

BLUNT TRUTH

Preventing knife crime through education, early intervention and community action across Manchester



Funded by:

msv mosscare st vincent's

MANCHESTER CITY COUNCIL

Jigsaw

one manchester

What is Blunt Truth?

Blunt Truth is a trauma-informed youth violence prevention programme tackling knife crime across Manchester. Through lived experience, education and targeted support, it works with young people, families, schools and communities to prevent violence and support those most at risk.

Blunt Truth – designed and developed with young people!



"Projects like this give me the hope that actually we can make the change we need to keep all of our young people safe."

- Cllr Bev Craig OBE, Mayor of Greater Manchester

"The mentors did a phenomenal job engaging the children and creating a safe, respectful space to talk about such an important topic."

- Kia McKenzie, Deputy DSL/Family Support Worker, Rolls Crescent Primary

Delivery Model:

- Early intervention in primary schools - awareness and decision making
- Education and consequences at high schools/ PRUs – real life scenarios and accountability
- Targeted intervention 1-1 mentoring - support for those most at risk
- Youth provision - safe spaces, activities and ongoing engagement in community settings
- Family support - parent workshops strengthening home environments

"Every school should have this group of people in to educate and inspire our children. They saw themselves in these young men and women and this was powerful. It also sent them hope."

- Year 6 staff feedback shared by Leah Steeles, Learning Mentor / Family Support Worker

"I truly believe that your sessions may have just saved a life!!!"

- Rachel Quinn, Designated Safeguarding Lead and Assistant Head Teacher, Chorlton High School



STREETDOCTORS

Street Doctors equips young people with potentially life-saving skills, teaching them how to respond safely to serious injuries linked to violence.

As part of Blunt Truth, it combines practical first aid, confidence-building and open conversations about street violence, empowering young people to make a positive difference without putting themselves at risk.

Outputs:

- Street Doctors delivered **42 sessions**, with **589 participants**
- **84%** of respondents said they would recommend the sessions
- **70%** reported increased knowledge, confidence and willingness to respond following the workshops

These percentages relate to people who completed the evaluation.

Creating Effective Generations

CEG delivers knife crime prevention through engaging school workshops, parent sessions and one-to-one mentoring.

Using lived experience and real-life scenarios, sessions challenge myths around carrying knives, encourage safer choices and help young people understand the consequences of violence.

"I enjoyed the workshop, it was fun, and I learnt a lot. I learnt about knife crime and to not carry a knife because it can make you more harm, and listen to positive things"

- Year 6 pupil, St Mary's CE Primary

"I learned that I should never carry a knife with me. If anything, bad happens ask support from someone you can trust."

- Year 6 pupil, St Mary's CE Primary

Targeted mentoring provides personalised support to build resilience, address risk factors and help young people achieve positive futures.

Outputs:

- Delivered **117 sessions**, attended by **685 individuals**
- **6** young people receiving **121 mentoring**

What the evidence shows:

Pupil feedback from primary sessions describes learning that carrying a knife can increase risk and that speaking to a trusted adult is a safer response. The mentoring case notes record examples of young people reflecting on consequences, identifying ways to manage conflict and making more considered choices about peers and activities. These are individual examples of progress, rather than a measured outcome for everyone reached.

"The mentors did a phenomenal job engaging the children and creating a safe, respectful space to talk about such an important topic."

- Kia McKenzie, Deputy DSL / Family Support Worker

84YOUTH delivers immersive, trauma-informed knife crime prevention sessions that bring the real-life consequences of violence into sharp focus. Using a courtroom-style experience, young people explore peer pressure, joint enterprise, personal responsibility and the law, helping them challenge assumptions, make safer choices and understand the lasting impact of their decisions.

High schools and youth settings:

In high schools, the courtroom experience helps students examine how quickly a situation can escalate and how the actions of others may affect them. Youth training provides another setting for these conversations, allowing young people to discuss real-life scenarios and challenge the idea that carrying a knife offers protection.

Teacher training:

84YOUTH also works with teachers and school staff, helping them continue conversations after a workshop has ended. Training supports staff to understand the pressures young people may face and to respond to concerns with greater awareness.

84YOUTH delivered **21** sessions, reaching **915** people through the Blunt Truth programme.

> "Finding out how the law can mean you can be charged with murder even if you didn't do it had a big effect on some of the students who will now think more about who they have as friends and will hopefully be better able to stand up to peer pressure."
>
> **- Chorlton High South school feedback**

Minds on a Mission and **Be Part of Change** bring lived experience to life through immersive learning and powerful personal stories.

Minds on a Mission leads the Blunt Truth escape room, using interactive challenges to spark conversations about risk, peer pressure, consequences and where to get support.

Be Part of Change shares the real human impact of knife crime, helping young people understand the devastating effects on families, friends and communities.

Together, they make prevention personal, engaging and memorable, reinforcing a clear message: every choice matters, and support is available.

Outputs:

Delivered **10** sessions reaching **1,390** people

> "We feel by working together, there is a way forward and we are so proud to work with the young people in the community on Blunt Truth."
>
> **- Charlie Norman, Chief Executive, MSV**

> "I learnt to never carry a knife, even for safety. We learnt safer ways to stay safe by communicating and working together as a team."
>
> **- Birchfield Primary pupil**

Impact and Outcomes:

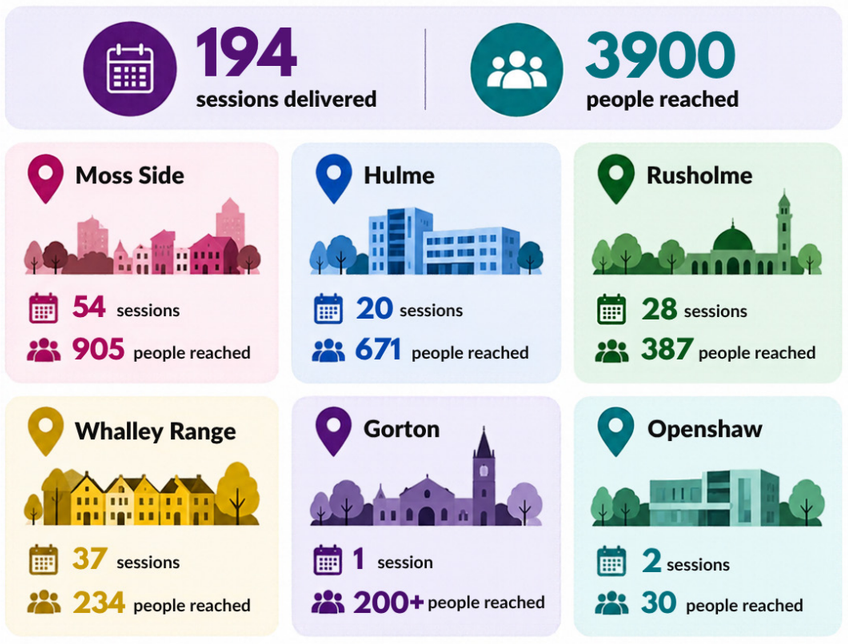
Blunt Truth project has delivered **194 sessions** reaching **3,900** young people, parents, teachers and youth leaders across schools, PRUs, youth provision and community settings.

Delivery Partner/Strand	Sessions	People Reached
CEG	117	685
Street Doctors	42	589
84YOUTH	21	915
Be Part or Change and Minds on a Mission	10	1,390
Youth Engagement	4	321
TOTAL	**194**	**3,900**

Education footprint:



Geographical depth:



Additional delivery was also recorded in Chorlton, Clayton and East Manchester.

Feedback from youth settings and primary workshops:

Improved confidence and safer choices

- **1,170** young people reported **improved confidence** overall in youth setting and primary workshops

Feedback from secondary school workshops:

Improved understanding, awareness of knife crime and the impact this can have, following 2010 surveys completed

- **100%** reported **improved confidence**
- **100%** reported **greater awareness** of risks and how to keep themselves and others safe.
- **100%** reported **better understanding** of the impact of serious violence
- **95.75%** felt confident they would make **safer choices** even if their friends did not.
- **95%** felt able to **speak** to someone if they felt unsafe or needed support.
- **93.25%** said they would be **less likely to associate** with people involved in knives or violence.

Feedback from parents:

Parents feel better equipped to deal with issues relating to knife crime within their own families:

- **100%** greater **confidence** having conversations about knives
- **100%** greater **awareness** of the **consequences**
- **100%** more likely to make **positive choices**
- **100%** greater **awareness of support** available

Early learning in primary schools

Primary school feedback provides qualitative evidence through pupil reflections, staff feedback and mentor observations. Recurring themes include understanding the risks of carrying knives, recognising peer influence and seeking support from trusted adults.

"You should always talk to a trusted adult if you feel like you need to carry a knife."

- Rolls Crescent pupil

"The sessions most definitely increased both children and staff confidence around the subject."

- St Clements Year 6 staff feedback

"They saw themselves in these young men and women and this was powerful. It also sent them hope."

- St Clements Year 6 staff feedback

Core learnings

Carrying increases risk; peer groups influence choices; trusted adults are a route to support; and safer decisions can be made without weapons.



Support beyond the workshop

80 staff attended training at Chorlton High South. School feedback described valuable insight into young people's experiences and reinforced the importance of understanding the individual when responding to challenging behaviour.

100% of attendees felt the workshops were effective and took away learning that can be used in the school setting.

1-1 Mentoring

Six young people received **one-to-one mentoring**. Case records describe progress in safer decision-making, managing emotions and avoiding risky situations. At Chorlton High, delivery also helped identify two girls needing a mentoring connection, creating an opportunity for further targeted support.

Secondary School Feedback:

Chorlton High South 700 pupils

The school reported that the two-session format gave students time to reflect between sessions and enabled staff to hold follow-on discussions before the summer holidays. It confirmed support for confidence, safer choices, engagement, awareness, aspiration and identity.

"Finding out how the law can mean you can be charged with murder even if you didn't do it had a big effect on some of the students who will now think more about who they have as friends and will hopefully be better able to stand up to peer pressure."

- Chorlton High South school feedback

1-to-1 mentoring: impact at individual level:

YP1 - independent decision-making

YP1 described exposure to violence, gang activity and negative influences in the wider community. By the second recorded session he reported making better decisions, thinking more about long-term consequences and choosing not to join a peer activity carrying significant risk. He had also begun spending less time with those individuals.

YP2 - from avoidance to positive opportunity

YP2 discussed past street-criminal activity, conflict, reputation and the difficulty of walking away. Later evidence records deliberate avoidance of environments likely to escalate and positive engagement at an entrepreneurship and careers event, where he won a prize for a creative design.

From awareness to safer decisions

The strongest evidence of impact is in what young people say they have learned and the choices they are beginning to make. Primary pupils described understanding that carrying a knife for protection can put them at greater risk.

They identified trusted adults, positive friendships and asking for help as safer responses to fear or peer pressure. School staff reported that interactive sessions opened up honest conversations, increased confidence around a difficult subject and helped identify children who may need further support.



Value generated

The recorded return on social return is **£44.09** for every **£1** invested

These are HACT-recorded estimates of social value, alongside the direct feedback and case evidence above.

Statistics Say:

GMP's recorded a **23% reduction in injuries related to violence.**

This is not down to one project alone, but a collective of different organisations all playing their part to raise awareness, educate, enforce and support communities.

Together, the evidence shows a programme reaching thousands while also helping

Next steps - Future plans

Key to making this project work

- Lived experience
- Interactive learning
- Safe spaces
- Trusted adults
- Positive identity
- Layered support
- Collaboration/partnerships

Priorities for the next phase

- Develop a standardised reporting tool for all partners to ensure outcomes can be easily tracked and monitored
- Continue to listen to community voices and embed in the design and delivery of the programme
- Expand 1-to-1 mentoring capacity
- Further develop parent intervention

Contact details

Jade - Jade.Crowe@msvhousing.co.uk or 07786960241
Steph - stephanie.tatton@msvhousing.co.uk or 07483735368
MSV - involvement@msvhousing.co.uk or 0161 226 4211

Find out more by searching for The Blunt Truth at: msvhousing.co.uk



Thank you to all involved from delivery partners, funders, schools, parents and, of course, the amazing young people who have really engaged with the project