interventions used. What emerged as a result of producing Table 2 was a recognition of how much time was taken applying the therapeutic philosophy (Lipsey) during the interruption phase. This required far more contact with participants' families than had been anticipated, and the introduction of sports, music trips and other activities earlier in the process. The data collected reveals some challenging but heart-warming stories that also demonstrate a shift in the language used to describe their experiences, as the

training they received in their orientation became a lived experience. It was also noticed during the coaching phase that reframing through structured experiences alongside the therapeutic response added value to the relationships developed. For the main programme, it is recommended that the timetable should be structured in a fluid way, in line with what is actually happening on the ground, rather than being driven by funding requirements. In addition a support system should be put in place for outreach/youth workers, to support them after their initial training has been completed. This could take several forms, including an action learning set or co-coaching sessions. It is also recommended that a directory of appropriate signposts be created to build on what has been learnt during the pilot.

Intervention	Anticipated outputs	Actual outputs
Interruption	<p>School and home visits</p> <p>Hanging out with young people on housing estates, community centres and other recreational contexts.</p> <p>Residential weekend focused on an examination of lifestyle on offending behaviours vs aspiration.</p> <p>Signposting appropriate to the need of the young people</p> <p>One to one counselling and mentoring</p>	<p>Each organisation recruited 5/6 at risk young people using their existing referral networks. These range from local schools and social services to individual nominations. Recruitment was seamless and all partners were oversubscribed leading to one group taking 6.</p> <p>This early phase involved school and home visits and hanging out with young people on housing estates, community centres and other recreational contexts.</p> <p>Within the first quarter of the programme all young people had been invited to and participated in a residential weekend during with there was an examination of lifestyle and a focus on offending behaviours vs aspiration.</p> <p>The early phase also consisted of drug awareness, signposting and the link between drugs and crime. In 90% of cases there was an in depth meeting with parents/carers. There was also an exchange of contact details for ongoing mediation and interventions.</p> <p>Personal Development plans and goal setting.</p> <p>Music and drama sessions depending on interest and need.</p>
Coaching for mindset change	<p>One to one coaching</p> <p>Workshops on: law and order, stop and search, drug awareness, mediation, revenge and reconciliation, restorative justice, drama workshops, out of school tuition, art therapy, sex education and masculinity, meditation and mindfulness, educational recovery, music, sport and employability skills.</p>	<p>One to one coaching</p> <p>Regular meetings with parents/carers</p> <p>Workshops on: law and order, stop and search, drug awareness, mediation, functional skills tuition, 10 sessions of art therapy, sex education and masculinity, meditation and mindfulness, employability skills, anger management training – 12 week programme, Eton-Xs</p>
Peer approbation	<p>Workshops on: joint enterprise, peer pressure, team work, 12-steps programme</p>	<p>Police and other members of the criminal justice system led training.</p> <p>Peer mentoring</p> <p>An adapted version of the AA 12 steps programme was used but curtailed in March 2020 due to Covid-19</p>

Table 2 Overview of the anticipated v actual outputs/ range of interventions used

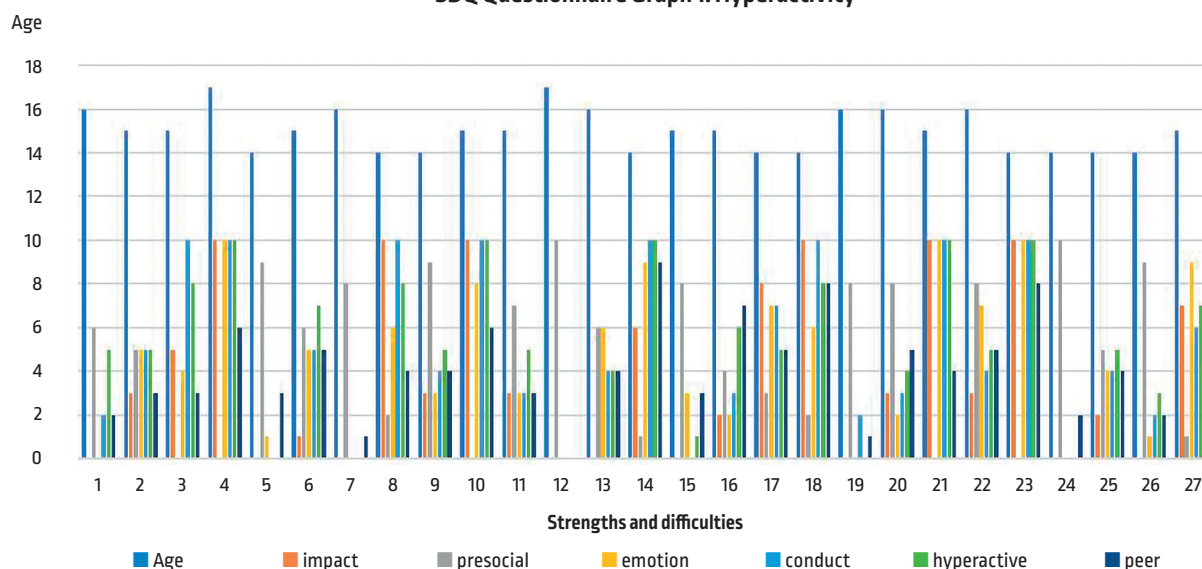
Analysis of the SDQ questionnaire revealed that two thirds of the participants scored high or very high scores in all three tests for hyperactivity. This is one of the key reasons that Antebellum was established in the first place, but it also represents one of the most significant obstacles to its success.

In their interviews, all the youth workers stated that the participants' ability to remain focused meant that things would take longer than expected. It should be noted that this was a consistent subtheme throughout the interruption step of the intervention. During the pilot, two of the participants came into contact with the police, much to the surprise of their youth workers, who in their reflective accounts had begun to see some behavioural change. The data collected demonstrates fluctuations in the participants' ability to sustain their new behaviours and habits within their daily lives, corresponding broadly to the length of time between contacts with a youth worker. These comments and frustrations lessen by the end of the intervention, with a two-point difference seen between the SDQ scores. Youthminds states that a two-point change represents significant progress and therefore Antebellum can be said to have contributed to a change in these

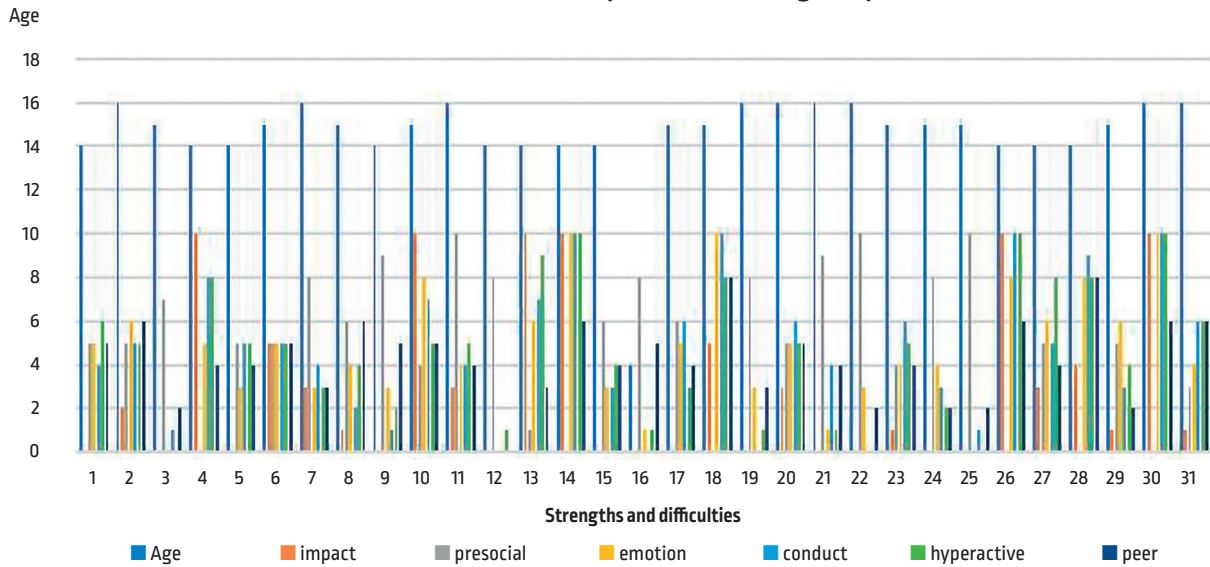
young people. However, in the absence of a control group, these results do not necessarily provide definitive proof that Antebellum alone made the difference.

Another of the key themes that emerged from the initial analysis of the data was the participants understanding of impact. A third of the participants scored very high in terms of impact and maintained that level throughout the intervention. In subsequent discussions, Youthminds suggested that this supports the findings of previous research highlighting that boys in particular do not know what causes impact but know it by how it feels. This is mentioned here as a common thread throughout all the data. For the youth workers, there is a sense of disbelief in their reflections that their young people seemed not to understand cause and effect. During the coaching step, all the youth workers stated this as a concern. They all shared stories of how they became more skilled at finding ways of demonstrating impact through the residential programme. All of the youth workers highlighted the value of the residential experiences within the intervention, again linking this back to the theme of having time to work immersively with the young people on areas of concern. Evaluations from the participants

SDQ Questionnaire Graph 1: Hyperactivity



SDQ Questionnaire Graph 2: Understanding of impact

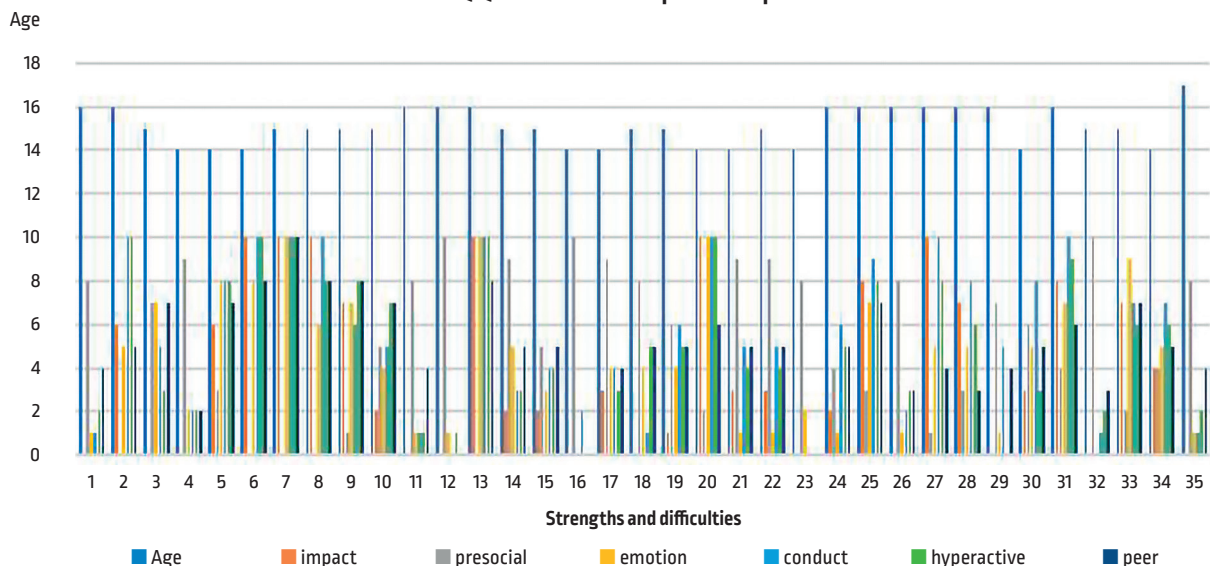


undertaken by EYLA after the residential also highlight the value that the young people placed on the experience. It is recommended that residential experiences continue to be a feature of Antebellum, but also that this is made iterative, so that in between experiences there is time to consolidate the new habits and behaviours in a more structured way, perhaps through some form of activity driven by the interests of the young people.

The final recommendation is in some respects the most crucial: two thirds of the participants began the programme

with a very high score for 'Peer problems'. Although this has been reduced to one third by the end of the programme, this finding remained a concern to the evaluator, Youthminds and EYLA in our final discussions. It is therefore a recommendation that EYLA recognise the strengths that already exist within its main offering, and finds ways to embed its organisational culture of assertiveness and leadership within the main Antebellum programme. Given the entry criteria for this programme, it will be no surprise that the results suggest that many participants suffer bullying or exhibit challenging attitudes

SDQ Questionnaire Graph 3: Peer problems



towards authority figures. However, research available through Youthminds suggests that if the programme can reduce the number of young people who fall into this category, then many of the habits and behaviours associated with violence and crime can be replaced with more life-affirming mindsets.

Recommendations for future evaluations

Over the course of the planning process, it became clear that the creation of a robust measurement of outcomes for Antebellum would be a challenge (Ross *et al* 2010). Attempts to increase the validity and reliability of the report findings produced an onerous amount of data. It is a recommendation of this report that the Ministry of Justice's intermediate outcomes toolkit becomes the tool of choice (Maguire *et al* 2019), in addition to the qualitative phenomenological approach and systematic text condensation used by Malterud (2012).

Key findings suggest that the partners were successful in recruiting more clients than initially targeted. From the evidence presented, this reflects the appetite among referral agencies to find new ways of engaging these young people. The speed and ease of recruiting participants in this way highlighted the importance of generating and sustaining good community networks. On the whole, staff were positive about their experience in supporting the delivery of the programme and this satisfaction was found to increase over time. However, some of the persistent issues that emerged throughout the intervention remain a cause for concern.

Conclusion

The key conclusion of this evaluation is that a marked transformation in behaviour and increase in academic attainment can be observed across the time period of

the Antebellum pilot scheme. However, it is not clear if these improvements can be solely accredited to the interventions commissioned by EYLA. The evaluation showed that:

- All six partners administered the SDQ and a reduction in violence was noted.
- On average, those programme participants in receipt of support from the partners appeared to have made academic progress on a par with, or greater than, that which might commonly be expected of pupils of their age.
- In most cases, the young people felt that participation in Antebellum had made a positive impact on them.
- All six partners shared information on attendance; there was also median reduction in sessions missed, although the change was not statistically significant.

At the end of the year in which the intervention took place, the mean number of sessions missed by pupils was found to have decreased across the partner organisations. Whilst not large, the greatest mean reduction appeared to have been achieved for those pupils who had been in receipt of support from EYLA (two half day sessions). Participants in receipt of support from Penifcent and WYLA recorded a mean reduction in missed sessions of around one half-day session. Given the high level of variability in the outcomes achieved by participants, such results are not statistically significant, but may be regarded as indicative of a generally positive outcome.

What also emerged was a clear sense of collective achievement by the partner organisations, as the expertise of the key workers assigned to Antebellum was welcomed by schools, governmental agencies and families. There is also anecdotal evidence that the project's legacy will continue beyond June 2021. ■

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

SDQ Evaluation Tool

Although originally designed as a behavioural screening tool, the SDQ is now available in versions that meet the needs of researchers, clinicians and educationists, and so has become widely used by researchers seeking to establish the behavioural impact of education initiatives on beneficiaries.

A number of different versions have been developed to support different age-groups (eg 10–14 and 11–16), and modes of completion (eg self-completed, parent-completed, and teacher-completed). Due to the variance in the delivery models used by the five partners, it was agreed that questionnaires should be self-completed.

The questionnaire comprises 25 single item response questions for which a respondent is asked to indicate the extent to which that statement is true to them or to the individual that they are commenting on. Depending on the responses given, a total strength and difficulties score can then be calculated between 0 and 40. In general, the scores achieved (under self-assessment) are interpreted as follows:

- 0 to 15 is commonly considered to be ‘normal’ and would indicate that there is little evidence that a child or young person is in need of clinical support
- 15 to 19 is regarded as ‘borderline’ indicating that there is some evidence that a child or young person may be in need of clinical support
- 19-40 is ‘abnormal’ and indicates that a young person is likely to require some support from a trained clinician.

Pupil learning outcomes

To support an assessment of pupil achievement over the course of the intervention period, partners were asked to collate teacher-assessed attainment data for participants in English and Maths.

Given the focus of the intervention, it is not surprising that median attainment for young people in receipt of support from the partner organisations was lower than might be expected for a child or young person of their age in English and/or Maths. Given the high level of variability in the performance of the intervention group, care must be taken in interpreting these results. It is interesting to note, however, that children in receipt of support from one provider appeared on average to be further behind in English (a median of two sub-levels) than those supported by the other five partners (a median of one sub-level). No such difference was observed in Maths, where the median performance of pupil participants across all five partners was one sub-level lower than the national expectation.

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