

### NORTHAMPTONSHIRE POLICE MATTERS OF PRIORITY:

Violence against women and girls/Drug harm/Serious and organised crime/Serious violence

Welcome to our Winter newsletter. CIRV is for young people who want help to move away from the violence, crime and misery associated with drugs, gangs and county lines. We know it isn't easy but

hope that sharing the below experience from one young man who worked with CIRV will inspire you to know that there is hope for a different future for those who want to take it, and this time next year it

could be you sharing your positive story on this newsletter.

Wishing you all a safe and merry Christmas and a promising and happy 2023 from all the CIRV team.

## X worked with CIRV. Here is his experience:

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Before CIRV life was challenging, not peaceful. I was surrounding myself with a lot of crime and I thought I was a big man. Now I realise it wasn't worth it.

I was excluded in year 7 when I was just 11 years old. Some kid hit me first and I laid into him back and was classed as 'a safeguarding' issue. I got sent to another school where there were fights taking place every day and I was excluded again.

I was a terror, constantly angry. The kind of kid you wouldn't want to get on the wrong side of. Me and my mates and another group of lads got very violent towards each other, machetes were being used and we were chasing each other on bikes.

The turning point was when my mate and I were going to a shop and a car screeched past, I was about 13 or 14 at the time. A group of men jumped out of the car with wooden bats, machetes and steel bars. They were coming for me, but my mate pushed me out of the way, and they laid into him. He was stabbed in his shoulder 14 times and was hit on the head with a machete. He was on the floor, and I tried to protect him, but then I was hit and my shoulder was badly injured. I ran into a shop to get help and the police came. My friend was in the ambulance and I thought he was dead, so I was going mental.

Thankfully my friend survived but it made us realise that we might not survive another attack. I stopped going out and then started going out in different places because I didn't feel safe locally, but I was still getting in trouble and getting arrested. My mental health suffered, and I would go nuts at the slightest thing.

There was a time when I glorified the gang lifestyle. Kids think that it gives them status and security but kids joining gangs don't realise what mugs they are. They might get some money but nothing that benefits them or makes them feel good about themselves. There is a lot of worry. Those they are working for don't care about them, if that worker hung themselves off a tree they wouldn't care. I've owed money to a gang before and they tried to make me pay back five times what I owed them.

A 13-year-old kid showed me his knife the other day and I said, "Can I have a closer look at it?" He gave it to me and I broke it in front of him then I took him home and told his Mum. He doesn't like me anymore, but his Mum does. I don't need others approval now because I have my own approval.

Kids are acting hard but they don't know what they are doing. I know because I used to be that kid. I had no fear. Weapons don't matter because there

is always someone bigger and harder waiting round the corner. People who will murder and do a prison stretch.

And all that illegal money ain't worth a legal pound because when a police officer kicks your door in, it's all gone.

I now realise that mud sticks to your name and everything can impact on your future and it's hard to shake a reputation. I know that I was making my mum ill with what I was doing. I was horrible to her.

A police officer put a referral in to CIRV and I started working with Junior (Anderson). He supports me and finds good things for me to do.

Wayne and Gifford from EXODUS (mentors with lived gang experience) are as real as they come. They mentored me and I am now doing a trainee mentorship which is going well, I have to make an effort, but it is worthwhile, and my confidence has grown.

I have done the 90-One motorbike education course which I loved, and I have achieved a BTEC in Health and Safety and am starting an apprenticeship. My future looks fabulous.

I had my doubts at the time when I was referred to CIRV but if anyone else is thinking about it I would say, "Do it, give it a chance."

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**Comment from X's mum : "The support was amazing to myself and X, without which I'm not sure the outcome would have been so positive. I am so grateful and proud of my son's achievements."**

# School exclusions

A report from the Commission on young lives was released in Nov 2022.

Amongst its findings it states that there is no doubt that those in the criminal justice system are more likely than not to have been excluded from school at some point. (86% of young men in Young offenders institutes have been excluded at some point).



When someone gets kicked out of school (they are) pushed right into the groomers' hands. There's people out there looking to make a fast buck off someone's child. If you're not in school, what else are you doing? You're going to be on the street with other people...that was my situation. When you push a child outside of school straight away someone's going to find him. The groomer is going to buy them new trainers and other (gifts). But it all comes at a price. They buy you things, then you owe them.



(S – Excluded from school)

CIRV recognise that exclusion can lead some young people to feel isolated, bored and with little hope for their future. They can become easy targets for those who would exploit them. CIRV can lead young people away from criminality and onto positive pathways to help prevent them re-entering the criminal justice system. We provide interesting, useful and fun interventions with positive role models and the support to help young people realise they can turn things around.



Approved Training Organisation Status



MY:BK:YD

my backyard

MYBK:YD (pronounced My Backyard) is CIRV's sister scheme which has approximately 50 different organisations/ companies providing real opportunities to those young people CIRV work with. This includes activities around support/ learning and jobs so there is something for everyone whatever point you are at in your life. And if there isn't something here that's right for you we will do our best to go out and find it for you.

Just one of the many opportunities offered to CIRV through the MYBK:YD scheme;



Construction Industry Training Board (CITB) run an 'Opportunities in Construction' event on the second Thursday of every month. 10.30-11.30

This includes UK construction industry facts and myth busting, pathways into construction, employment opportunities and employability tactics and where to look at and register for local opportunities. If you are keen to learn more please let your navigator know.

**Next course dates are: 08/12/22 and 12/01/23.**

## Robbery, exploitation and debt bondage

Gangs and drug users will often rob an individual of drugs, money, phones and other items they are holding on behalf of those elders who are exploiting them. The exploited young person is then held responsible for the cost of the stolen items, despite these robberies often being violent and sometimes involved their being kidnapped, locked up or tortured.

Victims are then forced to work with the criminal group by transporting and distributing drugs as 'free labour' to repay the debt. Victims may also be forced to carry out acts of serious violence such as knife and gun crime, to 'repay' the debt more quickly. This can be deeply traumatic

and will often lead to feelings of shame and affect mental health.

Many victims carry knives or other weapons to feel safe, particularly if they are worried that drugs or money may be stolen from them but this actually increases the risk of physical injury.

Robbery is an extremely serious offence, impacting severely on victims and attracting high penalties from the court for perpetrators (maximum life imprisonment) and CIRV are keen to help young people divert away from this offending. If you are a victim of this and need help finding a way out call CIRV.

If you feel you are involved with gangs, ready for change and in need of CIRV support, visit our website

**www.cirv-nsd.org.uk** or call our helpline on **07539 183975**

There is always someone ready to help, even if you feel there isn't.

#CIRV

#NeverTooLateToChange