

Focus: Glasgow's exemplary public health response to youth violence reduction

Goal: Identify key components of successful public health response



KEY TAKEAWAYS

Glasgow has implemented a public health approach for 13 years. They changed the culture and ethos from excluding (suspending/expelling) children from schools to emphasizing “nurture”, understanding the child, the reasons for its behavior, and the family’s context.

- Schools partner with police, social workers, community groups, and the third sector
- Equips children with knowledge, language, and tools to manage their emotions in school and the community
 - 50% reduction in youth crime
 - 88% reduction in exclusions
- Builds resilience in the child, family, community

Key elements for building a public health response to violence reduction include:

- Working with police and the criminal justice system to take a victim approach
- Taking an asset-based approach to nurture
 - Adverse childhood experiences can be assets after recovery; sources of resilience
- Giving young people the voice and respect they deserve
 - Model: UN Convention on Rights of the Child
- Building up community along with its children
 - Schools as weekend spaces to foster community connection

To change culture, adults in positions of power—teachers, administrators, police officers—need to be trained and challenged on their biases, conscious or unconscious.

- Biases or blind spots can be ethnic, sectarian, or power-based
 - Must be confronted and prevented from affecting children’s outcomes
 - May result from dissimilar backgrounds; training and conversation can help
- For police, who also experience trauma at work, learning about trauma-informed approach changes how they engage with children

Public health approach isn’t chiefly a matter of financial investment. However, successful approaches require sufficient resources to work proactively.

- Not a matter of extra layers, but of changed culture and better-connected resources
- Third sector particularly important: trusted by families and a bridge to statutory services

There is a global trend toward nurture and well-being, but local context matters. The best programs develop organically.

- Well-being is particularly important as children recover from lost structure during pandemic
 - Build resilience, emotional literacy, and open conversation in curriculum
- Different challenges and demographics require local solutions
- Organic development is in tension with funders, who often want full program before committing

An evidence-based scientific framework and ongoing evaluation are necessary for successful intervention.

- Data must be reviewed for efficacy, used to raise questions, and shared openly
- Efforts that fail in the local context should be abandoned, even if effective elsewhere
- Must be relentless and diligent; this work can take decades

Language is vital for changing how children are perceived, removing judgment, and for aligning stakeholders. The same language must permeate everything everyone involved does.

- Can be challenging adjustment for educators accustomed to instructing children
- Common language is also practical component of effective interagency collaboration

KEY EXAMPLES

- **UK** (Drive program on domestic violence)

RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

- “Improving educational outcomes through getting it right for every child: Glasgow” by Maureen McKenna/Glasgow City Council*
- [“Taking a public health approach to tackling serious violent crime: Case studies”](#) from the Local Government Association
- [“Repository of practice on serious youth violence: A place to share practice and learning across London”](#) from the Local Government Association



- [“A Public Health Approach to Serious Youth Violence: Supporting Evidence”](#) from the London Datastore
- London Mayor’s Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC) [website](#)
- London Violence Reduction Unit (VRU) [website](#)
- Newham: Whole Systems Approach with Geeta Subramaniam-Mooney*
- The Mayor of Newham's Youth Safety Board: Report and Recommendations*
- “Public health approaches to crime prevention and the role of the police” from the Police Foundation/KPMG*
- [“Schools of the Future: Defining New Models of Education for the Fourth Industrial Revolution”](#) from the WEF