

## The CIRV Self-Referral Session

CIRV Self Referral Sessions (SRS) are used to communicate the message that the violence must stop and encourage engagement with the initiative by the most violent street gang members.

Those targeted for attendance are identified through the intelligence and analysis process as being at the highest risk of being a perpetrator and/or victim of street gang violence. They can be invited to attend the SRS via either:-

- self referral by the potential clients themselves
- a recommendation for referral made by the police, school or Social Work Dept
- referral via a local youth worker, or
- referral via a community group or other agency

The SRS is held within a courtroom setting to stress the seriousness of the proceedings upon those attending. More detailed information is contained within the CIRV Self Referral Practice Note.

This Practice Note is part of a series which describe the CIRV model and gang intervention methodology. The others can be accessed via the national Violence Reduction Unit website [www.actiononviolence.org.uk](http://www.actiononviolence.org.uk)

Further information and documentation relating to the CIRV project can be obtained from:

[CIRV@strathclyde.pnn.police.uk](mailto:CIRV@strathclyde.pnn.police.uk)



**Gang Engagement**  
**violence is preventable not inevitable**



## Introduction

The **Community Initiative to Reduce Violence (CIRV)** is a multi-agency, community based, street gangs intervention service whose aim is to secure a rapid and sustained reduction in violent behaviour amongst gang members across Glasgow. The initiative has at its core a focused deterrence strategy coupled with diversion and personal development services. It is based on existing programmes introduced to tackle gang violence in the USA, but adapted to a Scottish context by Glasgow's CIRV Team.

A partnership group including police, social service providers and the community has been established to deliver a clear message to gangs: 'the violence must stop'. This message is communicated through a number of different mechanisms, including Self Referral Sessions, direct contact through street workers, police, prisons, teachers, school campus officers, community outreach workers and, when the time is right, the media.

The CIRV process can be summarised as follows:



## How does CIRV define someone as a member of a 'Street Gang'?

The term 'gang' can be misleading and opinions vary as to its definition. It is therefore crucial when delivering a CIRV – type model of intervention that partner agencies agree precisely who they are targeting. In Glasgow, a CIRV client may be either:-

- **A self identified member of a 'named' territorial street gang known to engage in violence and/or weapon carrying, or**
- **Identified by other members of that named gang, or trusted members of the CIRV network\* as being such a member, or**
- **Self identified as NOT being a member of a known named territorial street gang but known by the CIRV network\* to have engaged in occasional public space violence or weapon carrying with that gang, or**
- **Part of a loosely knit social network of individuals who, while not identifying themselves as a known street gang, group themselves together in public places and are known to engage in public space violence or weapon carrying.**

As such, the terms 'groups' and 'gangs' are used interchangeably by CIRV. They are not to be confused with groups who exist mainly for criminal enterprise purposes and who are defined by the police as Organised or Serious Organised Crime Groups (i.e. OCGs or SOCGs). CIRV does not target these organisations; they are subject to different interventionary tactics by the police. The role of CIRV is to deal with Glasgow's historical gang violence problem and those individuals and groups who perpetrate the most serious violence while acting as a part of these groups.

(\*Note - the term 'CIRV network' refers not only to core CIRV partners such as police, social work, education and housing, but extended partners with organisational experience in the identification of violent street gangs).

## How does CIRV engage with Street Gang Members?

Once identified as a potential CIRV client, the young person is approached by the CIRV Engagement/Enforcement Area Team for engagement. They advise the young person that as a result of their offending behaviour, or community intelligence held, they have been identified as a risk to their community or to themselves.

CIRV utilises a variety of engagement methods:

- **Self Referral Sessions** – (see Self Referral Practice Note)
- **Home Visits** – a narrowly focused, short-term deterrent in its own right, this is a 'cold calling' approach carried out by either the Area Team, CIRV Peer Mentor, community representative from across the CIRV network, youth worker or street level worker. Skills Development Scotland employability keyworkers also carry out home visits to encourage engagement and attendance at future Self Referral Sessions (as above).
- **Liaison with Youth Groups** – involves those youth groups within the CIRV target area who are already engaging with CIRV targets and who are used to assist in the engagement process. These groups can also make direct referrals to CIRV.
- **Via Young Offenders Institutes** – CIRV 'targets' within YOIs are approached and engaged either by a CIRV liaison officer (currently Glasgow Housing Association Neighbour Relations Officer) or by Scottish Prison Service (SPS) staff. Potential targets are invited to Self Referral Sessions where their attendance is facilitated by SPS staff.
- **Police Arrest Referral** – Any potential client arrested for a gang related incident by either divisional police officers or Gangs Task Force personnel can be referred to CIRV for potential engagement
- **Police Problem Person Referral** – Any individual identified by divisional police officers as being a 'Problem Person' in relation to gang activity and subject to specific Police attention or Action Plans can be referred to CIRV
- **Via Glasgow Community & Safety Services (GCSS)** – Potential clients who are currently engaged or targeted for GCSS programmes as a result of their general antisocial behaviour can be referred by GCSS staff, or approached by CIRV staff, where they meet the CIRV client criteria as detailed above
- **Dedicated Engagement Programmes** – Where particular groups or individuals are proving difficult to engage specific programmes are designed and/or accessed by CIRV to assist in the engagement process (such as CIRV's diversionary street football leagues)
- **Via Glasgow Life** – Glasgow Life has a significant network of youth street workers and outreach staff who work on a regular basis with CIRV target groups. These workers make direct referrals to CIRV, assist in the referral process or take part in dedicated engagement programmes.

## How does CIRV engage with Street Gang Members? cont.

- **Aberlour Trust** – Aberlour's seconded CIRV staff member carries out and coordinates gang and community engagement activity in target areas in order to engage potential clients.
- **Schools** – Potential clients who are identified as attending school are directly approached by School Campus Officers, school staff or CIRV's own Early Intervention and Education Officer. A number of specific engagement programmes for under-16s are also carried out by CIRV.
- **Notification Letters** – CIRV uses personalised notification letters as an additional method of client engagement. These are based on the criminal histories of those on the CIRV engagement target list and inform young people that they are at risk of focused law enforcement activity based on their violent criminal activity. The letter outlines the potential penalties of future criminal offences involving weapons and/or violence. Additionally, it describes the purpose of CIRV and notifies the recipient of the services available to assist them in developing a non-violent lifestyle.

## 24/7 Access to CIRV

Current and prospective CIRV clients can contact the service at any time using a dedicated 24/7 hotline provided and resourced by Glasgow Housing Association on behalf of CIRV. Attendees at each Self Referral Session are issued with a card containing the number and instructions for engagement. The card image is also sent to their mobile telephones using Bluetooth technology after each session.

## The CIRV pledge of non-violence

No young person is confirmed as a CIRV client until they have signed a commitment form pledging to stop the violence. This includes those who are solely participating in any CIRV funded or sponsored diversionary programme.

**The commitment form generally includes the following text:**

I ..... (Name) .....

as a member of ... (gang name) (where relevant)...

wish to engage with the CIRV project team and in so doing,

- I agree not to carry out any act of violence or to carry weapons.
- I understand that any support offered to me may be removed immediately if I fail to keep this agreement.
- I will attend all scheduled appointments and will remain respectful towards those who are assisting me.
- I give my full consent to CIRV Project Team members to share my private and personal information with the Education Department, Social Services, Community Health Partnership, Careers Scotland, Job Centre Plus and voluntary sector groups.
- I understand that this information will only be used for CIRV purposes

SIGNATURE.....

The client is then the subject of focussed discussion at CIRV case conference, as outlined in the Case Management Practice Note.

## The CIRV Area Team

The CIRV Area Team is based within each police division and has responsibility for all street gang engagement activity. The Area Team specifically targets the highest risk individuals in their communities. All information about those who are subject of targeting for engagement is shared with partners at relevant police Tasking and Co-ordinating Group (T&CG) meetings. Those clients who are 'disengaged' from CIRV, either as a result of ongoing offending behaviour or for some other specified reason, have a potential date for re-engagement identified at case conference (as outlined in the Case Management Practice Note). This is then passed to the CIRV Area Team for action by the Case Manager to make an approach with a view to re-engagement, either directly or via the CIRV network.

