

Webinar: Preventing violence in economic recession whilst maintaining rights-based and trauma-informed approach?



Host: No Knives Better Lives (NKBL)

Recording: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iv_QJUXtEzg

Speakers: Prof Susan McVie from University of Edinburgh, Niven Rennie from SVRU, Meg Binns from Cairn Project (6VT)

The Covid-19 pandemic has badly affected household finances, some of which were already precarious. Added to this, the adverse economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic may very well lead to greater wealth and income inequality going forwards. There is good evidence that there is a relationship between economic stress and increasing violence (though this relationship is complex and there is often a time lag). Financial worries also lead to household and individual stresses which clearly impact upon wellbeing as well as other areas of interest for community safety practitioners.

The following points capture the speakers' reflections:

Niven:

- We need a Life stages approach to tackling violence (Susan echoed this and talked about prevention, families and pre-birth)
- Police have role in suppressing violence but limited role in *tackling underlying issues*
- MUST tackle underlying issues collectively – POVERTY is a key driver
- Good drop in violence and homicide but not felt equally. Let's not forget that Scotland's figures for drug deaths, alcohol issues, self-harm and male suicide are much higher than other places.

Susan:

- Remember that the pandemic has enhanced existing inequalities, not created them.
- Violence is not just homicide and serious assault. It can happen online. Other things are relating to it – big picture is good but other underlying stuff indicates issues: robbery, attempted murder, weapon-related crime; unequal decrease in violence.
- There is a complex and non-linear relationship between economic recession and crime; and often a time-lag. What efforts are made to mitigate the impact of recession will impact on crime.
- Risks are: recession will hit poorest and most vulnerable hardest, it will hit young men and young men in poor areas the hardest – this is the area we have seen most improvement and are at most risk of seeing the impact of the recession on crime.

Meg:

- Funding concerns and donations decreasing
- Universal and specialised youth work is crucial

- Justice means (paraphrasing from the young people the Cairn project work with)... "Fairness, being listened to, trusted and respected."
"Justice is freedom, makes you feel relived, like finally I was taken seriously" "...fight to get justice, which doesn't seem right" "Perpetrator knowing what they'd done was wrong."

SCSN reflections in addition to the speaker points:

- Services to support underlying issues might come under financial pressure and this could impact on tackling some of the issues that drive violence (e.g. youth work, community spaces).
- A risk that acquisitive crime might increase as people have less money.
- Potentially justice backlog issues and poor support for community justice investment could also lead to increase in re-offending.

Question: What does ideal Scotland look like in terms of violence and how do we get there?

Susan: Remove trauma, poverty and stopping the harm when we stick children into systems are the biggest things we need to do. "Poverty is the parent of revolution and crime." (Aristotle) Poverty and reducing inequality key.

Niven: Complete rearrangement of services needed. Model of funding 3rd sector, participation of 3rd sector etc. is a real issue.

Meg: Trauma informed systems and organisations not just trained individuals. Barnhaus is a great model.