

# VIOLENCE

## reduction unit

www.actiononviolence.org.uk

*Violence is preventable,  
not inevitable.*

All the latest news from the  
Violence Reduction Unit

Autumn 2011

## Have you got the bottle?

As many of you will know, we are currently working on a sobriety testing project that we hope will go live soon.

While details of the project's existence were sadly leaked to a Scottish newspaper recently, we have taken the decision not to discuss details of the project further at present. This is simply because we want to wait until everything is in place before we announce anything. However, those of you who are involved in the project will know that it is an exciting and challenging initiative which will hopefully have an impact on levels of alcohol related violence and reoffending in Scotland.

### “play our part”

To tie in with our plans for sobriety testing and to “raise the temperature” of the debate around the issue of alcohol, we have, as we told you in our last newsletter, developed a new kinetic typography presentation, “Have You Got the Bottle?”. The presentation, which raises awareness of the impact of alcohol related violence, has been well received by colleagues from a range of services. North Ayrshire Council's Licensing Committee have been particularly enthusiastic, contacting some 400 local pubs, clubs and bars in their area and asking them to carry the presentation on any advertising screens they may have in their venue.

Councillor Willie Gibson, Chair of North Ayrshire's Licensing Committee, said:

“Research shows that alcohol plays a major part in a great number of violent incidents and we, as licensing authority in North Ayrshire,



The VRU's pay and display ad

want to play our part in helping to promote the responsible sale of alcohol.

“We have regular contact with licensees in the area and are urging them to show the two and a half minute presentation in their premises to draw this issue to their customers' attention.”

### Cocktail for Violence

In addition to the presentation, we are also planning to target drivers across Glasgow to help raise awareness of alcohol related violence during the Christmas and New Year period.

Two million pay and display tickets bearing the message “Cocktail for Violence: 1 Part Anger 1 Part Stupidity 1 Part Alcohol” will be distributed via ticketing machines in car parks and on street parking, tying in not only with the domestic abuse phase of our Anti-Violence Campaign but also with overall alcohol and violence messages.

Search for Violence Reduction Unit on:



# CIRV “not a miracle cure” for gangs issue in UK

The summer riots in London, Birmingham, Manchester and other parts of England attracted a significant amount of attention for the VRU, in particular for CIRV, our gangs’ project.

The work of the unit and Strathclyde Police in tackling gangs was referred to in the Commons by Prime Minister David Cameron and then in the Lords by Lord Browne of Ladyton (formerly Des Browne MP), who praised the unit’s work not just with gangs but also around early intervention.

## worldwide

Mr Cameron’s comments helped generate worldwide media interest for the unit, with coverage of our work appearing in media outlets in the US, Australia and Germany.

In subsequent months John and Karyn have met with a host of people working on issues arising out of the riots, namely gang violence and early years’ intervention. They were also present at the recent Home Office Gangs Conference hosted by Home Secretary Theresa May.

## “engage early”

Among those at the conference were LA police chief Charlie Beck and Bill Bratton, former chief of police in New York and LA, the man credited with a 20 year crime drop in the Big Apple.

Following the conference, Mrs May acknowledged that while the issues surrounding gangs were complex and var-

ied from place to place, there was common ground in how to approach the issue:

“We all recognise the need to engage early in the lives of young people and for a co-ordinated approach across all local agencies. This is not a problem that can be solved by the police and enforcement alone.”

Her comments tied in with those of John and Karyn, who were keen to stress that although CIRV had seen results in Glasgow, it should not be seen as a solution to gang issues everywhere.

## “real results”

John said:

“What CIRV is achieving in the east end and north side of Glasgow is great – we are seeing real results, with violence down by almost 50% amongst those gang members who have engaged with the programme.

“But CIRV is not a miracle cure for issues of gang violence everywhere. It can’t be lifted and applied wholesale to wherever there is an issue with gangs. We drew on programmes from Boston and Cincinnati to develop CIRV, but we tailored it to fit the Glasgow context. And just as there are differences between gangs in the US and gangs in the UK, so there are differences between gangs in Glasgow and gangs in London or Birmingham or Manchester. As we found out through CIRV, there are even differences between gangs in different parts



John at 10 Downing Street

of the same city. The approach needs to deal with the specific problem, not the general problem – there’s no one size fits all solution to this.”

Karyn said that no approach would end gang violence overnight.

## “momentum”

“The results shown by CIRV figures are testimony to the great work done by everyone involved with CIRV and to the commitment of young men who genuinely want to change their behaviour. But gang violence hasn’t stopped. It’s been a problem for Glasgow for years and it won’t go away overnight. The same is true of any successful project – you don’t stop once you see signs of success, you have to keep up momentum. If we can look back in ten, 20 years and still see a reduction, then we’ll know this has worked.”

# Taking a stand against bad attitudes

A pioneering American programme aimed at changing attitudes to casual sexism and acceptance of abuse is to be trialled by the VRU.

The Mentors in Violence Prevention (MVP) programme, developed by Dr Jackson Katz to help combat casual sexism in sports changing rooms, is used in colleges across the US.

Now the VRU plans to train mentors to establish the project in Portobello High, just outside Edinburgh, and on the joint campus of St Stephens and Port Glasgow High in the west of Scotland.

Chief Inspector Graham Goulden, who has been liaising with Dr Katz, said:

“In the past we’ve tried initiatives which have used very basic stereotypes, with women and girls as victims and men and boys as perpetrators of potential perpetrators.

“The problem is that whilst most men and boys are not abusers, there are some who see it as some kind of male right. That’s an attitude we have to eradicate.”

MVP employs a “bystander” approach, using a series of scenarios involving a range of abusive behaviour to make young people think about what their response should be.

“In some situations, the bystander can be empowered to change the situation rather than condone it,” said CI Goulden.

“That may be not through intervening physically and putting themselves at risk, but by finding safer options to distract, disturb or divert the abuser. For example, if you witness harassment in a school corridor, all it may take to rescue someone from clearly unwanted and threatening attention maybe distracting the abuser by making a loud noise by dropping something or shouting.

“The only two unacceptable options are doing nothing or thinking violence can be stopped by violence.”

Training for the project, which will involve fourth, fifth and sixth year pupils alongside teachers and members of the local community, will begin in November. Although initial training will be given to 30 participants from each school, mentors will be expected to train others up in the project.

The training programme comes ahead of the domestic abuse phase of this year’s Anti-Violence Campaign, which begins in December.



Dr Jackson Katz

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## Pioneering database provides lead in unsolved WW2 wren murder case

Fresh lines of inquiry on a murder case dating back almost seven decades have been uncovered as a result of a pioneering database developed by the VRU and Strathclyde Police.

We told you about Phoenix, our homicide database, in our last newsletter. Now we can let you know that the Phoenix team have managed to uncover new lines of inquiry on 10 “cold case” murders, the oldest of which dates back to World War Two.

Gertrude Canning, a 20 year old Irish Wren, was last seen alive near her base at HMS Que-

bec, Inveraray, in 1942. She was on her way to post a letter to her family in County Donegal.

Her body was discovered three days later – she had been shot four times.

Her case – and nine others – are now being re-examined by the Phoenix team.

Detective Chief Superintendent Colin Field, who has led the project on behalf of Strathclyde Police, said:

“An unsolved murder investigation is never closed. Every case is reviewed regularly. Staff are literally raking through people’s lofts, going



through old newspaper clippings and archive material. We have staff going through Crown Office, through mortuaries, re-interviewing retired officers and going through attics and basements.

He added that in future, the database, which allows investigating officers and analysts to search 350 different fields of data, could also be used to help prevent crimes.

“It’s not just a database but an investigative process. It is also useful as a tool to support crime scene officers and family liaison officers. It means lessons are learnt from every investigation and that learning is shared.”

## Hats off to medics as charity ball raises 7K



Medics Against Violence, (MAV) the VRU’s charity partner, raised almost £7000 at its recent charity ball event. The ball, the second event of its kind to be held by the charity, fol-

lowed an *Alice In Wonderland* theme with all attendees being encouraging to don headgear for the evening for a “MAV Hatter’s tea party”.

Held at the Oran Mor in Glasgow’s West End, the event featured a champagne reception, auction, ceilidh and stand up bingo. VRU and MAV staff got into the mood by dressing up as characters from the classic Lewis Carroll tale, with MAV admin assistant Lauren Thompson stepping into Alice’s shoes while the VRU’s admin manager June Hepburn took on the mantle of the Queen of Hearts. Pictures from the event are online now at

[www.medicagainstviolence.org](http://www.medicagainstviolence.org).

# Practice makes perfect

The latest in our series of Practice Notes has been published.

The notes, handy fold out guides to various aspects of VRU activity, are intended as simple introductions to specific projects.

The notes cover aspects of our CIRV gangs project, which we handed over to Strathclyde Police to become part of their day to day business earlier this year.

CIRV has seen a drop in violent offending of almost 50 per cent amongst those gang members who engaged with the project.

The notes examine the gang engagement, intelligence and analysis, case management and mentoring aspects of the CIRV project. They follow on from the first CIRV practice note, which looks at the self referral session.

The notes are available as hard copies or online at <http://www.actiononviolence.co.uk/practice-notes>.

**If you would like a hard copy of any of our practice notes, please contact the office on 0141 532 5835.**

