

# • Redthread Youth Violence Intervention Project: St Mary's Hospital

## Executive Summary • May 2018

### Introduction

This report summarises a three-year independent evaluation<sup>1</sup>, carried out by NPC Associates, of Redthread's Youth Violence Intervention Project (YVIP) at St Mary's Hospital, Paddington. The YVIP consists of Redthread youth workers embedded within the Major Trauma Centre (MTC) at St Mary's, who support young people attending the MTC as a result of violent related injuries. The youth workers are able to engage young people in the period immediately after their injuries – the 'teachable moment'<sup>2</sup> - to encourage them to make healthier choices and positive plans to disrupt the cycle of violence and risk that many are seemingly trapped in.

During the three years of the evaluation, the incidence of knife crime in London has increased<sup>3</sup> and there has been a rise in public interest in the issue and potential solutions, Redthread has been at the forefront of this work and their service at St Mary's has been supported by J Isaacs Charitable Trust, The Imperial Health Charity, Comic Relief, John Lyon's Charity, The Westminster Foundation, Dresden Hardship Fund and MOPAC. Redthread have also been commissioned to deliver their service across 3 London MTCs for the past 2 years and similar interventions are currently planned to commence in other cities.

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<sup>1</sup> Redthread Youth Violence Intervention Project: St Mary's Hospital. Final Evaluation Report March 2018 NPC Associates

<sup>2</sup> Cheng, T.L et al (2007). Characterizing the Teachable Moment: Is an emergency department visit a teachable moment for intervention among Assault Injured Youth and their Parents? Paediatric Emergency Care 23:553-559.

<sup>3</sup> Office for National Statistics. Statistical bulletin: Crime in England and Wales: year ending September 2017

## Methodology

The overall aim of this work is to evaluate the impact the project has had over the past three years on improving the outcomes for young people attending St Mary's MTC, involved or at risk of involvement with violence and/or sexual exploitation. The evaluation is based on both qualitative and quantitative evidence.

### Outcome Framework

NPC Associates has worked with Redthread, the Imperial NHS Trust and St Mary's clinical staff, together with other organisations with a specific interest in Community Safety, since 2014 to evaluate the VVIP. In 2014, stakeholders were brought together to agree the desired outcomes from the work of the YVIP. These are presented later in this report.

### Risk Assessment by Youth Workers

NPC Associates worked with Redthread to introduce a risk assessment process used by the youth workers designed to capture information relating to the key desired outcomes, and to provide better insight into the nature and extent of risks that the young people using the YVIP service face at different stages. The risk assessment process, and repeat risk assessments (undertaken by phone 6 to 12 months after the initial assessment), involve youth workers using their professional judgement and interpretation of what the young people they are working with say and do. The results must be seen in this context. They illuminate the likely direction of travel of young people, rather than providing objective verifiable fact.

### Other Sources of Evidence

The evaluation has also utilised confidential interviews with a wide range of stakeholders, feedback from young people, MTC staff surveys, financial and activity analysis, ED records and case studies.

## The Redthread Service at St Mary's Hospital

Redthread youth workers work in partnership with the St Mary's Emergency department (ED) and major trauma ward, and increasingly other hospital departments in providing a source of expertise when required. Young people are referred to the Redthread service after contact by emergency staff, clinicians, or the Redthread youth workers or Programme Coordinator will identify eligible people through the hospital record systems. The vast majority of referrals now come directly from hospital staff as the team have become more

embedded in the department. In the first year of the project 58% of referrals were directly from the hospital staff rather than young people being identified by Redthread from hospital records. By 2017 direct referrals from hospital staff accounted for 85% of referrals.

The youth workers engage with victims of serious youth violence who present at ED with assault-related injuries, gunshot wounds, stabbings, and physical assaults using body parts or blunt objects, and those about whom there may be concerns of possible sexual exploitation. This moment of engagement between the Youth Worker and the young person is known as the ‘teachable moment’, referring to the period immediately after their injuries, when the young people are potentially more responsive and open to changes that might reduce the risk in their lives.

The Redthread youth workers’ input is designed to be a relatively short-term bridging mechanism between the young people and other charities and organisations who can offer longer term support. Despite the programme’s short-term intervention design, it is emphasised to service users that Redthread remains available to offer support, even if time has passed since their initial contact.

In 2017 the Redthread service at St Mary’s cost £200,978, including central programme support and Redthread overheads. The cost per young person engaged in 2017 was £559 (£550 in 2016). In the remaining sections of this report the outcomes achieved for this £559 are described. Intuitively it appears that this service is cost effective given the positive evidence that is emerging. Indeed, based on independent estimates of between £18,600<sup>4</sup> and £26,915<sup>5</sup> per violent incident, if the programme were to prevent just 8 - 11 incidents of violence against the person each year, it would pay for itself in terms of reduced economic and social costs.

The service model delivered by Redthread has stayed mostly the same since it commenced in November 2014 although modifications are currently being put into practice across all MTCs as the result of a review of the service model conducted during 2017. These had not come into effect at St Mary’s by the end period of our evaluation.

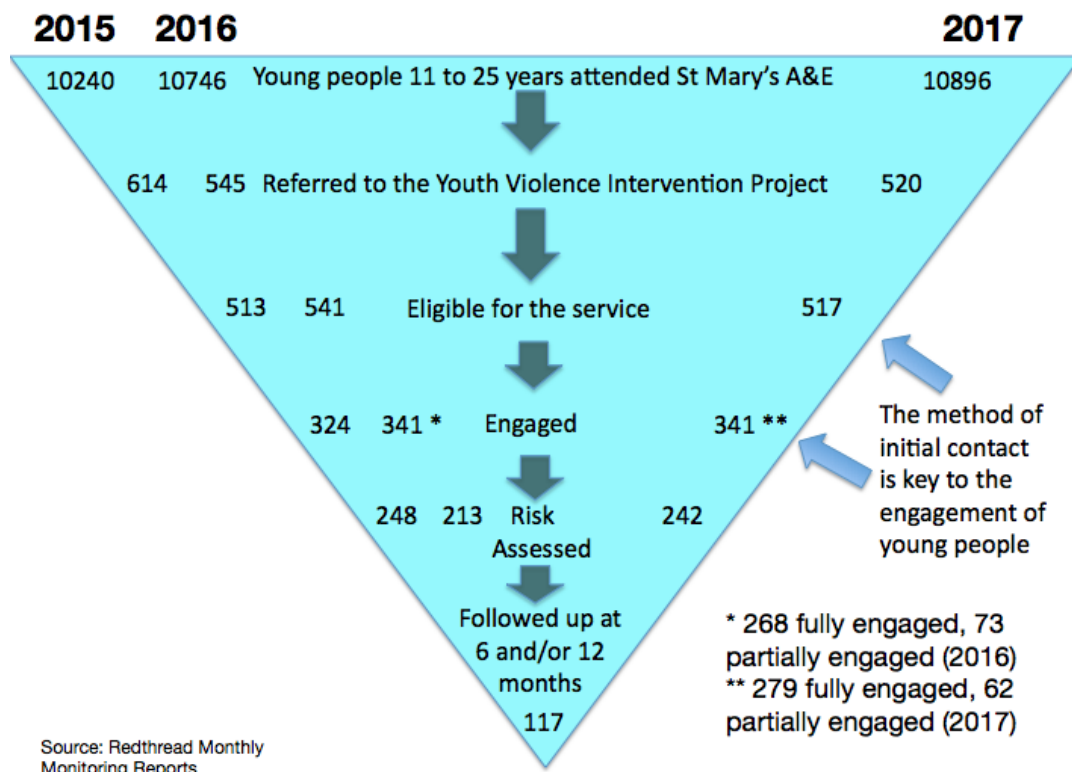
## **Overall Activity and Profiles of Young People**

The following chart shows the breakdown of numbers of young people attending St Mary’s Hospital ED across the 3 years, and the subsequent flow of activity into the Redthread service.

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<sup>4</sup> [www.neweconomymanchester.com/our-work/research-evaluation-cost-benefit-analysis/cost-benefit-analysis/unit-cost-database](http://www.neweconomymanchester.com/our-work/research-evaluation-cost-benefit-analysis/cost-benefit-analysis/unit-cost-database)

<sup>5</sup> <http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20110218140137/http://rds.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/pdfs/hors217.pdf>

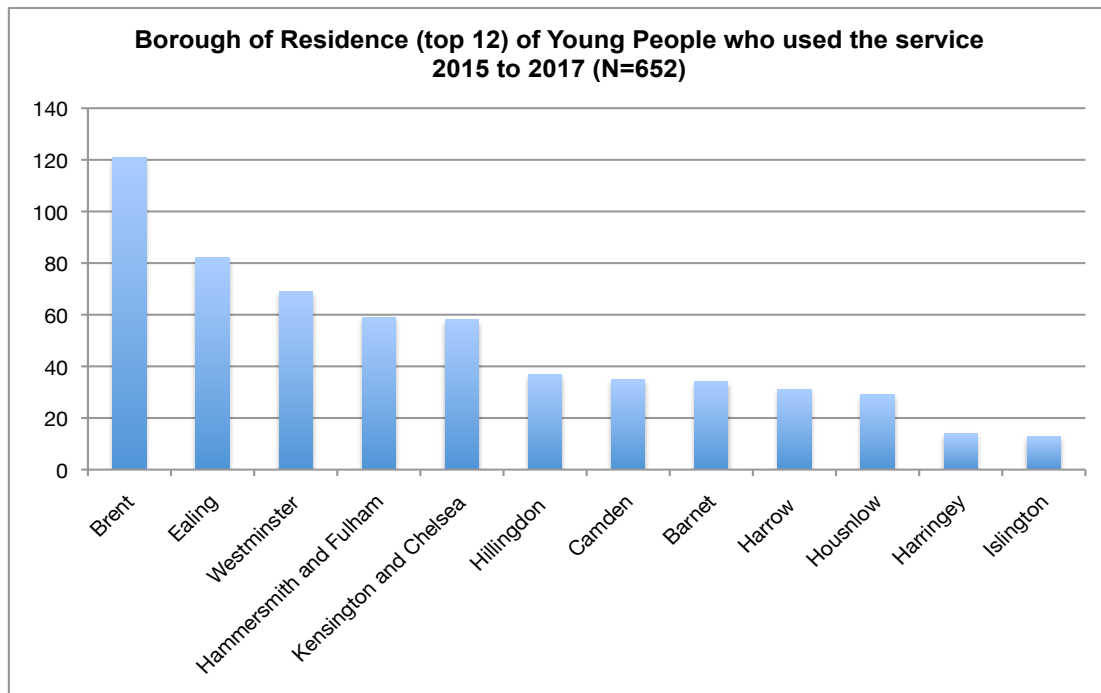


Our findings showed that: the YVIP is engaging with a group of high risk young people:

- The YVIP has provided a valuable and effective service to over 700 young people, the vast majority of whom had been assaulted
- However, only 64% of the young people who attended St Mary's following a violent incident and were eligible for the service, could be engaged by the Redthread youth workers, and a greater coverage of youth workers could increase face to face engagement.
- Young people aged between 11 and 26 years <sup>6</sup> have used the service. The mean age of young people using the service was 19 years 4 months for males and 18 years 4 months for females.
- 89% were male (rising throughout the project from 85% in 2015 to 91% in 2017).
- Young people who have used the service are from a wide diversity of ethnic backgrounds. The three largest ethnic groups are Black/Black British – African (32%), White British/Irish (16%) and Black/Black British – Caribbean (16%). The vast majority of young people (69%) who used the service had attended ED as a result of an assault with a knife or other sharp object, 10% had been physically assaulted (by body part or blunt object) and 3% had gunshot wounds.

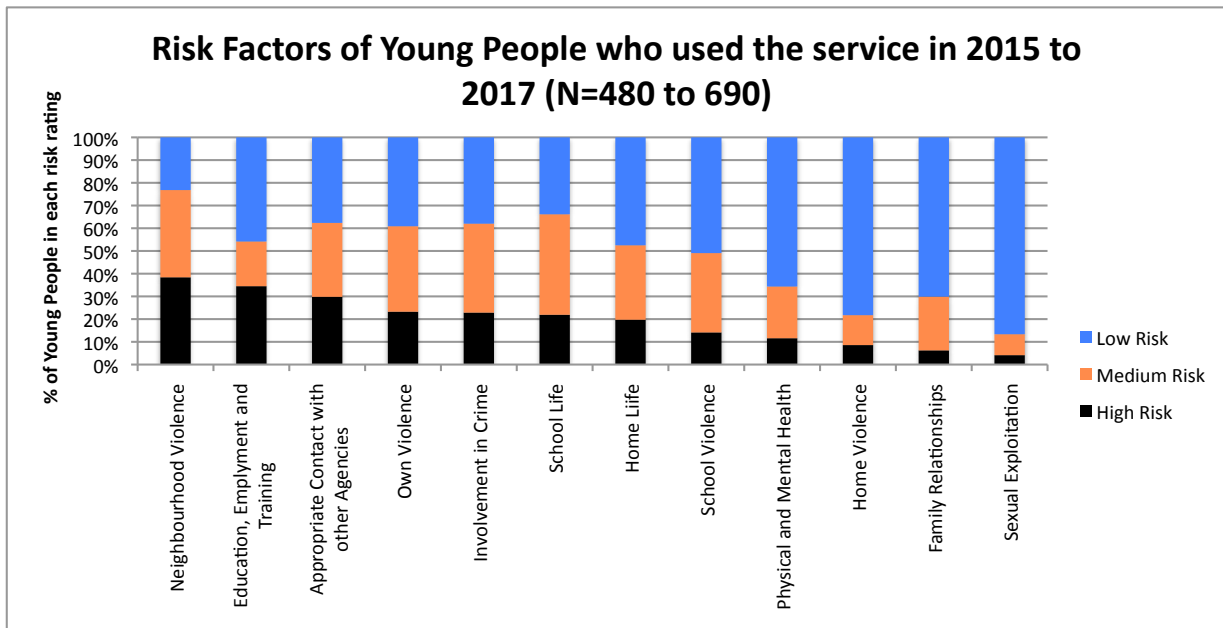
<sup>6</sup> Five young people over the age of 26 have used the VVIP since 2015

- 89% of young people arrived at St Mary's ED by ambulance and 66% were admitted to hospital after being seen in ED.
- 1 in 5 of the young people using the service stated that they had previously attended ED as a result of an assault in the previous 5 years.
- 81% of young people who used the service live in Central and West London, with the highest numbers coming from the London Boroughs of Brent (121), Westminster (84), Ealing (70), Hammersmith and Fulham (61), and Kensington and Chelsea (53).



Source: Redthread Risk Assessment Data

- Young people were identified as facing a multitude of risks, particularly in relation to: neighbourhood violence, lack of appropriate contact with other agencies, lack of involvement with education, employment or training and their own levels of violence and involvement in crime. The graph below ranks these in order of the highest risk (dark-shaded bar).



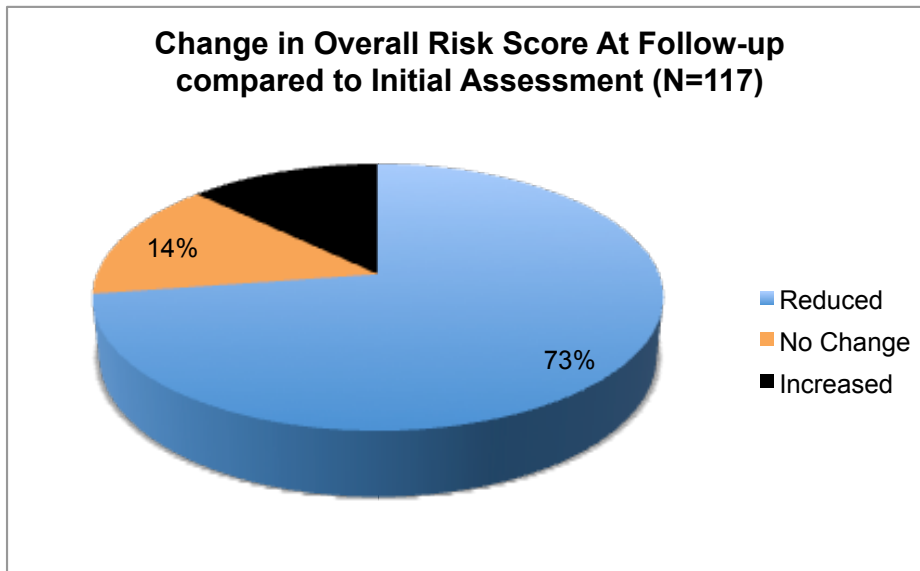
Source: Redthread Risk Assessment Data

## Impact of the Service

In looking at these overall conclusions, it is important to note that much of the data presented in this report is derived from the Risk Assessment tool used by the Youth Workers to record their assessment of the risks that young person faces. The risk assessment process, and repeat risk assessments (undertaken by phone 6 to 12 months after the initial assessment), involve youth workers using their professional judgement and interpretation of what the young people they are working with say and do. The results must be seen in this context. They illuminate the likely direction of travel of young people, rather than providing objective verifiable fact.

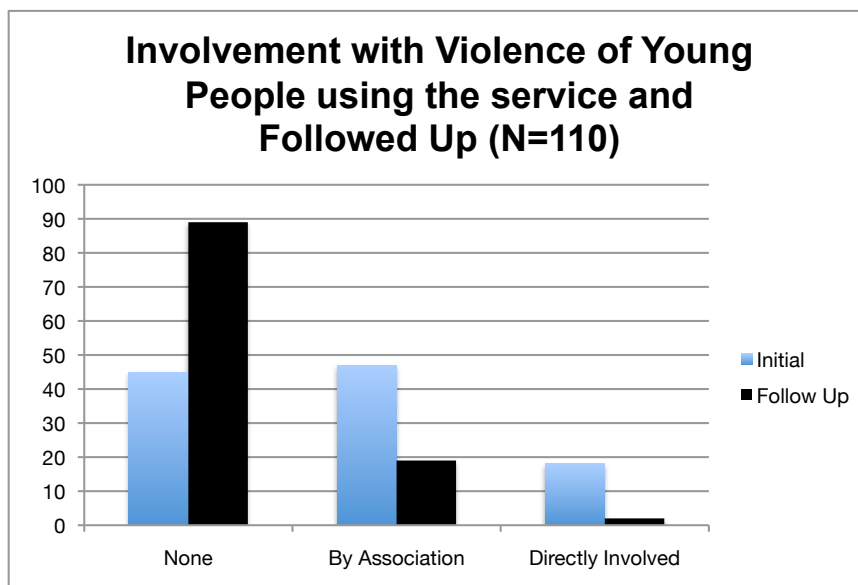
**Outcome 1:** Young people who have attended St Mary's Emergency Department as a result of violence-related injuries, including those related to sexual exploitation, will be supported by Redthread to achieve a reduction in their risky lifestyle, including reduced involvement in violence and crime (as victim or perpetrator).

- Follow up assessments in the first year after their initial contact with 117 (out of 589 attempted) of these young people indicated reduced risks in their lives, with overall risk scores improved for 73% of young people (as measured by their total un-weighted risk score), 14 % remained at the same levels and 13% faced increased risk since their first assessment.



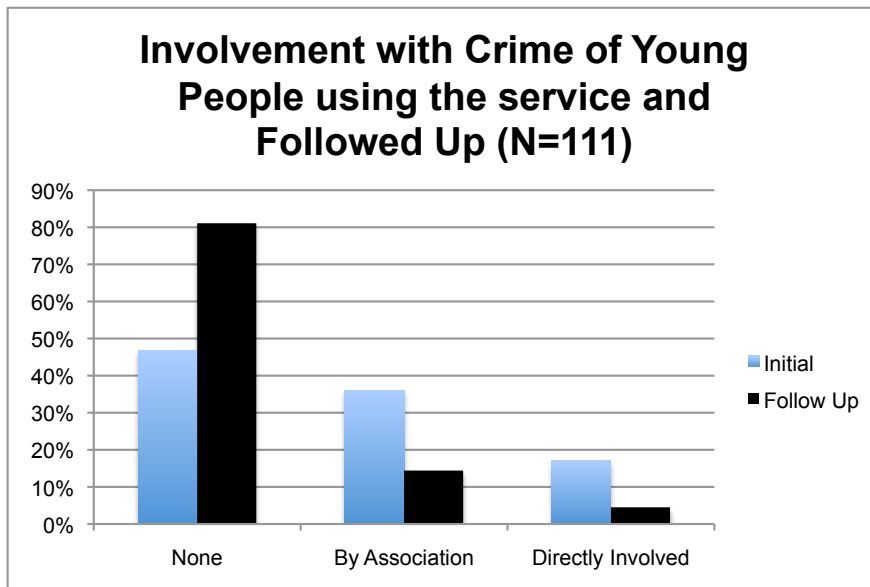
Source: Redthread Risk Assessment Data

- At follow up the involvement of young people with violence was much less than at initial assessment. The proportion involved with violence directly or by association fell from 59% to 19%.



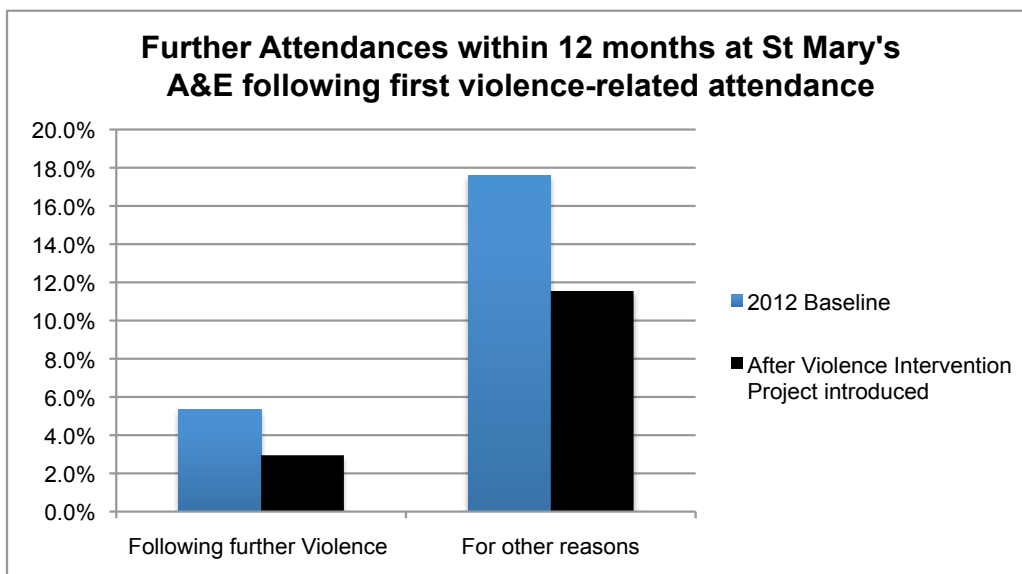
Source: Redthread Risk Assessment Data

- At follow up the involvement of young people with crime was much less than at initial assessment. The proportion involved with crime directly or by association fell from 53% to 19%.



Source: Redthread Risk Assessment Data

- A comparison of re-attendance rates between a 2012/13 pre-project baseline and those using the Redthread service, suggests that the rate of re-attendance due to repeat violence within 1 year has fallen from 1 in 19 to 1 in 34.



Source: Redthread Risk Assessment Data

- A similar reduction is observed for re-attendances at St Mary's ED for non violence-related reasons. The re-attendance rate for non-violence related reasons has fallen from 1 in 6 to 1 in 9

- Whilst these results are both statistically significant ( $p < 0.05$ )<sup>7</sup>, there are important caveats to bear in mind. Only re-attendances at St Mary's could be tracked, and there are many other potential factors that could have led to the reduction observed.

Sexual exploitation is proportionately a much greater risk amongst women and girls. A total of 18 women and girls were assessed as high risk – requiring a safeguarding referral (compared to 7 young men and boys). However, although the numbers seem low this represents 26% of all females assessed.

- Overall feedback from stakeholders has been overwhelmingly positive, in particular there was widespread appreciation for:
  - > The model built on the 'teachable moment' which complemented and enhanced the effectiveness of existing services;
  - > The approach, attitude, dedication expertise and interpersonal skills of the Redthread workers and their commitment to multi agency working;
  - > The speed of communication following an admission enabling much faster contact with young people
  - > Their ability to facilitate access to wider health and community services.

Many felt that the combination of the above significantly improved their levels of engagement with young people, which in turn helped bring about reductions in risky lifestyle. Several clinical staff commented specifically on the value of the 'teachable moment' and the opportunities it created to work meaningfully with young people when they are at their most vulnerable, The quotes below illustrate the benefits of this timely intervention from the external agencies working with these young people.

*They are in the hospital so they can engage so quickly...completely different someone the young person has not met before, no pre-existing relationship. Someone speaking to them about their vulnerability, a different angle around safety and well being as opposed to offending.'* London Borough Staff 2016

*The teachable moment is absolutely vital ...when that young person with life changing injuries has someone help them to come out of that cycle, absolutely key, police can't do that.'* London Borough Staff 2016

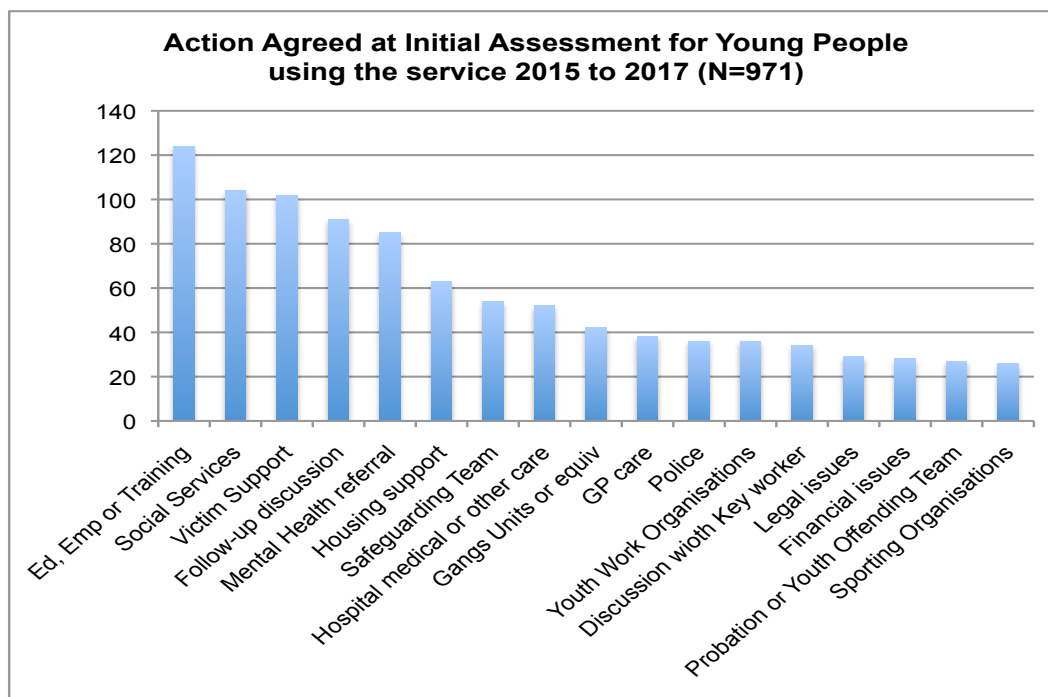
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<sup>7</sup> The results were tested using a one-tailed T test

*'They are being moved through the system quicker, having someone there who can give advice and information at the critical moment, and visitors –have them engage with other young people who visit. Reduction in risk is likely to happen. Diffuses tension amongst other gang members visiting. Police officers try but cannot be as effective. Not willing to talk to police officers because of the implications.'* London Borough Staff 2015

**Outcome 2 :** At-risk young people will have been supported by Redthread to access appropriate supporting services in a planned way.

- Feedback from local agencies has identified the timely, empathetic, well judged engagement by youth workers with young people at a time of crisis as a critical intervention in facilitating the on going contact with relevant agencies and contributing to improved outcomes. *'They save lives, prevent young people from dying. I really really believe that. Lot of time these young people wouldn't talk to anyone, now we can get access to those young people.'* London Borough Gangs Unit Manager 2017
- Initial assessments demonstrated that a substantial number of young people (71%) did not have appropriate contact with agencies relevant to their situation. Action taken by the Redthread Youth workers after their initial assessment with young people demonstrate that they have a major impact on improving take up of a wide range of services relating to education, employment and training, health services - hospital, GP, and mental health, housing, and social care, as well as contact with police.
- Action plans were agreed between the youth workers and 94% of the young people assessed. The graph overleaf illustrates the range of actions taken. Evidence from follow-ups indicates that contact with relevant agencies appears to have improved. For those followed up the proportion with appropriate contact with agencies that would benefit them had risen from 32% to 71%. The contribution of Redthread to increasing this contact is illustrated in the quotes overleaf.



Source: Redthread Risk Assessment Data

*Probably one of the most essential services...optimise the contribution of all agencies.’ London Borough Gangs Unit Staff 2017*

*‘Can liaise inside and outside the hospital, they understand the infrastructure of health, when and how to help, they can act as a conduit for other services.’ London Borough Gangs Unit Manager 2017*

*‘Would probably never have got to the door of New Horizons (housing) if not for Redthread. One I had worked with for years, had been stabbed and gone to Redthread and they had referred and engaged him. Redthread can get the ‘buy in’ of the young person, ordinarily he would have slipped through the net, if not for Redthread I wouldn’t have been able to engage him. No-one in the hospital would have picked up his housing issues.’ London Borough Gangs Unit Staff 2016*

- 12% of young people were assessed as having no contact with a GP or community services at initial assessment. This had fallen to 3% at follow up. This evidence suggests an association with the finding that those fully engaged with Redthread were less likely to re-attend St Mary’s ED for reasons other than violence. In the 12 months following their initial attendance for assault (compared to the pre-intervention baseline comparison group)

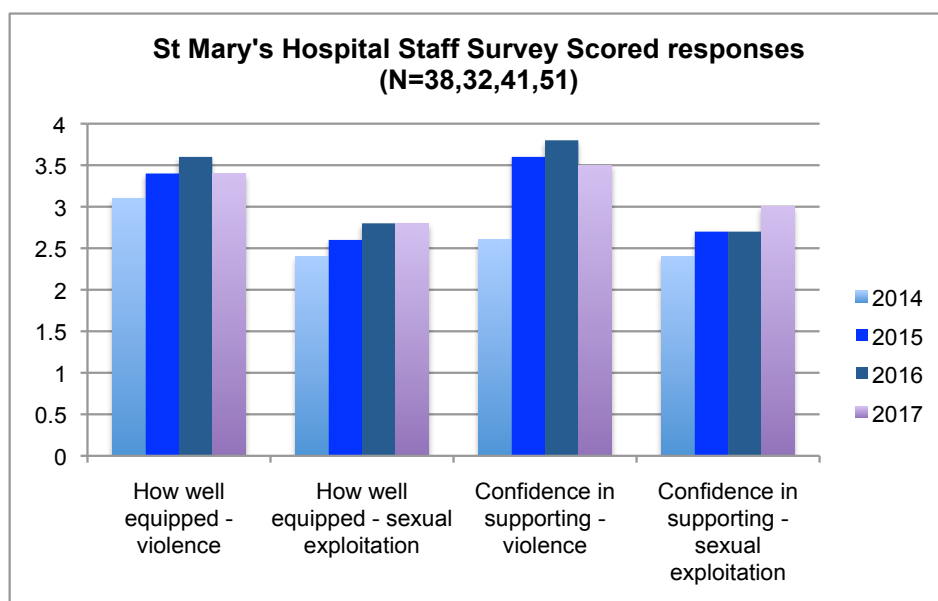
- This support in accessing community services is not just about the on-going contact from the hospital but the practical support which Redthread youth workers can put in place. Hospital staff commented on how good it was to hear youth workers, fixing appointments, topping up oyster cards, arranging lifts etc. *'stuff which we could never do,'*
- Although limited feedback from young people has been extremely positive about the support provided by the Redthread youth workers. In particular they appreciated the ease of communication (both in terms of availability and approach), the practical help and guidance, and the discussions about options for the future.

*Biggest difference –helping me to start doing things, last year not doing much... last 6 months just madness, struggling, in a bad place, she brought a lot of options, starting to turn a corner.'* Young person supported by Redthread 2017

**Outcome 3:** There will be an increased awareness, understanding and engagement by ED staff with young people attending with violence related injuries including those related to sexual exploitation.

- Based on returns from the annual survey of ED staff (illustrated in the graph below) St Mary's Hospital ED staff feel better equipped and more confident in dealing with young people who have been assaulted.

*'Has definitely increased nurses understanding of young people, particularly adult nurses –how to work and engage young people generally and what services and support are out there-can just pick up the phone.'* Nurse ED 2015



Source: St Mary's ED staff survey

- Hospital staff value the contribution of the youth workers to the overall work of the department, in particular their skill in supporting highly vulnerable young people through their medical treatment and using their expertise and knowledge to increase understanding of the young person's situation in order to minimise risk for both the young person and hospital staff.

*Such patients require so much more time than we can offer in ED. Also ED is not a very conducive environment in which to explore such sensitive and emotional subjects. Added to that the immaturity of the person involved makes these patients so very complex and vulnerable. The Redthread team play such a vital role in these individuals lives at a time of crisis.' ED Hospital Consultant 2016*

*'They reassure patients in a busy acute setting where a lot of people look like they are in authority. Can keep the patient still and quiet and co-operating with us.' ED Nurse 2017*

- Clinical staff were relieved and reassured by the knowledge that after young people left the hospital, they were now being more appropriately supported in the community. *'so satisfying to know what used to be an inevitability is now less and less so....feels like no longer sending that person back to crappy life they came from.'* ED Nurse 2017
- The actions taken by the Redthread Youth workers after their initial assessment with young people demonstrate that they play a major role in the safeguarding processes within the hospital. In particular, their expertise and local knowledge contributing to more accurate risk assessments, their availability to continue work out of hours and helping pick up young people who might slip through the safeguarding net by giving false dates of birth, and using their knowledge about the young person's circumstances they *'can elicit accurate information in way nurses or doctors never could.'* ED Registrar 2017

**Outcome 4:** Collaborative working and sharing of data between relevant agencies will have improved.

- The service has a detailed knowledge of when and where assaults take place, and the method of assault/weapon – which they share in an anonymised form with

community safety forums. The Information Sharing to tackle Violence<sup>8</sup> data set (date/time/weapon used//location) was 93% complete.

*'If Redthread weren't there some would go through St Mary's I wouldn't know about – there is a small window of opportunity. When we meet in the hospital the aim is to assess risks, that's our immediate concern, reprisals for them and their family. Find out what's happened and work out further possibilities.'* London Borough Gangs Unit Staff 2016

- Whilst data sharing at operational level is excellent, there is still scope to strengthen partnership working at a strategic level with key London boroughs, in order to share knowledge regarding patterns of activity across North West London.

## In Conclusion

This is a summary of the third and final evaluation report for the Redthread service at St Mary's Hospital in Paddington, London. Over the three years there have been remarkable consistencies in the qualitative and quantitative findings.

Overall, our conclusion is that the YVIP has made a substantial positive impact in terms of the desired outcomes agreed at the outset of the project.

**The YVIP has helped at risk young people who attended St Mary's to reduce the risks in their lives including reduced involvement in crime and violence.**

From 2015 to 2017 the YVIP engaged a group of over 700 young people who are at high risk of further harm and increased involvement in crime and violence. The evidence from those young people successfully followed up 12 months after their initial contact, suggests that there had been reductions in the risks faced by those young people, and the proportions involved in crime and violence had fallen. By comparison with a similar group of young people who attended St Mary's as a result of an assault before the YVIP commenced, young people engaged with the YVIP were less likely to re-attend St Mary's as a result of a further assault.

**The YVIP has supported at-risk young people to access appropriate supporting services in a planned way.**

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<sup>8</sup> The ISTV data set was mandated by NHS England in 2016 to be collected by all NHS Trusts and shared with relevant Community Safety Agencies

Feedback from local agencies suggests that the timely, empathetic and well-judged intervention by the YVIP was critical in facilitating their contact with at-risk young people, and that the YVIP had a major impact on improving the appropriate take-up of local services such as education, employment and training, health services - hospital, GP, and mental health, housing, and social care, as well as contact with police.

**There has been an increased awareness, understanding and engagement by St Mary's ED staff with young people attending with violence related injuries including those related to sexual exploitation.**

ED staff feel better equipped and more confident in dealing with young people who have been assaulted, valued the contribution of the youth workers to the overall work of the department, in supporting highly vulnerable young people, through their medical treatment, and using their expertise and knowledge to increase understanding of the young person's situation in order to minimise risk for both the young person and hospital staff. The actions taken by the Redthread Youth workers after their initial assessment with young people demonstrate that they play a major role in the safeguarding processes within the hospital.

**Collaborative working and sharing of data between relevant agencies has improved.**

The YVIP shares its detailed knowledge of when and where assaults take place, and the method of assault/weapon in an anonymised form with community safety forums. Whilst data sharing at operational level is excellent, there is still scope to strengthen partnership working at a strategic level with key London boroughs, in order to share knowledge regarding patterns of activity across North West London.

**Intuitively, the service appears cost-effective.**

Based on independent estimates, if the programme were to prevent just 8 - 11 incidents of violence against the person each year, it would pay for itself in terms of reduced economic and social costs.

## Acknowledgements

We should like to record our grateful thanks to all those at Redthread that have worked with us on this project. In particular, the young people and youth workers at St Mary's, the two Programme Coordinators at St Mary's (Fiona Woollett, and Stephanie Kelsey), Dr Asif Rahman and his clinical staff at Mary's, John Poyton at Redthread, Ruth Dixon del Tufo at Imperial Trust and the Imperial Healthcare Charity, and the many stakeholders in Local Authorities and Community Safety organisations who provided feedback.

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