



How did StreetDoctors provide a solution to violence
in 2020 whilst navigating the impact of COVID-19?



Impact Report 2020

Introduction



Lucie Russell

CEO

'As COVID-19 spread across the world, this year has been like no other for us. It has been really challenging, frustrating and worrying, but it has also been inspiring. They say from adversity springs hope, resilience, and creativity, and this has been clearly illustrated at StreetDoctors.

Our year started with our face-to-face training delivery model operating normally to young people affected by violence. But when the pandemic hit this was paused, as was our face-to-face training programme for our highly committed movement of healthcare volunteer trainers. The epitome of our work is about empowering young people through interactive confidence building, and it felt like for a while this model was at stake. However, instead of diminishing in the face of the pandemic, our staff team and volunteers rose to the challenge.

From scratch we transitioned our training for young people to a fully interactive online offer, delivered live by our healthcare volunteers. We also created a brand new comprehensive online training programme for our healthcare volunteer trainers, something we had only done face-to-face previously. As CEO I am so proud and humbled by the amazing commitment and sheer tenacity demonstrated by our staff team and volunteers over this year.

Our trustees have also provided much wisdom, space for reflection and planning. Our funders provided us with a bedrock of support, with a special thank you to Paul Hamlyn Foundation, The National Lottery, John Lyons Trust, the Butti Foundation, Citi Group and Garfield Weston Foundation. As we move into 2021 I firmly believe we have the talent, creativity and fierce loyalty to the cause to fully recover from this time. Our focus on violence reduction delivered through a trauma informed lens continues to be at the heart of all we do. Our ambition for 2021 is to grow our reach and impact so we can continue to positively touch the lives of young people affected by violence across the UK.'



Sophie Clissold-Lesser

Chair of Trustees

'This year has been one of new challenges for StreetDoctors – unable, for the first time, to deliver sessions in person the team rallied to launch digital and remote delivery options. The evolving situation of unknowns, frustrations and pauses has been a stretch for everyone – I am proud of the focus demonstrated by the staff team.

We started 2020 with the excitement of a recruitment drive for new trustees and have been thrilled to introduce six additional trustees to our board, bringing fresh perspectives and broadening our range of expertise. I'm confident we now have a really strong board to match the passion and tenacity of the volunteer and staff teams.

The coming months continue to bring uncertainties, and yet the problems of violence persist. I am hugely grateful to our funders and donors who enable StreetDoctors work to continue, and to all the volunteers, staff and trustees whose commitment drives us forward. Thank you all.'

2020 impact in numbers

StreetDoctors
has trained
20,000
young people
since 2013

28
young people
took part in
StepWise
12
young people
were trained
to co-deliver
StreetDoctors
sessions

241
sessions with
175
partners in
education,
criminal justice
and youth and
sports clubs
across the UK

400
young
healthcare
volunteers
trained
2,219
young people

After our training:

95% of young
people say they
understand the
consequences
of violence

93% say they know
what to do if
someone is
bleeding

91% say they know
what to do if
someone is
unconscious

84% say they would
be willing and
able to act in a
first aid emergency

What we do to reduce and prevent violence

At StreetDoctors we believe knowledge is power. So, we confront the devastating impact of violence by training young people at risk to become lifesavers in their communities, and equip them with the knowledge to make informed decisions about how to keep themselves and others safe.

We use a peer-to-peer training approach delivered by our network of young healthcare volunteers (student nurses, paramedics and doctors). They work in partnership with criminal justice services, schools, pupil referral units, sports and community groups across the UK.

We run our training sessions as part of the community response to violent incidents, often when there has been a stabbing or attack locally. Our training is a chance for young people to make their streets safer after a traumatic event, by becoming 'street doctors', capable of stepping forward when needed. All our work is trauma informed and complies with safeguarding best practice.

We put young people at the centre of all our work, and influence for more effective solutions to reducing violence.

Our Reducing Violence Programme

What to do if someone is bleeding:

How to call an ambulance and administer emergency first aid until an ambulance arrives. Visual props explain the science of blood loss, Q&A features debunk common myths, and role play exercises prepare young people for real-life scenarios.

What to do if someone is knocked out:

How to assess if someone is unconscious, and either put them in the recovery position if they are breathing or deliver chest compressions if they are not. Young people discover how the heart, blood and lungs work, practice the recovery position, and deliver CPR on dummies.

StepWise

StepWise is our deeper youth engagement programme, where young people learn a range of vital skills including how to train their peers in emergency first-aid. They also gain a first aid at work qualification and explore healthcare career options.



Young people's experiences of violence

In 2020 the British Youth Council reported that knife crime was the biggest concern for young people aged 11-18.¹

In the year ending September 2020 there were 47,119 knife and sharp implement offences. This is a 3% decrease from the previous year (attributed mainly to the March-June Coronavirus lockdown), but it is still a huge number, and threats to kill with a sharp implement have increased by 13%.²

We spoke with young people about their fears and concerns surrounding violence before and during the year's lockdowns.³

We heard from young people that violence is common, something they have to navigate as part of their everyday lives. Most of the young people we spoke with had direct experiences of witnessing knife crime, and many reported other types of violence such as sexual assault, the effects of drugs concealment and gun crime.

"I don't feel very safe because there has been stuff going on where I live, I've had people stabbed outside my flats."

"If you think about it, you probably walk past someone at least every day who's carrying a weapon."

"I already saw a friend dying in my hands and I already got stabbed."

"My flatmate actually overdosed and passed away from drugs earlier this year."



1 British Youth Council – Youth Select Committee, Our Generation's Epidemic: Knife Crime, Feb 2020, page 5

2 ONS, Knife or sharp instrument offences year ending September 2020, Feb 2021

3 All the quotes on pages 5 and 6 are directly from young people: focus groups conducted on our behalf by Wavehill Ltd with young people from Youth Offending Teams in Liverpool, Oldham, London and Bristol who had attended StreetDoctors training; comments made by young people during StreetDoctors Reducing Violence training programmes; focus groups conducted on our behalf by Clearview, with young people affected by violence from across the UK; our Living Through a Lockdown research report, published Sept 2020.

What do young people think causes violence and why do some young people carry weapons?

The young people we spoke with told us violence was normalised, and an unfortunate reality of where they lived. But with the right support, knowledge and opportunities they believed they could break free from it, making their communities safer.

We asked young people why they or others might carry knives or get involved in violence. Their answers covered three broad areas:

Out of fear

"Protect themselves"

"Carrying a knife to feel secure"

"You need violence to protect yourself, if someone is trying to harm you, you use your violence to protect yourself from getting harmed."

From social pressures

"Social attitude"

"Influenced by others"

"As I got to 14-15 that's when I was out with the wrong 'uns fighting all the time and I'll be honest carried a weapon once myself and then got punished for it and obviously I'm in here for that reason."

Experiencing violence or abuse

"Abused"

"Issues at home"

"Groomed"

"Racism"



The impact of COVID-19 on young people affected by violence

During the COVID-19 lockdowns between April and June incidents of violence fell, but as restrictions lifted in July 2020 knife and sharp weapon offences rose by 25%, back to only slightly lower levels than the previous year.⁴

In September we released **Living Through a Lockdown: reflections and recommendations from young people at risk of serious violence** with Redthread and Mac-UK. We asked young people affected by violence about their experience of the lockdowns of 2020 along four themes:

COMMUNITY

39% of young people took part in community activities during lockdown:

"Everyone has become closer in my neighbourhood helping each other out if they need essential items and clapping every Thursday night for the carers."

"I have helped my local community by shopping for others."

Young people asked for more support for the vulnerable:

"[I would like to see] more opportunities for young people to work or volunteer to keep the community together and make sure they feel safe in their environment."

"Make sure vulnerable people have all the support they need during this time. People who have mental health issues [should] get the support they need easily."

SUPPORT

Over half young people felt support was lacking during lockdown:

"I had a support worker at college. I had a counsellor every week ... [not having access is] making me feel very low."

"Being on lockdown has affected my school work in a negative way I was so used to being at school having people supporting me ... at home I did not have that."

They spoke about the types of support they found important, such as speaking to friends and family. 39% said counselling or youth work was important:

"It helps me to know that I have people there for me."

"Otherwise I would get really bored and it means I can talk about my problems."

⁴ ONS, Knife or sharp instrument offences year ending September 2020, Feb 2021



SAFETY

A third of young people said their feelings of safety had not changed or they felt less safe. Of those who said they felt more safe, the primary reason was due to being away from potential street violence or crime:

"The fact that I'm in my house and no one can bust open the door without my Mum doing something about it is a reason for feeling safer."

"I am at home there's not a lot that could actually hurt/happen to me."

But young people were worried about the virus and the safety of their families:

"My mum is in the vulnerable group of people so I am more worried about her."

MENTAL HEALTH

76% young people said lockdown had impacted negatively on their mental health:

"I haven't been as active as I would and it has impacted a lot on my self-confidence and my mental wellbeing. During this pandemic I have had lots more down days."

"Staying at home is mentally exhausting, and not seeing friends has made me a lot lonelier."

"I go to sleep throughout most of the day – to kill time as I don't have a lot to do."

"I was anxious, at the start of lockdown my sleeping patterns were bad and I was having a lot of bad nightmares."

Our work in the pandemic – 5 highlights

1. Switching to digital delivery



From January to March we delivered our Reducing Violence Programme in person. However, with the closure of schools and youth facilities we had to pause our delivery. So we created an online version of our training sessions, delivered live by our volunteer trainers with interactive polls, question and answer sessions, and live demonstrations.

Over 200 volunteers are now trained to deliver digitally, either with young people and partners joining from their own devices, or with the volunteers live streaming to a group of young people in a classroom or youth centre.

This change in delivery was hugely challenging for us, but by working with our fantastic volunteer network we can now provide all our training content online.

We are also adapting our training to make it COVID safe as we return to in-person delivery.

2. Delivering StepWise

In 2020 we partnered with Eastside Young Leaders Academy to run our StepWise programme face-to-face with **24 young people**, adapted to coronavirus restrictions. All 24 graduated as **'street doctors'** enabling them to use their skills to keep their communities safer. **8 young people** have been further trained to co-deliver StreetDoctors first aid sessions to their peers alongside our volunteers, both face-to-face and digitally.



Graphic: Ranae Klara @byrktart

We also worked with Voyage Youth to enable **4 recent StepWise graduates** to co-deliver our training sessions to **36 of their peers**, both in person and digitally.

We are developing more StepWise programme cycles, including working with Health Education England on a joint programme to launch in Summer 2021.

"I did StepWise because I don't want to be a bystander when someone's in danger. I really enjoyed the programme. One of the things I learnt was that not all heroes wear capes, and even the tiniest actions could have a huge effect on how much time someone has on this earth. I want to thank StreetDoctors for this opportunity."

StepWise graduate, 2020

3. Putting young people at the centre of our work

We believe absolutely that young people affected by violence need to be part of the solution to it. Involving young people in developing and improving our work is therefore central to our activities.



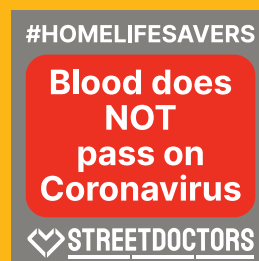
#ApplyPressure

In March 2020 we launched **#ApplyPressure** an educational campaign aimed at young people across the UK, highlighting the emergency actions they should take if someone has been stabbed. Watch it here: streetdoctors.org/applypressure.

The video was seen over 1.7 million times and is now embedded in our training.

Home Lifesavers series on Instagram

To respond to coronavirus lockdowns we adapted our young lifesaver first-aid training to create a **#HomeLifesavers** series on Instagram, providing a range of practical steps a young person can take if faced with a medical emergency as a result of violence. We adapted our medical information to be current to the times, targeting young people at home, and ensuring our advice was COVID safe. [See the full series on our website here.](#)





Research on new training content

We commissioned Clearview Research (specialists in research, evaluation and engagement projects with young people, minority ethnic groups and culturally diverse communities) to conduct a series of exploration labs with young people at risk on what new training session content they would like us to create. We then tested these ideas with our delivery partners. We are planning to launch two new co-created training sessions in 2021 as a result of this work.

8 Minutes to Save a Life campaign

Directly influenced by young people affected by violence and young TikTok influencers, we co-created a campaign to empower young people to act as first responders at the scene of a stabbing. Funding from the Coronavirus Community Recovery Fund enabled us to work with youth marketing agency Livity to develop this innovative campaign.

8 Minutes to Save a Life was launched in March 2021.



4. Supporting our healthcare volunteer trainers

We could not deliver our lifesaving training without our amazing healthcare volunteer trainers. We have **400 volunteers** in **22 teams** across **17 cities** in the UK who are students or recent graduates of nursing, medicine or paramedicine. Our volunteers are credible messengers and role models for young people; many have lived experience and have witnessed the effects of violence first-hand, both on the streets and in hospitals. During the Coronavirus lockdowns our volunteers faced many challenges and disruption to their studies, placements and lives. Many worked or volunteered on the frontline of the pandemic, in NHS hospitals and with communities.

As we were unable to deliver our highly valued volunteer training programme in-person we converted it all to digital, providing **29 brand new digital training events**. **255 volunteers** took part with each one spending around **5 hours** learning about leadership, presentation techniques, dealing with challenging behaviour, becoming trauma informed and safeguarding.

To further support them during this time we also:



- Held weekly online coffee and chat sessions
- Offered monthly wellbeing sessions led by a trained psychotherapist
- Provided mental health support and signposting
- Created a full social calendar of events, including award ceremonies, talent shows, panels and talks

What do our healthcare volunteers say about working with StreetDoctors?

99%

of volunteers enjoy or highly enjoy working with young people at risk of violence through being StreetDoctors volunteers

"Living in East London, I was very aware of the issue youth violence posed in my local community. I wanted to be able to use the knowledge I had gained as a medical student to better understand and shape dialogue and mindsets around this topic."

99%

of volunteers said volunteering had increased their understanding of young people

"[I have learnt] how to explain different concepts more easily and how widely spread stabbing and other issues are in today's young people."

97%

said volunteering helped improve their communication and facilitation skills with young people

"Fun, rewarding and beneficial for both the YPs and myself. A valuable time spent learning vital skills."

86%

felt volunteering helped them feel more confident in a clinical environment

"I am working on ensuring my teaching is trauma informed having attended the workshops."

82%

of volunteers said they feel their own wellbeing is addressed well by StreetDoctors

5. Influencing for effective solutions to reduce violence

We use our knowledge and networks to push for change, including working with organisations and public bodies across the sector to influence policy and practice.

- **We submitted evidence** to the British Youth Council Youth Select Committee's report *Our Generation's Epidemic: Knife crime*, launched in February 2020. Also, as a member of the Alliance for Youth Justice we contributed to a consultation on the government's proposed Serious Violence Reduction Orders.
- **Our *Living through a Lockdown: reflections and recommendations from young people at risk of serious violence* report** was released with Redthread and MAC-UK in September 2020. It contained seven recommendations for policy makers, focusing on changes in service provision and funding to better support at risk young people if further lockdowns took place. Dissemination events included meetings with Violence Reduction Units and Local Authorities from across the UK, and with the Alliance for Youth Justice (AYJ) and Redthread's HIVE network. See page 7 for more.
- **We held a panel event in March 2020**, streamed live online, featuring young people with lived experience of violence, campaigners and activists, a trauma surgeon and a StreetDoctors volunteer to discuss: *Youth violence & a poverty of hope – what needs to change?* The panel has been watched by over 2,000 people.
- **We are no longer using the term 'youth violence'** where we can, as there is evidence to show it can stereotype young people and implies they are part of the problem or to blame. Instead, we are using more solution-focused language such as 'young people affected by violence'. We are calling on all organisations and media to do the same.



"It was an amazing session which exceeded my expectations. Both facilitators were good and worked well together and the session was compact"

Delivery partner

"I'm not a doctor but [the skills I learnt] can help you keep them there for longer while the ambulance does come, so I could have saved their life."

Young person

"I can save my friend's life thanks to you lifesavers"

Young person

"For a lot of young people it's the only certificate they're going to get so it's important to get an achievement, then potentially become better citizens."

Youth Offending Team

"[I like] the opportunity to make a real difference to young people as well as exercise our teaching skills."

Volunteer

"The young people were inspired to not only take in the information they learned in but pass it on to others in the community. That was pleasing to see and hopefully will be a catalyst for change."

Delivery partner

"It was good, it wasn't easy but you learnt a lot, you actually listen and take it all in."

Young person

"Given the media attention to knife crime, it's more important to talk about dangers and not criminalise but educate. Police are adamant to criminalise but the StreetDoctors intervention seems more effective."

Youth Offending Team

"It's not like you're volunteering as you're learning from the experience. You realise that everyone's story is very different and not to judge others by their past decisions."

Volunteer

Conclusion

We are greatly looking forward to 2021, a year in which we hope that the pandemic starts to lose its grip on us all. However its hugely traumatic effects, especially on those who are most vulnerable, will take many years to subside.

The pandemic will have a particularly long-lasting effect on vulnerable young people, embedding their lack of access to social mobility, ingraining the inequality they suffer, and profoundly affecting their already fragile mental health. It is therefore vital that skills based interventions like ours continue to both prosper and grow. In 2021 we will launch a range of new training content for young people, grow our StepWise programme, recruit and support more healthcare volunteers as part of our youth social action movement, and continue to influence on the causes of, and most effective solutions to, violence affecting young people.

A huge thank you to all our invaluable supporters, donors and funders this year.



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