Preventing Violence Against Women and Girls and Serious Youth Violence through a 'whole school approach'

A report of the learning from Tender's work in four Croydon schools 2018-2020

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Foreword by Tender's CEO

I am delighted to write the foreword to this Learning Report by DMSS Research. We have learned such a lot over the three years of piloting a whole school approach in Croydon. Inevitably we have learned as much from those aspects of the pilot that didn't work, as from those that did, and this learning has enabled us to develop a very clear vision for a whole school approach framework that is robust and viable.

What a journey it has been! We have tested ideas, explored new ways of working, engaged with students on a daily basis and become part of the fabric of schools. Teachers and school leaders have been tremendously positive about our use of drama in enabling children and young people to practice strategies for dealing with conflict, and about the skills of our facilitators in creating safe spaces where children do not feel judged. And the children themselves have been equally positive about being listened to, respected and supported.

When Tender set out to create and pilot a whole school approach programme, we were pretty confident about what we could achieve. We had previously tested a model in 2010-12 and therefore had a good understanding of some of the fundamentals. That model had been developed with secondary schools, but since then Tender has also built expertise in delivering work in primary schools. With our short-term programmes reaching more than 200 schools across London and the UK every year we have a good understanding of how schools operate and the diverse range of, often conflicting, responsibilities and priorities of teachers and school leaders. We therefore felt in a good position to tackle this ambitious piece of work.

We recruited DMSS Research early in the programme and have worked closely with their team over the three years. Tender has valued this relationship and view DMSS as a 'critical friend'; supportive of our aims but ready to hold us to account when we are not achieving our objectives. This report lays out the ambition, the achievements, the challenges and, most importantly for me, it shows us how we can take this learning and turn it into a tangible framework for the future.

The report particularly highlights the core challenge Tender faced in developing and implementing a whole school approach: "Being outsiders to the core business of schools, while trying to shape and influence how things are done, is not an easy task, especially across multiple schools with different expectations and operating styles". Probably the key learning from the pilot was that an external organisation can't drive this approach alone; it must be fully owned and co-led by schools themselves.

A whole school approach can only be built on solid foundations and this report outlines the essential building blocks that need to be in place to achieve lasting change. These include the commitment of school leaders to ending violence against women and girls; the skills and confidence of staff in addressing the issues; and a school culture that promotes equality and challenges all forms of abuse.

We are extremely grateful to MOPAC for funding this pilot and to the four participating schools in Croydon. Together we have learned so much and that learning has created the

basis for an innovative, achievable and replicable whole school approach framework that I am proud to stamp with Tender's name.

Susie McDonald, CEO Tender

Executive summary

Schools have a significant role to play in preventing violence. A supportive school culture and skilled teachers can influence young people's values and help them develop the confidence needed to challenge violence and abuse when they encounter it. Schools can also forge alliances with parents and the wider community to help maintain a safe, non-violent environment in which children and young people can thrive and provide a counterpoint to social norms that accept or encourage abusive or aggressive behaviour.

This report summarises the learning from establishing, delivering and evaluating a whole school approach (WSA) to prevent violence against women and girls and serious youth violence in four schools in the London borough of Croydon. It brings findings from the evaluation together with evidence from the wider field of prevention work in order to identify implications for other WSA initiatives.

The whole school approach project in Croydon

Tender, an arts-based and educational organisation working to end domestic abuse and sexual violence, led the three-year project in Croydon. Funded by the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC), the project was delivered in three primary schools and one secondary school. The project ran from January 2018 to July 2020 and was evaluated by DMSS Research.

Tender used a 'hub and spoke' delivery model in Croydon, with two dedicated WSA workers and a number of freelance workshop facilitators delivering the majority of direct work with students and staff in years 6 – 10. The project engaged over 1,400 students in regular Tender workshops across the three years. Student workshops used age-appropriate language, games and drama-based activities to address issues such as gender stereotypes, diversity and healthy relationships. Older students also learnt about victim blaming, sexual cyber bullying and consent.

A 'whole school approach'

A whole school approach is based on the premise that because the causes and consequences of violence against women and girls are multi-faceted, strategies to prevent violence also need to address multiple factors in a co-ordinated way. A whole school approach means taking account of how all those involved with the school can play a role in preventing violence and how all aspects of school life can make a contribution.

The six building blocks of a whole school approach

This report highlights six building blocks identified as necessary to establish and embed a whole school approach to prevent gender-based violence. The first three building blocks (1 – 3) form the foundation on which a whole school approach needs to rest. However, as a whole school approach is a collective, holistic and continuous process, multiple strands of work involving different stakeholders need to take place concurrently to ensure that key messages are embedded in all aspects of school culture.

Building block 1: Establishing school ownership and leadership

School ownership of a WSA is crucial for it to be effective and facilitate systemic change. To **establish ownership** and ongoing commitment by school leaders, the project team, whether internal or external, needs to carry out a significant amount of preparatory work with school leaders, governors and staff. While ongoing and committed **leadership is key to ownership**, project learning also highlights that **knowledge is key to ownership**. Hence, schools need to carry out assessments of their strengths and weaknesses, and agree goals and milestones for the WSA that reflect their starting point and local context.

The experience of this project emphasised that **establishing ownership takes time** and that for outside agencies the optimal time to fully develop a WSA partnership is three years or longer. To facilitate school change through a WSA, it must regularly **touch and involve everyone** so that core messages are communicated – either through direct or indirect work.

Building block 2: Building a strong delivery team

As a WSA works with multiple groups, including children, staff, school leaders, parents, governors and other community organisations, and operates at different levels, it requires a project team with access to **diverse skills and experiences**. **The diversity of a staff team** and the match between the communities and cultures of children and workers can also bring real strength to a project. Well considered changes to staff recruitment enabled Tender to diversify its staff team.

Delivering at a distance is often an organisational challenge, as physical and social distance can influence the resources and support available to staff based remotely, and the ability of managers to effectively steer a project. Hence, partner organisations using a hub and spoke delivery model need to plan how best to minimise this.

Building block 3: Raising awareness, skills and confidence among school staff

Staff play a pivotal role in establishing and maintaining a positive school culture that promotes equality and respect. It is therefore critical that school staff are supported to increase their own awareness, confidence and skills through **high quality staff training** with a clear purpose. **The content of training** needs to be appropriate to the outcomes of the WSA, as well as allow school staff to build ownership of the project.

As **staff changes** are common in most schools, especially in larger secondary schools, staff awareness training is best built into the induction of new staff, with a rolling programme of refresher sessions. However, staff development can be achieved by a variety of means, and awareness and skills can be developed without attending training courses. Hence, where a WSA struggles to engage school staff, **training is not the only option** to raise awareness, confidence and skills.

Building block 4: Working with children and young people

The Croydon project showed the value of working with primary school children when addressing gender-based violence, as well as older children and young people in secondary school. **Prevention work with younger age groups** can help address issues before social norms and gender stereotypes become established. When working directly with children and young people, **the use of creative methods** such as drama and role play offer young participants the opportunities to practice skills and apply learning to real life scenarios. In addition, **a confidential and safe space where young people feel comfortable to talk** is paramount for any project working within a school environment.

Strategies to grow the active involvement and ownership of violence prevention messages through **co-production with children and young people** should form a central plank of any whole-school approach. The WSA in Croydon also undertook **targeted work with vulnerable children** which enabled schools to offer support to children and young people who were perceived as potentially vulnerable to abuse or involvement in violence.

Building block 5: Developing a positive school culture

Schools are complicated institutions and each school is distinct in its own right.
A regular presence in schools is therefore essential, in part because schools often have a strong culture of in-person communication, but also to help **build relationships with key staff in schools**. Such relationships are essential to the effective management and impact of a WSA project.

While direct work with students and staff are a crucial feature of any WSA project, **prevention messages** should be reinforced through a variety of means. Policies and procedures, PSHE curriculum, pastoral support, assemblies, parental newsletters and information boards can all reinforce a school's commitment to ending violence against women and girls, and its contribution to a positive culture of gender equality and anti-violence.

Building block 6: Involving parents and the wider community

Parents are often the most challenging group for school-based projects to engage. The WSA project in Croydon benefited from **utilising the schools' existing structures for engagement**, like parents' evenings and children's performances.

Violence and abuse affects parents too and a whole school approach should keep in mind that some parents are liable to themselves be survivors, victims or perpetrators. By **thinking 'whole family' as well as 'whole school'**, a WSA project can **build positive relationships with parents and carers** and extend its reach into the wider community.

Conclusion

The learning report emphasises the importance of building a foundation of school leadership and staff ownership to enable schools, with the support of a skilled WSA team, to

engage all stakeholders and to build a positive school culture of gender equality and anti-violence.

Taken together the building blocks illustrate the importance of developing a whole school approach that is collective, holistic and continuous with multiple strands of work involving different stakeholders taking place concurrently to ensure that key messages are embedded in all aspects of the school culture. By bringing findings from the evaluation together with evidence from the wider field of prevention work this report has also highlighted some of the specific implications that future projects may want to consider when developing a whole school approach initiative.

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1. Introduction

Schools have a significant role to play in preventing violence. A supportive school culture and skilled teachers can influence young people's values and beliefs, equip them with skills for developing healthy relationships and develop the confidence they need to challenge violence and abuse when they encounter it. Schools can also forge alliances with parents and the wider community to help maintain a safe, non-violent environment in which children can thrive and provide a counterpoint to social norms which accept or encourage abusive or aggressive behaviour.

This report summarises the learning from establishing, delivering and evaluating a whole school approach (WSA) to prevent violence against women and girls and serious youth violence in a group of schools in the London borough of Croydon. Tender, an arts-based and educational organisation working to end domestic abuse and sexual violence, led the three-year project. Funded by the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC), the project was delivered in four schools, three primary schools and one secondary school. The project ran from January 2018 to July 2020 and was evaluated by DMSS Research (the approach and methodology of the evaluation is described in appendix 1).

This report highlights six building blocks identified through the evaluation as being necessary in order to establish and embed a whole school approach to preventing gender-based violence:

1. Establishing school ownership and leadership
2. Building a strong delivery team
3. Raising awareness, skills and confidence amongst school staff
4. Working with children and young people
5. Developing a positive school culture
6. Involving parents and the wider community

Building blocks 1 to 3 are the core foundations on which a whole school approach needs to rest, but the nature of a whole school approach is that it is collective, holistic and continuous with multiple strands of work involving different stakeholders taking place concurrently to ensure that key messages are embedded in all aspects of school culture.

This report brings together findings from the evaluation with evidence from the wider field of prevention work around youth violence and violence against women and girls, in order to summarise what has been learnt from the project in Croydon and draw out some of the implications for future initiatives.

2. Background to the WSA project in Croydon

2.1 Tender Education and Arts

Tender is an arts charity working with children and young people to prevent domestic abuse and sexual violence through creative projects. Established in 2003, Tender delivers

workshops in primary and secondary schools, to children, young people and staff, with a specific focus on healthy relationships, helping participants to recognise and avoid abuse and violence.

Tender uses drama and the arts to engage children and young people in experiential learning in a way that helps them to step into other people's shoes, explore sensitive issues from a safe distance and deepen their understanding of the issues in ways that other teaching styles cannot.[1] There is evidence that drama and arts-based methods are effective ways to deliver health messages to children and young people[2], as they offers young people opportunities to practice skills and apply learning to real life scenarios.[3] [4]

Tender has grown over the years and has a staff team of twenty employees across its Islington office in London and regional "Hubs", but also works with up to 40 freelance workshop facilitators who deliver Tender's healthy relationship workshops in primary and secondary schools, special educational needs schools, alternative education settings, youth clubs and in the community. Last year, Tender delivered 256 projects, trainings and events and was able to reach 35,290 children and young people.

Tender largely works with 11-16 year olds in secondary schools, but has more recently extended its reach into primary schools to work with 9-11 year olds to help children identify un/healthy friendships and un/safe touch. With a focus on youth engagement, Tender also runs a number of projects focusing on peer champions and youth ambassadors who are trained and supported to mentor their peers about healthy relationships. Through its Youth Board Tender has developed a range of creative campaigns, influencing policy makers and raising awareness about relationship violence. The Youth Board also helps Tender ensure its work remains relevant and accessible.

Tender is generally invited into schools to do one-off, short workshops with a year group or selected students over one or two days. But over the years Tender has also developed longer term relationships with some schools, which has allowed them to work more closely with staff and students, and consequently see a greater impact. In 2010, with funding from Comic Relief, Tender piloted their first whole school approach project in eight London secondary schools. The evaluation findings were very encouraging and Tender was therefore delighted to be working with MOPAC to develop a scaled-up pilot in Croydon, building on the learning from the Comic Relief work.[5]

> *'Schools are the context for all our work and when we undertook the previous WSA project in 2010 [funded by Comic Relief] we saw the potential for doing so much*

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[1] Tender Education and Arts (2017) Collective, holistic and continuous: a whole school approach to preventing violence against women and girls and serious youth violence, designed by Tender Education and Arts, supported by MOPAC.

[2] Fredland, N. M. (2010) Nurturing healthy relationships through a community-based interactive theatre program, Journal of Community Health Nursing, 27, pp. 107-118.

[3] Fox, C. L., Hale, R. and Gadd, D. (2014) Domestic abuse prevention education: listening to the views of young people. *Sex Education*, 14(1), pp 28-41.

[4] Cody C (2015) Utilising the arts to tackle child sexual exploitation, *Safer Communities*, 14 (1), pp.47-55.

[5] DMSS Research (2012) Tender's Healthy Relationship Education in Schools funded by Comic Relief, Final Evaluation Report

more than just workshop delivery. Schools for us are the crucial context to do this work in for a number of reasons: One, because they are a 'learning space' where young people are open to ideas. Two, they are a safe(guarded) space separate from whatever is going on in home or neighbourhood life. Three, they are like a microcosm of society with all the same elements of hierarchies, power play and people with a whole range of attitudes - so they are a kind of natural laboratory for social change. We've always wanted to have long-term impact – so that what we did really affected gender-based violence – and we knew that had to start with long-term work being done in schools. This funding seemed a fantastic opportunity to really explore what was possible.' (Tender staff)

2.2 What is a whole school approach

A whole school approach (WSA) is based on the premise that as the causes and consequences of violence against women and girls are multi-faceted, strategies to prevent violence also need to address multiple factors in a co-ordinated way. There is now a good degree of consensus in the research literature about the value of taking a whole school approach to prevention[6]. A whole school approach means taking account of how all those involved with the school (e.g. leaders, teachers, other staff, students, parents, governors and community members) can play a role in preventing violence and how all aspects of school life can make a contribution (e.g. school policies, the curriculum, the school building and environment, and the school's relationships with community groups). As the World Health Organisation puts it, a whole school approach *'works towards making sure that the whole school shares the same vision towards reducing violence, and that the school head, teachers, administrative staff, students, parents and the community work together towards this shared goal'.*[7]

Back in 2012, DMSS and Tender developed the following model of the key elements involved in whole school change:

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[6] Barry, M., & Dowling, K. (2015). A Review of the Evidence on Enhancing Psychosocial Skills Development in Children and Young People. HPRC, National University of Ireland, Galway. https://doi.org/10.13025/S8001V; Ross, A., Duckworth, K., Smith, D. J., Wyness, G., & Schoon, I. (2011) Prevention and reduction: A review of strategies for intervening early to prevent or reduce youth crime and anti-social behaviour. London: Centre for Analysis of Youth Transitions
[7] World Health Organisation (2019) School-based violence prevention: A practical handbook https://www.who.int/publications-detail/school-based-violence-prevention-a-practical-handbook

Figure 1. A whole school approach model

Source: Tender's Healthy Relationship Education in Schools funded by Comic Relief Final Evaluation, DMSS[8]

2.3 Croydon and the four schools

Croydon is an outer London borough, the largest local authority in London, with a diverse population in terms of ethnicity and socio-economic background. At the outset of the WSA project, partner schools and other local stakeholders identified the following relevant issues in the borough:

- Croydon is an outer London borough with inner London issues, including high levels of poverty, homelessness and migration; high rates of teenage pregnancy and of children in care (including unaccompanied asylum seekers).
- There is a serious problem with peer violence and gangs, including schools having experience of gang association amongst children in year 6.
- There are powerful gender expectations which intersect with issues of race, class and sexuality to limit the options of both boys and girls.
- Many young people have low aspirations and feel they have little choice about their identities and futures.
- There are high rates of gendered violence in young peoples' relationships.
- Some children lack family support or positive role models, and some parents are unaware of the risks involved in the worlds their children inhabit (e.g. social media).
- Schools are safe spaces for many young people, although they face pressures from limited resources and high staff turnover.

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[8] DMSS Research (2012) Tender's Healthy Relationship Education in Schools funded by Comic Relief, Final Evaluation Report

The four schools involved in the WSA project were as varied as Croydon itself. The three primary schools differed markedly in terms of their size (ranging from 375 students to almost 900), geographical location (one school is perceived as a 'village school'), the proportion of students with English as an additional language (EAL) (ranging from 22% to 57%), free school meals (16% to 49%) and Ofsted report (good, requires improvement and inadequate). However, they all had in common a willingness to address violence against women and girls and serious youth violence within their school, with their students and in their local community.

The secondary school is relatively small with 550 students. The school has a high proportion of students leaving and joining the school during the year, and reportedly only about 20 students completing year 11 joined the school in year 7.[9] Many students are recent immigrants to the UK – and 67% of students have English as an additional language, while 41% claim free school meals.

The Tender project was initially delivered by two full-time WSA workers working in the four schools and utilising a number of freelance workshop facilitators to deliver workshops to every student across years 6-10.

3. The building blocks of a whole-school approach

Figure 2. The six building blocks to a whole school approach

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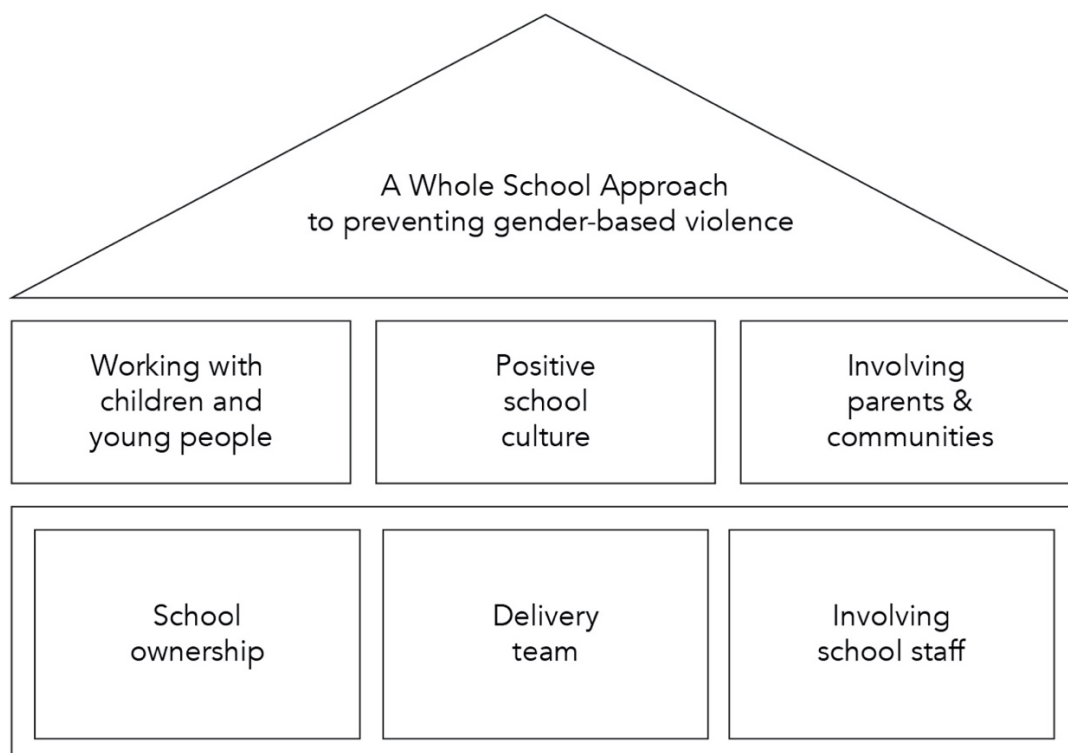
[9] Source: Evaluation interview with head teacher in year 2.

3.1 Building block 1: Establishing school ownership and leadership

What Tender did and what we learned

The Croydon project had two distinct phases, which, while both funded by the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC), involved two separate and competitive tendering processes. During phase one (2016-2017), Tender planned and undertook a stakeholder consultation in four Croydon schools with the aim of developing a whole school approach framework to prevent violence against women and girls.

Four schools in Croydon were recruited as part of phase one (of which two later became partner schools in the phase two project). However, at the consultation stage, schools only had to sign up to receiving healthy relationships workshops for their students and agree to a small number of focus groups. Focus groups with young people, teaching staff and parents, and participant questionnaires completed by young people following healthy relationship workshops, helped Tender identify reoccurring themes and these were used to shape a WSA framework.[10] The framework also drew on Tender's extensive previous prevention work in schools, including their earlier pilot of a whole school approach in eight London secondary schools[11]. The WSA framework highlighted four 'overarching features' that were seen as essential to maximise its effectiveness:

- The school is the expert – by listening to the school and its users, the project will be flexible and adaptable in addressing the school's needs and its context.
- Dedicated WSA workers – who will help schools establish and embed the preventative themes within the school community and its structures.
- The use of drama and the arts – will be central to engaging children and young people in interventions to prevent violence and abuse[12].
- An appropriate timeframe – the timeframe for the WSA project will be longer-term to increase its effectiveness and lasting impact.

The framework also developed:

- A concept wheel setting out core themes and intended outcomes, and how they related to the multiple participants involved in the WSA project.
- A process diagram showing the steps needed to establish a WSA.
- An outline of key components of work with young people (e.g. PSHE projects, campaigns and whole school events) and different themes to be delivered to year 6-11 students linking core messages with Ofsted's requirements.

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[10] Tender Education and Arts (2017) Collective, holistic and continuous: a whole school approach to preventing violence against women and girls and serious youth violence, designed by Tender Education and Arts, supported by MOPAC. https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/mopac_a_whole_school_approach_to_preventing_violence_against_women_and_girls_gangs_serious_youth_violence.pdf (accessed 4 July 2020).

[11] DMSS Research (2012) Tender's Healthy Relationship Education in Schools funded by Comic Relief, Final Evaluation Report

[12] Stanley, N. et al. (2015) Preventing domestic abuse for children and young people (PEACH): a mixed knowledge scoping review. Public Health Research, vol. 3(7). https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/26180863/

Taken together the framework provided a 'roadmap' for establishing a WSA project linking the theories that underpin a whole school approach with the delivery that should take place with young people, parents, staff and school governors.

Phase two, took the form of a three-year project (or two and a half by the time the procurement was completed and the WSA team was in post). Due to a gap between phase one and two, the Tender workers who had been involved in the WSA framework development had moved on, and two new specialist WSA workers were employed. Their first task was to recruit the four Croydon schools. Two of the original phase one schools were interested in continuing the work, but recruitment was otherwise challenging and it required the WSA workers' persistent efforts to bring another two primary schools on board. As part of the partnership agreement, schools agreed to enable an extensive project of workshops, meetings and training sessions for students, staff and parents, including for example, three best practice sessions for the senior leadership team (SLT) each year, but schools were not required to make any other commitment of resources or time.

Violence against Women and Girls (VAWG) and Serious Youth Violence (SYV)

In line with Tender's longstanding work in schools, phase one work in Croydon was mainly focused on gender-based violence, such as domestic abuse and sexual violence. However, in the tendering process for phase two, MOPAC strengthened its focus on serious youth violence as a theme running alongside violence against women and girls, and made addressing this issue a project requirement, rather than a recommendation. Serious youth violence, which largely involves young men's violence to each other, was a new topic for Tender that required integrating into the project both theoretically and pedagogically, a process that had not been catered for within the project timescale.

All Tender's work on improving self-esteem, identifying pressure and control, keeping secrets, and understanding how people you are close to can harm you was considered to be applicable to both avoiding coercive relationships and to reducing vulnerability to social pressures that can encourage gang association or risk taking. However, the WSA team started delivering sessions to students before they had been able to develop new resources to specifically address the theme of serious youth violence. In the absence of such, the delivery team utilised Tender's tried and tested healthy relationship resources and sometimes struggled to identify suitable ways of incorporating discussion of serious youth violence into sessions.

The WSA team collaborated with some local organisations who provided serious youth violence prevention work in schools. However, they found that such organisations rarely looked at youth violence through a gender lens and did not focus attention on issues like consent and sexual harassment – even when these were brought up by students in sessions. In the absence of a commitment to working in partnership over the longer-term these collaborations did not lead to real integration of the two themes. Over the course of the project serious youth violence became less prominent and most of the direct work

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undertaken with children and young people primarily addressed violence against women and girls, thorough issues such as healthy and unhealthy relationships, consent, and gender.

With the WSA team in post, and 3 out of 4 schools recruited, the WSA project kicked off with a theory of change development workshop in April 2018 involving all the project's partners in Croydon. The aim of the workshop was for project partners to come together to articulate a shared vision for the WSA and to facilitate shared ownership of the project from the outset. The workshop was well attended by school and community stakeholders, who worked productively to identify goals and articulate the issues they wanted the project to address in Croydon. However, following the workshop, none of the school leaders commented or responded to the draft theory of change that was circulated.

A whole school approach to addressing gender-based and serious youth violence

Theory of Change Statement

We believe that a whole school approach to gender-based and serious youth violence, which actively involves children and young people in developing education to promote healthy relationships, challenge stereotypes and promote gender equality, can build confidence, increase knowledge and change attitudes that legitimise harmful behaviours. We further believe that over time this will bring about positive changes in the aspirations, achievements, relationships, well-being and safety of children and young people.

A whole school approach involves providing safe spaces for staff, governors, parents and students to discuss issues of choice, consent, relationships and abuse; having school policies and procedures that address these issues; and ensuring that effective support is available for children who are particularly vulnerable to gang-involvement, abusive relationships or exploitation.

The theory of change highlighted the link between project activities and intended outcomes:

Table 1. The theory of change activities and outcomes

Activities	Outcomes
- Specialist workers embedded in the 4 partner schools - Training for all school staff and governors - Programmes of workshops for children and young people - Information/awareness raising sessions for parents/carers - Develop staff and student champions of both sexes	**For children and young people** - Young people are safer from gender based and serious youth violence - Young people feel able to make their own life choices and have positive aspirations - Young people have equal and healthy relationships - Young people have better resilience and improved wellbeing - Young people make positive transitions from primary to secondary school and remain engaged with education

	Fewer young people are involved in serious youth violence
• Review the relevant policies and recording practices of schools re incidents e.g. whether bullying is gender based, homophobic etc • Engage with existing student voice initiatives and develop additional opportunities for students to shape and deliver the project • Targeted support to identified vulnerable children and young people • Consultation to school staff and governors including on curriculum development and individual student support • Develop links with local services	**For schools** • Staff are comfortable and confident in addressing the spectrum of ideas, attitudes and behaviours which underpins gender-based and serious youth violence • Schools are able to identify concerns at an early stage and prevent escalation • Staff are well supported including with such issues in their own lives • The promotion of gender equality is embedded across the curriculum and in daily interactions between staff and students • Schools are well networked and supported by local specialist services • Schools have a more positive reputation locally
	For parents and the community • Parents are engaged and supportive • Parents are confident to address issues of gender based and serious youth violence with their young people and in the wider community
	For the project • There is a well-evidenced model of good practice for a whole school approach

The preparatory work in phase one and the theory of change development was useful, but it was not *sufficient* to gain the commitment needed for the development of the WSA as a partnership and ensure school buy-in and staff commitment through the three years. Indeed, our evaluation findings show that at the end of the project some school staff remained vague about the overall aims of the WSA project, and some senior leaders had stepped back from their involvement with the project.

The idea that certain foundational building blocks needed to be put in place in order to establish and embed a whole school approach was clearly articulated in Tender's WSA framework. It highlighted the importance of the WSA team prioritising initial tasks, such as consulting with school leaders to identify the issues that particularly needed addressing in their school, followed by both training for all staff and some specialist training for pastoral staff and PSHE teachers, before proceeding to other activities, including direct work with students and parents. While this approach was clearly articulated in theory, it was complex to implement in practice, in part because of insufficient understanding of the necessary steps amongst all the stakeholders or an agreed timescale over which the building blocks would be put in place. We also know from evaluation interviews with the WSA workers, and observations during year one, that the team felt a certain amount of pressure (whether imagined or real) to be seen to progress as swiftly as possible from setting up the WSA to delivery of direct work with children.

Transition

The importance of supporting children's transition from primary to secondary school was a topic introduced into the WSA project between phases 1 and 2 that shaped the distribution of schools within the project (three primary and one secondary school). Transition is a critical point of vulnerability, which can have both short- and long-term consequences for some children. A smooth transition is likely to protect children from early disengagement with education and the heightened risk of gang involvement or exploitative relationships, and the development of positive peer group relations is an important indicator of children's successful transition[13].

Early discussions between MOPAC and Tender focused on the three partner primary schools being feeder schools to the secondary school. This would allow WSA workers to engage year 6 students as they prepared for their transition and then reconnect with them in year 7 as they settled into their new school. However, with the exception of a small group of students, this strategy was unworkable within the context of Croydon as none of the partner primary schools were feeder schools and consequently their students were spread across the borough when they left. In similar terms the secondary school did not have any feeder schools, but accepted students from across the borough. Nevertheless, transition preparation formed an important aspect of WSA sessions with primary school students.

The WSA framework emphasised the importance of building trusting relationships with staff and students in the four schools. And despite staff changes both within the WSA team and in schools, the evaluation found that Tender workers were well known and liked by most school staff who completed staff surveys in 2018 and in 2020 and there are many examples of positive relationships having been developed between school staff and the WSA team. Visibility, accessibility and the development of positive relationships were facilitated by a number of strategies including:

- Negotiating desk space for workers in the school offices
- Workers being seen around the school and being approachable when staff had any questions
- Attending parent evenings and coffee mornings
- A worker volunteering as a school governor

However, positive relationships in schools are not the same as school leaders taking responsibility for the intervention. It is widely acknowledged within the research literature that for a whole school approach to have a lasting impact, a school needs to have committed and effective leadership to develop a shared vision, establish co-ordination, deliver action plans and maintain a strategy over the longer term so that the WSA vision becomes embedded in the school's day to day functioning.[14]

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[13] van Rens, M., Haelermans, C., Groot, W. & H. M. van den Brink (2018) Facilitating a successful transition to secondary school: (how) does it work? A systematic literature review. *Adolescent Res Rev* 3, 43–56 (2018). https://doi.org/10.1007/s40894-017-0063-2

[14] World Health Organisation (2019) School-based violence prevention: A practical handbook https://www.who.int/publications-detail/school-based-violence-prevention-a-practical-handbook

'… [Schools say] 'it's good, the children like it', but there needed to be more work at the beginning, of them recognising for themselves where their gaps are, 'what are we good at or not so good at,' and then working on that.' (Tender staff)

Teachers and school leaders interviewed as part of the evaluation did indeed value the project in terms of workshops delivered to students, but they did not regard themselves as having taken on a responsibility to ensure that prevention themes were embedded into school life and the curriculum, or continued beyond the project. This was exemplified by one of the school leaders who contributed to the theory of change workshop in year 1, declining to be interviewed for the evaluation at the end of year 2, because she was no longer involved in the whole school approach project, but had handed over responsibility to classroom teachers. This had direct implications for the effectiveness of the project as systematic change needs to be school owned and led. Or as one WSA worker expressed it: *'You can't do a WSA to schools, they have to do it for themselves, you can support them, but they have to own it'.*

Implications for future projects

Establishing ownership. School ownership of a WSA is crucial for it to be effective and to facilitate systemic change. To facilitate ownership the project team, whether internal or external, needs to carry out a significant amount of preparatory work with school leaders, governors and staff. The idea of hosting a WSA project can be appealing to schools for a number of reasons, but initial enthusiasm does not always translate into an ongoing commitment and this needs to be carefully monitored as demonstrable commitment from senior leaders is a keystone for success.

Knowledge is key to ownership therefore a school audit or assessment should be carried out in order to identify a schools' strengths and weakness. An audit would help school leaders and governors identify and agree goals for what the school wants to achieve as a result of the WSA, and some milestones for monitoring progress. Such goals are likely to vary depending on schools' starting point and local context.

Leadership is key to ownership and needs to be provided at all levels. Headteachers need to both state and demonstrate their support for a whole school approach and a member of the senior leadership team needs to be the overall designated school lead for the project. It may be helpful to involve a school governor on the project team and/or for regular reports to the Board of Governors to be part of the monitoring and review cycle.

Establishing ownership takes time. If an outside agency is involved the optimal time to develop a WSA partnership is probably 3+ years. The first year would be used to recruit and train any WSA staff, develop resources, recruit schools, build a partnership team and carry out preparatory work, including a school audit and initial staff training. Any external funding would need to be secured for the whole project, and the planning period agreed with both funders and schools, to avoid pressure to deliver direct work with young people before goals and responsibilities are established.

A WSA should touch and involve everyone. While this doesn't necessarily mean direct work with all students in the school, the core messages must reach everyone – children and adults – through staff training, assemblies and parental newsletters. In the case of healthy relationship education, delivery in primary schools may well focus on year 5 and year 6 students, but age appropriate messages should be cascaded to younger age groups, through the curriculum, assemblies, posters, routine interactions between staff and pupils and approaches to classroom management or discipline.

3.2 Building block 2: Building a strong delivery team

What Tender did and what we learned

The delivery model in Croydon was that of a 'hub and spoke'. Two full-time WSA workers were based in Croydon, working remotely from Tender's offices in Islington. At the outset it was intended that the WSA team would spend one day a week in each of the four schools and one day in the Tender office. In practice this was never achievable due to schools' changing and conflicting timetables, but it still ensured an ongoing physical presence in schools which allowed Tender to build positive relationships with school staff. In addition to the dedicated WSA staff team the project also utilised a number of freelance workshop facilitators who delivered the majority of direct work with students. The use of freelance facilitators enabled the project to deliver regular Tender workshops to every student across years 6-10 in the four schools. This huge undertaking enabled the project to work with 1090 students over the three years.

The diversity of WSA facilitators was highlighted by school staff as a valuable feature of the WSA project. Encouraged by the WSA team, Tender had made relatively small, but deliberate changes to its recruitment process, in order to draw in facilitators whose backgrounds corresponded more closely with students in Croydon. In the process, Tender has increased the diversity of its overall pool of freelance facilitators in terms of gender and race to the benefit of students in other schools across London and the organisation as a whole.

The Croydon project differed from Tender's other school work in that it involved longer-term involvement with a group of schools in a specific locality, more intensive work with students and the requirement to address the topic of serious youth violence alongside violence against women and girls. These differences meant that the project always ran the risk of becoming detached from Tender's core work.

It is also the case that managing a project at arm's length requires strong managerial oversight. The evaluation identified that changes of manager, geographical distance and lack of experience in developing similar projects meant this oversight was not consistently available. The project therefore depended heavily on the two WSA workers (and in the second year just one dedicated worker working four days a week) to develop, implement and steer the work. Furthermore, the Croydon based team did not have the diverse skillset and experience required to facilitate such a multi-faceted and complex project on the

ground, and, working at a distance from colleagues, the team did not benefit sufficiently from Tender's wider organisational expertise and knowledge.

> '[We] didn't take into account how distance would affect a project or how tricky arm's length management could be. Also the project was a very different 'shape' to our other projects – just four schools, but very intense… and a long timeline – almost the opposite of what we are geared up for on other projects…' (Tender staff)

In addition, while the original WSA team consisted of two dedicated full-time workers – a manager and a coordinator – the team went through a number of staff changes and saw its overall staff hours shrink when full-time staff reduced their hours or were replaced with part-time staff. These changes meant that the WSA team was spread too thinly: having to plan, coordinate and deliver sessions to several audiences in multiple schools and in the community.

Through the use of freelance facilitators Tender maintained a considerable presence in the schools across the three years, but a WSA does not result from just delivering workshops to students. An overemphasis on planning, timetabling and delivering to young people distracted the WSA team from the need to work more strategically with school leaders and staff. Without substantial organisational and managerial support the reduced WSA team struggled to juggle the multiple components that a WSA entails.

Implications for future projects

Delivering at a distance is often an organisational challenge as physical and social distance can influence the resources and support available to staff based remotely, and the ability of managers to effectively steer a project they only know at arm's length. Over time there may be 'mission drift' as 'spoke' staff lose connection with the 'hub.' Partner organisations may therefore want to plan how best to minimise this, for example through regular team meetings, learning opportunities and adequate line management support and supervision[15].

Team skills and experience. The nature of a WSA is that it works with multiple groups, including children, staff, school leaders, parents, governors and other community organisations, and operates at different levels. It therefore requires a project team with access to a diverse set of skills and experience. In the course of the evaluation we identified that the Croydon project required an understanding of change management, familiarity with the educational sector, audits and policy review, facilitation skills with children and adults, knowledge of early intervention and prevention work, resource development, insight into both gender-based violence and serious youth violence, and skills in project management and the coordination of freelance facilitators.

Diversifying the staff team. The diversity of staff and the match between the communities and cultures of children and workers was a real strength of this project. Well considered changes to staff recruitment, such as the wording of job adverts, raising awareness of the

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[15] Harris, J. (2017) Evaluation of the Alex project 'hub and spoke' programme of CSE service development: final report, The Alexi Project, University of Bedfordshire, https://www.beds.ac.uk/media/87236/final-report-alexi-project-evaluation.pdf

organisation at targeted events and considering where jobs are advertised had a noticeable impact on the diversity of an organisation's staff team, which is beneficial to all.

3.3 Building block 3: Raising awareness, skills and confidence amongst school staff

What Tender did and what we learned

At the beginning of the project, the WSA team held meetings with school leaders and delivered short introductory sessions to teaching staff in the four schools. In year 2, the WSA team organised awareness raising sessions with staff and in year 3 developed short reflective sessions took place in two of the primary schools (more were planned but were cancelled due to the Covid-19 outbreak).

Schools signing up to the WSA project originally agreed to Tender delivering three staff training sessions per academic year (six in the secondary school), but throughout the project the WSA team struggled to have training prioritised or to access staff on any more than a one-to-one informal basis. This was especially true in the secondary school. While the WSA team trialled various staff training formats in order to access staff, more substantial staff training (e.g. a ½ day) did not take place in any of the schools across the three years. Such barriers are not uncommon in projects involving schools and are partly due to the pressures on staff time[16]. Workloads and challenging working conditions (one school for example received a second 'inadequate' Ofsted report during the project) impacted on staff development time, but it also suggests that schools did not prioritise WSA staff training either because the project overall did not have sufficient priority or school ownership, or because the direct link between staff skills and confidence, and the effectiveness of the WSA project was poorly understood.

At the end of year 2 an attempt to find an alternative way of putting this building block in place was proposed. This would involve Tender facilitators co-delivering student sessions with teachers, in order for them to 'learn by doing'. The aim was to upskill teachers to enable them to deliver healthy relationship materials to their students following the end of the WSA funding. Unfortunately, this model was not the success that was hoped, as most teachers did not actively participate in sessions, let alone co-facilitate. While some teachers did engage and in interviews highlighted how they had learnt more about their students and the topics covered as part of the project, we also observed a few teachers contradicting Tender messages in sessions and reinforcing cultural norms about gender stereotypes and sexuality.

We know from the literature that school-based approaches to preventing violence, including gender-based violence, are heavily reliant on the attitudes, confidence and skills of staff.[17] Staff play a pivotal role in establishing and maintaining a positive school culture which promotes equality and respect, in providing day-to-day support for students, managing behaviour and being the first point of call in dealing with incidents. However,

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[16] Bubb, S. & E. Earley (2012) The use of training days: finding time for teachers' professional development, *Journal for Educational Research*, Vol. 55(3). https://doi.org/10.1080/00131881.2013.825161
[17] World Health Organisation (2019) School-based violence prevention: A practical handbook https://www.who.int/publications-detail/school-based-violence-prevention-a-practical-handbook

social and cultural stereotypes around gender, disability or sexual orientation can influence teaching practices, making certain groups of students more vulnerable to violence, bullying and unequal treatment by other children and school staff. It is therefore critical that as part of a WSA school staff are supported to increase their own awareness, confidence and skills.

Implications for future projects

Staff training. Freeing teaching staff to attend training is extremely challenging for schools. It must therefore be very necessary, very high quality and have a clear purpose that is well understood by stakeholders. Staff training is usually planned a year in advance and can be impossible to arrange at short notice; projects will therefore need to prioritise the planning of any training at the very outset of a project.

The content of training needs to be appropriate to the outcomes of the WSA and build ownership and involvement. The WHO Handbook on School-based violence prevention[18] suggests that training and awareness-raising for staff should include: awareness of social, cultural and gender norms and their influence on teaching practices; the role that teaching practices and materials can have on reinforcing social, cultural and gender norms; how to recognise gender-based violence based on social, cultural and gender norms and how to challenge and deal with this behaviour among students. Teachers will also need a good understanding of school policies and be trained in how to respond to challenging behaviour when it happens in school.

Staff changes are common in most schools, especially in larger secondary schools, and staff awareness training is therefore best built into the induction of new staff, with a rolling programme of refresher sessions every two or three years and more in-depth or specialised training for pastoral staff and safeguarding leads.

Training is not the only option. Staff development can be achieved by a variety of means and awareness and skills can be developed without ever attending a training course. For example, the involvement of teachers in action research within their own school can be instrumental in raising awareness, changing teacher practices and develop better understandings of, for example, how gender inequality influences students and staff. There is evidence that involving staff in this way – possibly beginning with an initial audit of school issues and needs – is likely to encourage them to own and facilitate change.[19][20] Modelling and mentoring can be effective alternatives to delivering training workshops and can enable

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[18] World Health Organisation (2019) School-based violence prevention: A practical handbook
https://www.who.int/publications-detail/school-based-violence-prevention-a-practical-handbook
[19] Bell, M., Cordingley, P., Isham, C. & Davis, R. (2010) Report of Professional Practitioner Use of Research Review: Practitioner engagement in and/or with research. Coventry.
http://www.curee.co.uk/files/publication/1297423037/Practitioner%20Use%20of%20Research%20Review.pdf
(accessed 17 July 2020)
[20] Hayes, D., Mills, M., Christie, P., & Lingard, B. (2006) *Teachers and schooling: Making a difference*. Sydney: Allen and Unwin.; Stoll, L., Bolam, R., McMahon, A., Wallace, M., & Thomas, S. (2006) Professional learning communities: A review of the literature. *Journal of Educational Change*, *7*(4), 221–258; Cordingley, P (2012), *The role of professional learning in determining the profession's future*, Centre for the Use of Research and Evidence in Education (CUREE), support paper for presentation to the international invitation seminar on the Future of the Teaching Profession held at Churchill College Cambridge on 16/17th February 2012.

staff to observe good practice and engage in active learning 'on the job'. However, involving staff in direct delivery without sufficient preparation, is unlikely to be successful.

3.4 Building block 4: Working with children and young people

What Tender did and what we learned

The WSA team worked directly with children and young people in all four schools, mainly through:

- PSHE (Personal, Social and Health Education) sessions
- Targeted group work
- Assemblies

Across the three years, the majority of work with students was delivered as universal PSHE sessions to all year groups (except year 11 students). PSHE lessons took place weekly, generally over a period of 6 – 10 weeks, although this varied depending on school size. PSHE sessions used age appropriate language, games and activities to address issues such as gender stereotypes, diversity and healthy relationships. Older students also learnt about victim blaming, sexual cyber bullying and consent. Tender facilitators had access to lesson plans and a range of creative and drama-based activities, and while core messages were addressed with all students, the exact manner and order through which this was done was flexible and adapted in response to the children and young people's needs and interests. Approximately 1,400 children and young people participated in a series of PSHE sessions at some point over the six terms of project delivery and some students participated in a second series of sessions at the end of year 6 or after their transition to the secondary school. The WSA framework developed in phase one had suggested that longer-term exposure would be significant in changing attitudes, a point supported by evidence from a meta-analysis of 27 school-based prevention programmes that found the highest impact for longer programmes[21]. While the evaluation was not able to confirm this quantitatively, there were plenty of examples in interviews with teachers, facilitators and with students themselves, of changing views over the course of Tender's PSHE sessions:

> *'One boy this morning said [in a Tender session] that it was perfectly fine to be gay, even if some religions might think otherwise – 'love is love'. Not all the students had [homophobic] views at the beginning, but some did and were very vocal about it, but that has changed. It has been really good to see and to be a part of.'* (Secondary school teacher)

The second strand of direct work with children and young people was through targeted groups. Targeted group sessions largely covered the same topics as the PSHE sessions, although some focused specifically on transition to secondary school, but working with a smaller number of students allowed for more in-depth, often student-led, exploration and discussion. Students who participated in targeted groups were selected by school staff on

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[21] Davis, M. K. and Gidycz, C. A. (2000) Child sexual abuse prevention programs: A meta-analysis. *Journal of Clinical Child Psychology*, 29(2), pp 257-265.

the basis of their potential or perceived risk of unhealthy relationships or due to general vulnerabilities in their home life. Overall, school staff were astute in their selection of vulnerable students, and put forward not merely students with overtly challenging behaviour, but also students who struggled with emotional difficulties and life challenges in different ways. The WSA team delivered mixed and single sex groups in all four schools. These ran weekly over 4 – 6 weeks, and across the three years the WSA project worked with approximately 170 students through targeted work. This type of early intervention with children and young people represented a new development for Tender. Feedback from facilitators, schools and students themselves was positive and highlighted its value in enabling students to unpack feelings and go into greater depth about issues in a safe space. The supportive environment and the attention they received from WSA facilitators had clearly helped some children deal more positively with challenging situations:

> Interviewer: 'What does your family think about Tender?'
> 'My parents think it is very helpful for me, because you see I used to get bullied in year 6 and it helped me with my anger. Because I usually get angry when I get bullied. Before Tender, I got so angry that I started raging at home, I broke a few things, because that day I got that much bullied…. I get less angry now.'
> Interviewer: 'why do you think that is?'
> Boy: 'I think that is because I am more calm, I haven't been having any anger issues – it's been helping me a lot'. (Year 6 boy)

While less widespread, the WSA team also helped organise one or two assemblies in each of the three primary schools. Student-led assemblies were mainly held to present work to parents, host external visitors or cascade student learning from year 6 to year 5 students. Students' involvement in the co-production of resources and in producing, for example creative outputs for year-group campaigns within the schools featured in the original WSA framework, and feedback from parents and staff who attended student-led assemblies highlighted how important student's involvement is in a whole school approach.

One example of the active participation of students within the WSA project was a peer research project undertaken by the evaluators with a small group of year 10 students. Over a five-week period, eight students took part in weekly interactive and practical training sessions to learn about research and evaluation. This enabled the young people to plan their own research project, choose methods they believed would best suit their peers, learn about ethics, run focus groups and interviews with other young people, analyse the qualitative data they collected and present their findings. The peer researchers asked 21 students within their own secondary school and with 16 year 6 students in one of the WSA partner primary schools about their views on healthy relationships, gender stereotypes and help seeking. They also chose to include evaluation questions to find out what their peers thought about Tender sessions and to present their findings to Tender staff, including Tender's CEO. Adult stakeholders thereby gained an authentic insight into the impact of their work on young people. The peer research project demonstrated the power of actively involving young people in the whole school approach, as they increased their awareness, and consequently ownership, of the issues.

The importance of participation and co-production with young people is well supported in the literature. Some programmes have recruited and trained young people as peer trainers, an approach which can add credibility, authenticity, and increase the acceptability of interventions[22]. Young people can reach peers by speaking the same language and peer educators are considered by most young people to be highly credible[23]. However, participation work can be very resource-intensive and if young people are to deliver prevention programmes, they too require quality training and high levels of support[24].

Primary school prevention

With Tender's primary aim being the prevention of domestic abuse and sexual violence, the organisation has traditionally focused on work addressing these issues directly with older children in secondary schools. Although Tender had already extended its prevention work to primary schools prior to the WSA project in Croydon, the project was still exploring the relevance and benefit of this type of work with younger students.

The project demonstrated how issues such as healthy friendships, peer pressure, gender and support can be addressed using interactive and fun methods. Sessions were acceptable to children and considered appropriate and effective by school staff. In evaluation interviews staff repeatedly expressed a wish to extend delivery to year 4 and 5 students in order to affect an even earlier introduction to the issues.

Younger students were often described by Tender facilitators as more receptive to the project's messages, and as having less 'hardened' views about gender and diversity. It was thought that such work with primary children could provide a foundation of positive ideas about the importance of equality, choice and consent in relationships which could be built on in later interventions.

From observations in Tender sessions and participant feedback forms (see appendix 1) we know that young participants enjoyed Tender's PSHE sessions and targeted groups, and that they found the topics relevant and interesting. Children and young people also told us in focus groups that sessions had increased their knowledge about healthy friendships and relationships, and *why* it is important for young people to be able to identify unhealthy relationships. Students interviewed for the evaluation were generally able to explain with a high level of maturity what terms such as gender, stereotyping and diversity meant.

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[22] Bovarnick, S. with D'Arcy, K. (2018) Let's talk about sexual violence: involving young people in preventative peer education. In Beckett, H. and Pearce, J. (eds.) *Understanding and Responding to Child Sexual Exploitation.* London: Routledge, pp 69-82.

[23] Pound P., Denford S. and Shucksmith J. (2017) What is best practice in sex and relationship education? A synthesis of evidence, including stakeholders' views. *BMJ Open*, https://bmjopen.bmj.com/content/bmjopen/7/5/e014791.full.pdf, accessed 10 March 2019.

[24] Stanley, N., Ellis, J., Farrelly, N., Hollinghurst, S., Baily, S. and Downe, S. (2015) Preventing domestic abuse for children and young people: a review of school-based interventions. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 59, pp 120–131.

All of this suggests that the themes were relevant to students and they gained new knowledge and understanding. However, the evaluation was unable to demonstrate much change in students' attitudes to sexual harassment, violence, consent or gender equality in relationships as a result of the WSA project in their schools.

Student's attitudes were measured by a questionnaire administered prior to any intervention in the participating schools and at a second time point approximately eight months later (see appendix 2 for more detail and findings). At the outset of the WSA project student responses showed that many young people endorsed gender stereotypes and held some victim blaming attitudes. The number of 'not sure' responses to attitudinal statements also showed a high level of uncertainty among students, especially younger students and boys, suggesting that many had not considered these issues previously.

Pre and post questionnaire responses showed a 'downward trend' by age, with some negative attitudes and behaviours being more common amongst older students. The 'no or little positive change' findings described in appendix 2, may therefore be indicative of how young people's attitudes change, and become more gender differentiated, as they mature into their early teens and are approaching an age where they begin having intimate relationships. Any intervention is therefore addressing a moving target and school programmes therefore need to be carefully calibrated with maturity and the changes in peer relationships that result. A whole school approach may be helpful in this regard because it can draw on staff knowledge about where classes or cohorts 'are at' developmentally. These findings also reinforce the importance of work with primary age students, as this has the potential to influence behaviours and attitudes before they become established.

However, issues of fidelity and 'dosage' are often highly relevant to whether or not an intervention has an impact, and the findings from the pre / post questionnaires raise questions about the consistency and the quantity of Tender sessions with children and young people. As mentioned earlier, Tender facilitators were given a great deal of autonomy in the delivery of PSHE sessions and targeted work, often taking the lead from students in terms of their maturity and interest. While this flexibility to adapt sessions is likely to have made sessions more relevant and appropriate to students, this may also mean there was not entirely consistent coverage of core concepts or messages. The 'dose' that students received (as in the number of sessions they took part in) varied between schools and although most students will have received between 6 and 10 PSHE sessions in a year it may not have been sufficient to change attitudes – particularly if the usual age related direction of change is in the opposite direction.[25]

Within a whole school approach direct work with students is only one means of changing young people's attitudes. So, while factors such as consistent delivery and dosage are crucial to understanding the impact of specified, contained educational interventions, they cannot provide a total explanation if messages are promoted through a variety of strategies outside, as well as inside, the classroom.

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[25] It is interesting to note that students themselves wanted greater input from the project: 89% of year 6-8 students and 62% of year 9-10 students said they wanted more sessions with Tender (see appendix 3)

Implications for future projects

Prevention work with younger age groups before social norms and gender stereotypes become established is beneficial. The project highlighted the value of working with primary school children when addressing gender-based violence, but the WSA project also found that engaging even younger students would have extended the impact of the project further.

The credibility, acceptability and delivery style of the facilitators. Preventative sessions are best delivered by 'credible individuals', who are knowledgeable and comfortable talking to students about gender, sexuality and violence[26]. While this can be done by teachers if they are confident and have received training, studies show that students often feel more comfortable with external specialist workers, who are enthusiastic and unembarrassed talking about sensitive topics.[27]

Addressing diversity. The most effective facilitators are those with the best rapport with young people. BAME young people may therefore find messages conveyed by adults who have personal insights into their concerns more relevant and impactful. Such facilitators are also more likely to understand the intersectional experience of gender, race and socio-economic background of students.[28] One study also shows that male facilitators can provide good role-models and increase the acceptability of messages about healthy relationships, particularly for boys.[29]

The use of creative methods such as drama and role play offer young people opportunities to practice skills and apply learning to real life scenarios[30]. They also promote engagement, bring life and energy to a topic, increase empathy and enable self-expression. Distancing techniques, such as using scenarios or 'vignettes', can also make it easier for young people to discuss sensitive topics without asking them to disclose personal information.[31]

A confidential and safe space where young people feel comfortable to talk is paramount for any project working within a school environment. Games and activities, especially with

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[26] Beckett, H. with Brodie, I., Factor, F., Melrose, M., Pearce, J., Pitts, J., Shuker, L. and Warrington, C. (2013) *It's wrong… but you get used to it: a qualitative study of gang-associated sexual violence towards, and exploitation of, young people in England.* London: Office of the Children's Rights Commissioner in England.

[27] Pound P., Denford S. and Shucksmith J. (2017) What is best practice in sex and relationship education? A synthesis of evidence, including stakeholders' views. *BMJ Open*, https://bmjopen.bmj.com/content/bmjopen/7/5/e014791.full.pdf, accessed 10 July 2020

[28] D'Arcy, K., Dhaliwal, S., Thomas, R. with Brodie, I. and Pearce, J. (2015) *Families and communities against Child Sexual Exploitation (FCASE) Final Evaluation Report.* Luton: University of Bedfordshire.

[29] Fox, C. L., Hale, R. and Gadd, D. (2014) Domestic abuse prevention education: listening to the views of young people. *Sex Education*, 14(1), pp 28-41.

[30] Fox, C. L., Hale, R. and Gadd, D. (2014) Domestic abuse prevention education: listening to the views of young people. *Sex Education*, 14(1), pp 28-41.

[31] Hale, D., Fox, C. and Gadd, D. (2012) *RE-aDAPt! Research Report: Evaluation of three European schools-based domestic violence prevention education programmes. First evaluation report;* Pound P., Denford S. and Shucksmith J. (2017) What is best practice in sex and relationship education? A synthesis of evidence, including stakeholders' views. *BMJ Open*, https://bmjopen.bmj.com/content/bmjopen/7/5/e014791.full.pdf (accessed 10 July 2020).

primary school students, can create a friendly and fun atmosphere where young people can build trust with facilitators, get to know each other better and develop their social skills in a safe environment.

Targeted work with vulnerable children enables schools to offer support to children and young people who are perceived as potentially vulnerable to abuse or involvement in violence. The purpose of this work is usually to build confidence and self-esteem as well as increasing awareness of risks and encouraging healthier relationships in general.

Co-production with children and young people can take a number of forms including direct delivery of workshops or assemblies, peer research projects, the involvement of school councils or the development of student 'champions' or peer mentors. Strategies to grow the active involvement and ownership of projects to combat violence against women and girls and youth violence should form a central plank of any whole-school approach.

To measure impact, sessions with students need to be consistent in terms of content, quality and dosage, as well as having specific and explicit learning outcomes. Tools to measure impact should relate to these learning outcomes and demonstrate that impact is persistent over a reasonable period, such as the following term or the following school year.

3.5 Building block 5: Developing a positive school culture

What Tender did and what we learned

Schools are complicated institutions and each school is complex and distinct in its own right. From the outset the WSA team spent time in each school, getting to know its routines and procedures, understand its organisational structures, the different roles of staff and how best to communicate with different people within the school community. Being outsiders to the core business of schools, while trying to shape and influence how things are done is not an easy task, especially across multiple schools with different expectations and operating styles.

> *'The project was hugely time consuming – being in schools day-after-day just to establish a presence but never being part of it – always being outside the real business of the place and begging for scraps of time to even speak to teachers.' (Tender staff)*

The team quickly realised that school staff did not have an e-mail culture and were rarely reachable by phone. Consequently, most arrangements had to be made in person, a fact that made strategic and day-to-day communications very challenging. (Only half in jest did the WSA workers refer to themselves as 'walking emails'.) Popping into schools trying to catch the relevant individual in the corridor was often the *only* way to communicate with school leaders and teachers. Hence, having dedicated WSA workers who were flexible, who were known to the schools and who had a regular presence on the ground was paramount to the achievements of the WSA project.

The WSA framework highlighted the importance of having a dedicated WSA worker within the schools, who as the trusted face of the project could respond to new opportunities and issues as they emerged. We know from evaluation observations and interviews that when school staff got to know the WSA workers they would often come and share thoughts and concerns with them. Informal conversations often took place in school corridors or staff rooms, and the team stressed the importance of being approachable and available to listen to staff. Their presence promoted the idea that issues of violence and abuse were something the school was committed to addressing and contributed to building a culture where this was so.

The WSA framework also stressed the role of whole school events in bringing together the whole school community, including staff, students, parents, governors and local community support services, as a way to ensure that key prevention messages were heard and shared by all. The framework suggested a range of potential events that schools might organise and around such as International Women's Day, White Ribbon Day (international day of the elimination of violence against women) and anti-bullying week. The WSA team was able to organise a number of events across the three years within the schools and their communities to promote the issues highlighted by violence against women and girls.

Whole school events: a case study

In year 2, the WSA team organised a visit from the Mayor's office to one of the participating primary schools. The Deputy Mayor for Policing & Crime came to see a student-led assembly and to hear more about Tender's work in Croydon. The school had also invited year 6 parents and school governors to attend the event where students presented what they had learnt about healthy friendships, the impact of gender stereotypes on girls and boys, and some of the creative activities they had engaged with, such as the 'house of friendship'[32]. The event required a lot of preparation by the school, but was very successful in raising awareness among governors, parents and teachers about Tender's work within the school and also provided a platform for conversations within the school community about why it is important to talk to children about relationships, gender and diversity. Both the school and the WSA team received positive feedback from parents who attended the event.

Implications for future projects

A regular presence in schools is essential because schools have a strong culture of in-person communication. The presence of project workers helps keep themes on the school agenda, but it also helps workers understand how individual schools operate, how best to negotiate complex school structures and build relationships with staff and students.

Building relationships with key staff in schools, such as the pastoral, PSHE, safeguarding leads and those responsible for planning staff training, is essential to the effective management and impact of a WSA project. The reliance on face-to-face communication in many schools means that relationships with those who already have influence and are

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[32] See the front cover for an example of a 'house of friendship'.

responsible for making things happen are the most important communications tool for any change initiative.

Prevention messages can be reinforced by a variety of means: posters and displays can help remind staff, parents, children and visitors about core messages and reinforce the school's commitment to end violence against women and girls. Assemblies, plays, films and whole school events during domestic violence awareness month, anti-bullying week or 16 days of activism can all contribute to a positive culture of gender equality and anti-violence.

3.6 Building block 6: Involving parents and the wider community

What Tender did and what we learned

Parents are often perceived as the most challenging group for a whole school approach project to engage with, and at least two of the four WSA schools struggled in general to involve parents in school activities.

Initially, the WSA team organised an introductory meeting in each of the schools to tell parents about the WSA project. However, the team quickly acknowledged that the best approach to parental engagement was to work with the schools' existing timetable of events, such as school plays and parents' evenings, as parents were more inclined to come into school to see their child perform or if it was relevant to their education. One such event, which the school perceived as very successful and motivating for the school community, involved a year 6 sharing assembly where children talked about their PSHE sessions with Tender in front of parents and invited visitors including the deputy Mayor.

In the three primary schools, parental worries about their year 6 children's transition to secondary school also enabled the WSA team to attract a number of parents to a short awareness raising session about healthy friendships and transition. However, overall the WSA project's involvement with parents, especially in the secondary school, was challenging to make happen.

During evaluation activities we observed parents who had previously met the WSA team seeking informal advice from WSA workers about the social and friendship concerns they had for their children. This highlights that once relationships have been established parents felt more comfortable to engage again. However, the WSA model in primary schools meant that Tender primarily worked with year 6 parents. Consequentially, rather than strengthening such positive relationships over a number of years, the WSA team had to re-introduce themselves to a new cohort of year 6 parents at the beginning of every school year.

Schools are only one influence on children's values, attitudes and behaviour. For most children, parental influence is the most important factor, and this remains the case throughout the teenage years, although as children grow older other influences such as the wider community and peer group become more significant. Any school initiative to prevent violence and promote equality can therefore be enhanced or undermined by the level of support from parents. Parents need to understand why the school is addressing these

issues, the strategies it is using, the messages it is giving, and how they can also talk about gender inequality and violence with their children and support them. If schools are concerned about violence against women and girls, it is very likely that many parents are too. Research suggests that most parents welcome information provided to their children in schools as it facilitates discussion on sensitive subjects at home[33]. And whilst a minority of parents may be 'part of the problem', most are a potential part of the solution, but may themselves need support and skills in relation to issues of violence or abuse in their own lives or in respect of the challenges of parenting.

Implications for future projects

Utilising schools' existing structures for engagement of parents. Most parents attend some school events during the year and it may be easier for external partner organisations to involve parents when they are already in school, rather than expect them to attend a specific meeting. Many schools have active Parent Teacher Associations (PTA), parents' council or parents' forums, which the WSA can use for awareness raising or to consult with parents. A regular column in the school newsletter may be one way to reach parents and keep them up to date about WSA activities and events, or to promote local support organisations.

Building positive relationships with parents and carers. Like school staff, parents will often engage with the WSA workers informally if they have been introduced to the WSA project and understand the purpose of the project.

Thinking 'whole family' as well as 'whole school'. Violence and abuse affects adults too and a whole school approach should keep in mind that some parents are liable to be current victims and perpetrators, or survivors of previous abuse, and that violence against women and girls and youth violence will be live and sensitive issues for other members of families. Ensuring that a whole school approach is trauma-aware and promotes information about sources of help and support is a vital underpinning to the prevention agenda.

4. Conclusion

This report has highlighted the learning from developing and implementing a whole school approach to preventing gender-based violence in four schools in Croydon. It has summarised the six building blocks identified through the evaluation as necessary to establish and embed a whole school approach:

1. Establishing school ownership and leadership
2. Building a strong delivery team
3. Raising awareness, skills and confidence amongst school staff
4. Working with children and young people

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[33] Topping, K. J. and Barron, I. G. (2009) School-based CSA prevention programs: a review of evidence. *Review of Educational Research*, 79, pp 431-463.

5. Developing a positive school culture
6. Involving parents and the wider community

The report has emphasised the importance of building a foundation of school leadership and staff ownership to enable schools, with the support of a skilled WSA team, to engage all stakeholders and to build a positive school culture of gender equality and anti-violence.

Taken together the building blocks illustrate the importance of developing a whole school approach that is collective, holistic and continuous with multiple strands of work involving different stakeholders taking place concurrently to ensure that key messages are embedded in all aspects of the school culture. By bringing findings from the evaluation together with evidence from the wider field of prevention work this report has also highlighted some of the specific implications that future projects may want to consider when developing a whole school approach initiative.

Appendix 1: Evaluation methodology

The evaluation used a theory of change approach, which is particularly appropriate for evaluating complex community-based interventions involving a wide range of stakeholders. It is inherently participatory and takes full account of the importance of contextual factors.

The methodology was furthermore designed to support the primary aims of assessing outcomes for beneficiaries and to gathering learning for Tender. For this reason, a mixed method approach was selected, which allowed both for quantitative and qualitative methods to be used, adding breadth and depth to the evaluation. This also enabled the evaluation team to gather data from multiple perspectives, as our overall aim was to achieve a whole-school perspective on a whole-school intervention. We regarded this as particularly important given that students, teachers and parents were also likely to have different experiences and perspectives on school culture.

Evaluation questions

The evaluation addressed two main objectives, each with a number of related evaluation questions:

1. To identify and share the lessons learned from the process of implementing a whole school approach to prevent gender-based violence

Key questions:
- To what extend does a whole school approach contribute to change in participating schools?
- What are the factors that facilitate change and what are the barriers? How can barriers be overcome?
- Does greater exposure to prevention messages through a whole school approach framework sustain change?
- What are the key factors necessary to support a whole school approach?
- Does access to a dedicated worker better enable schools to establish, embed and maintain a whole school approach?
- Are there any lessons that can be learned about the partnership between Tender, the school and the dedicated worker / coordinator that makes a difference?
- What are the school factors? What helps / hinder the engagement of schools? Are there characteristics of schools, which are more / less likely to engage successfully?
- What role does staff training play?

2. To assess the impact of the programme on its beneficiaries

Key questions:
- What are the outcomes for the students involved in the programme?
- To what extent are participants using prevention messages to reduce VAWG and SYC in their own lives, and in the lives of friends and family?
- How does help seeking happen in the context of participating schools?

- What difference does targeted support make to student outcomes?
- What is the particular contribution of drama and participatory arts in achieving outcomes for participants?

Evaluation methods

Qualitative methods

- **Repeat interviews**

Interviews with key stakeholders within Tender, the WSA team and in each of the partnership schools were regularly carried out over the three years. Interviews focused on the process of developing and delivering the project in different partner schools and the impact of project activities on school culture, students, staff, parents and the local community more widely. Interviews also addressed project learning, challenges and sustainability.

- **Focus groups with children and young people**

Focus groups were a useful tool to obtain several children and young people's perspectives, as insight and data was produced through the interaction between group participants. The focus groups explored young people's experiences of being involved with the project, sought feedback on what could be improved, as well as their perceptions of any impact of Tender sessions.

We had also intended to run focus groups with parents, and in the wider community. However, due to the project's limited involvement with parents this was not pursued.

- **Observations**

The evaluation team used participant observation during project delivery as a way to gain contextual information about the project and to make sense of data collected using other methods. Across the three years we did semi-structured observations during different types of project activities, such as PSHE session, targeted work, staff awareness sessions, stakeholder events, and parents' evenings and workshops.

- **Summary of qualitative data**

Table 2. Data gathered from qualitative evaluation methods (number of people)

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
Tender staff	6	4	6
School leaders / contacts	6	5	5
Teachers / staff	0	5	5
Children and young people	0	44	16
Observations	3	6	12

Quantitative evaluation methods

- **Pre & post attitudinal tool (PAGRA)**

PAGRA ('Pre-teen Attitudes to Gender, Relationships and Abuse') is an attitudinal tool to explore young people's attitudes to gender, diversity and relationships. Students in year 6-8 completed the form twice with eight months apart (see appendix 2 for more details).

- **Before & after workshop questionnaire**

Following a review of Tender's existing monitoring tools, the evaluation team re-developed two age-appropriate before and after questionnaires to be completed by students involved in short-term Tender projects and targeted work (see appendix 3 for more details).

- **Online staff questionnaire**

An online survey was developed for school staff and teachers within the participating schools, focusing on staff perceptions of different types of harassment and bullying that may take place in their school, and the frequency of sexual harassment and serious youth violence between students. The questionnaire was completed in autumn 2018 and again in summer 2020 (see appendix 4 for more details).

- **Summary of quantitative data**

Table 3. Data gathered from quantitative methods

	Pre / before	Post / after	Total
Attitudinal tool (PAGRA)	409	334	743
Workshop questionnaire	314	239	553
Staff questionnaire	51	35	86

Peer researchers

In year 3, the evaluation team worked with a group of eight year 10 secondary school students to train them as peer researchers. The tailored and interactive training covered the purpose of research, ethics, different approaches and methods for gathering data, analysis and reporting. The evaluation training was participatory and the students 'learnt by doing', which enabled them to plan their own research project, gather data from 39 primary and secondary students, and to analyse and present their research findings to Tender staff and school leaders.

- **Summary of peer research data**

Table 4. Data gathered for the peer research project

	Year 6	Year 7	Year 9	Year 10	Total
Students by year group	16	15	2	6	39

Appendix 2: Attitudinal tools for young people: PAGRA

Developing the tool

DMSS Research had previously developed an attitudinal tool to assess young people's attitudes to sex, relationships and gender (Teenage Attitude to Sex and Relationship scale - TASAR)[34] and used this in the context of evaluating an earlier school based healthy relationship education initiative in schools across Scotland. For this project we collaborated with the WSA team to review its suitability for use in the context of Tender's work in Croydon. We wanted to ensure the tool was suitable for the particular multi-ethnic and urban context; that is was appropriate to the age groups being targeted and that it addressed the outcomes identified in the project Theory of Change. On the basis of this review we made a number of changes to the tool.

To address all of Tender's outcomes for the WSA project in Croydon we incorporated attitudinal questions on youth violence and gang involvement. Three statements were developed based on other evaluations of gang-related interventions[35] and agreed with the WSA team. However, the evaluation team had not previously tested these statements.

To ensure age-appropriateness for the age groups targeted by the WSA project (Year 6 – 11) we decided to develop two distinct tools - one for the younger age group and one for the older:

- 'Pre-teen Attitudes to Gender, Relationships and Abuse' (PAGRA) for students in Year 6 – 8.
- 'Teenage Attitudes to Sex, Violence and Relationships' (TASVAR) for students in Year 9 – 11.

PAGRA consists of 20 statements, and TASVAR of 24, to which respondents are asked to respond (on a five-point scale) to indicate how strongly they agree or disagree with each:

- I strongly agree
- I agree
- I am not sure
- I disagree
- I strongly disagree

PAGRA and TASVAR have many statements in common, but PAGRA focuses mainly on healthy and unhealthy *friendship*, rather than 'dating' or intimate relationships. Both tools address attitudes towards diversity, youth violence and gang involvement, sexual harassment and victim blaming, consent and gender equality. The tools also address young

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[34] McNeish, D & S. Scott (2015) An independent evaluation of Rape Crisis Scotland's sexual violence prevention project, DMSS.

[35] Funk, J. B., Elliott, R., Urman, M. L, Flores, G. T. & M. M. Rose (1999) *The attitudes towards violence scale*, Journal of Interpersonal Violence, Vol. 14(11), pp. 1123-1136. 'Only Connect' knife prevention school evaluation (https://onlyconnectuk.org).

people's views on sex and relationship education, and their knowledge in relation to support and help seeking.

The completion of both tools is confidential and students are not asked to supply their name.

Data collection

The Tender WSA workers handled the distribution of the tools in the four schools at baseline. As the WSA team did not have access to students in the secondary school until the end of the autumn term (2018), the school offered to facilitate the distribution of the TASVAR forms. Unfortunately, this was severely delayed and only the PAGRA forms (Year 7 – 8) were completed within the agreed timescale.

In the older age group (Year 9 – 11), only one-in-five students (21%) completed the TASVAR form. This was an insufficient number of responses for a robust baseline assessment, as we were unable to ensure that students who completed the tool pre-intervention would also complete it post-intervention. Consequently, the evaluation would be unable to evidence that any changes to students' attitudes were due to the intervention, rather than changes to the sample. It was also not known whether the students who completed the pre-survey were representative of the school population, for example in terms of gender, ethnicity and ability. Hence, the evaluation team was forced to exclude year 9-11 students from the pre / post evaluation approach, and consequently the post TASVAR tool was not been repeated at the end of year 2 (July 2019).

For the baseline assessment reported here, 409 students in years 6, 7 and 8 completed the PAGRA tool in the autumn term 2018. The post assessment was carried out in July 2019, where 334 students in the same years 6, 7 and 8 completed the PAGRA tool. Due to an administrative error, one year 6 class (out of five) did not complete the post PAGRA tool in one primary school.

The ethnic background of students reflected the multi-ethnic population of the catchment area in Croydon – with every ethnic category represented in the sample.

Table 5. Participating schools (names have been changed)

	Pre-PAGRA		Post-PAGRA	
	Number	**Percent**	**Number**	**Percent**
Meadowside Primary	76	19	77	23
Woodhurst Primary	54	13	51	15
Queen's Park Primary	123	30	86	26
St Joseph's Secondary	156	38	120	36
Total	409	100	334	100

Findings from pre / post PAGRA

'The Pre-teen Attitudes to Gender, Relationships and Abuse' (PAGRA) was designed to measure Year 6 – 8 students' attitudes towards youth violence, sexual harassment, victim blaming, consent, gender equality and diversity. These are all issues covered with students through Tender's whole school approach project.

Overall, the findings show either very little or no positive change in young people's attitudes pre and post the WSA project. In order words, there is no clear evidence that the opinions and attitudes of young people as a group have been affected by the intervention.

- **Gender equality**

The majority of students both pre (86%) and post intervention (88%) believed 'girls and boys should be equal and have the same opportunities in life'. Pre-intervention this figure varied by gender with girls (91%) and boys (83%) agreeing or strongly agreeing. Post intervention the girls' positive attitude towards gender equality remained high (90%), while the boys positive attitude increased slightly to a similar proportion to the girls (89%).

- **Sex and relationship education**

A large proportion of students were 'not sure' both pre (41%) and post intervention (39%) whether they thought young people their age (10-13 years old) should have education about sex and relationships. Given that participating schools have recognised a need to work with an organisation like Tender to deliver this type of education, this is a puzzling finding. However, it is unknown whether young people perceived Tender sessions as relationship and sex education or as something else entirely.

- **Diversity**

Prior to the WSA project the vast majority of the young people agreed or strongly agreed (86%) that they would tell a friend who said something racist that it was wrong. This figure saw a small increase in the post survey to 90%.

Pre-intervention, just over half of the young people either disagreed or strongly disagreed (55%) with the statement 'I might laugh at a joke about gay people if I thought it was funny'. This fell slightly to 50% in the post responses. The proportion of those who strongly disagreed fell from 37% to 28% between the two time points. One-third (32%) of young people said they were not sure if they would laugh at a joke about gay people in the post survey, slightly up from 28% in the pre survey.

- **Healthy and unhealthy relationships**

Controlling behaviour, like shouting to get your own way, was rejected by the majority of students in both pre (60%) and post surveys (57%). However, one-in-five agreed or strongly agreed that 'it is sometimes OK to shout at someone to get your own way' (pre 20% vs. post 17%).

Responses to both the pre and post tool showed that the majority of young people agreed or strongly agreed that it is important to apologise later if you called your friends mean names (pre 86% vs. post 84%). The proportion of young people who disagreed or strongly disagreed remained the same (8% pre and post).

One type of controlling behaviour – telling your girl/boyfriend what to wear – was explored while also considering gender differences. Young people were asked two questions 'it's OK for a **boy** to tell his girlfriend what to wear' and 'it's OK for a **girl** to tell her boyfriend what to wear'. While the pre and post findings show a small positive change to young people' answers, it is clear that girls and boys responded differently. In response to the statement 'it is OK for a boy to tell his girlfriend what to wear', boys were more likely to strongly disagree after the project compared to before (pre 23% vs. post 40%) – this is a positive finding. However, although half of the girls also said they strongly disagreed (post 52%), the number of girls who were 'not sure' about their opinion increased from 15% to 23%.

- **Sexual harassment and victim blaming**

The proportion of young people who agreed or strongly agreed with the statement 'I hate it when boys make rude comments about girls' bodies' remained largely unchanged between the two time points (pre 74% vs. 73%). However, this statement showed considerable differences by gender both pre and post – a difference which increased noticeably in the post survey as girls became more likely to agree that they hated boys making rude comments (pre 82% vs. post 91%), while boys became less likely to agree (pre 67% vs. post 57%).

More than half of students (59%) thought pre-project that 'when a girl acts more grown up than she is, it is her own fault if she gets into trouble with older boys'. This increased to 65% post-intervention. This increase is largely due to the increased proportion of girls who support this victim blaming attitude (pre 54% vs. post 71%), while boys attitude remained relatively unaltered (pre 57% vs. post 59%).

- **Consent**

Two statements explored consent from a gendered perspective ('if a girl/boy sends a picture of herself/himself, it's OK for him/her to share it with friends'). Both saw a small improvement, with more young people strongly disagreeing post intervention compared to pre. However, the statements about consent showed a clear gender gap which either stayed unchanged or increased in the post findings.

Responses to whether it is OK for boyfriend to share a picture of his girlfriend, show that girls were more likely than boys to disagree or strongly disagree with this statement pre intervention (girls 80% vs. boys 68%). So while overall the proportion of students who disagreed with this statement increased (pre 73% vs. post 79%), the gender gap remained in the post data (girls 87% vs. boys 70%).

- **Support and help seeking**

Knowing where to get support and help if young people are experiencing harassment, abuse or being pressured to do something against their will is an important feature of the WSA project.

Three-quarters of students said pre-intervention that they knew where a friend could get help or support if they had been abused. This saw a small increase in the post-survey (pre 75% vs. post 81%).

Responses to the statement 'I would know where to get help if a friend told me they were feeling pressured into doing something they didn't want to do', show that almost three-quarter agreed or strongly agreed pre survey. However, a quarter felt unsure about where to get help. These figures remained unchanged in the post-survey.

- **Youth violence and gang belonging**

Three statements in the PAGRA tool aimed to explore young people's attitudes towards youth violence and gang membership, focusing on feelings of safety and the young people's perceived need to retaliate.

Prior to the project, most students (78%) did not believe that carrying a knife would make them feel safer, but a noticeable minority (10%) thought that it would. These figures were largely unchanged in the post-survey.

In the pre-survey, one-third of students (37%) believed that you need to retaliate to get your pride back if someone disrespects you. This figure saw a small decrease in the post-survey (34%). However, the proportion of young people who were not sure increased in the post findings (pre 34% vs. post 40%).

One statement, 'outside of school, it would make me feel safer to hang out with a big group', was asked in order to explore the attraction of belonging to a gang, while recognising that most young people would not identify their friendship group as a gang. Just over half of the young people agreed or strongly agreed (53%) pre-survey, while just under half agreed afterwards (47%) – a slight decrease.

Discussion

Overall, the findings from the PAGRA tool show no change or little positive change in young people's attitudes pre and post the WSA project. Consequently, there is no evidence from the attitudinal evaluation that the opinions and attitudes of young people as a group have been affected by the intervention.

In the light of these findings it is important to consider the possibility that the PAGRA tool is not precise or sensitive enough to pick up changes in attitude that have occurred. However,

as many of the statements included have been used previously[36] and have provided evidence of substantial change in young people's views this is unlikely to entirely explain the findings.

It is also important to ask whether there may have been students, for example with English as an additional language (EAL), who struggled to understand what was being asked of them. This is particularly worth considering given that across both pre and post responses, a sizeable proportion of young people said they were 'not sure' whether they agreed or disagreed with statements. However, the proportion of 'not sures' was clearly related to the topic of the statement and the gender of the respondent (e.g. in response to the statement on racist language only 6% ticked 'not sure', while 5% of girls and 26% of boys ticked 'not sure' to a statement about boy's making rude comments about girls bodies). Hence, students not understanding statements cannot fully explain the pattern of not sure responses. Rather it suggests that many students, and especially boys, continue to be uncertain about their attitudes towards, for example, sex and relationship education, diversity, gendered harassment and controlling behaviour.

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[36] McNeish, D & S. Scott (2015) An independent evaluation of Rape Crisis Scotland's sexual violence prevention project, DMSS.

Appendix 3: Students before and after questionnaires

Developing the tools

In year 1, the evaluation team reviewed Tender's existing monitoring tools and developed two age-appropriate before and after questionnaires to be completed by students involved in short-term Tender projects or targeted work. The questionnaires explore young people's understanding of healthy relationships and help seeking, and their responses to a specific age-appropriate scenario. The 'after' questionnaire also includes feedback questions about Tender facilitators, the sessions and suggestions for improvements.

Data collection

In year two (2018/19), only students who took part in Tender's targeted group work in participating primary schools completed before and after questionnaires. In year three (2019/20), the questionnaires were used more widely in PSHE classes, especially in the secondary school with year 8-10 students who did not complete the PAGRA tool. No students in Meadowside primary completed the before and after questionnaires.

An equal proportion of girls and boys completed the forms.

Table 6. Students by year group

	Before questionnaire		After questionnaire		Total	
	Number	**Percent**	**Number**	**Percent**	**Number**	**Percent**
Year 6 - 8	132	53%	118	47%	250	100%
Years 9 - 10	182	60%	121	40%	303	100%

Almost three-quarters of students who completed the questionnaire after Tender sessions said they had also completed the questionnaire before (70% in yr 6-8 vs. 69% in yr 9-10). This is a good proportion of students who have completed the questions at two timepoints.

Findings from students before and after questionnaire

Comparing students' responses, the overall findings show little or no change in students' responses before and after Tender sessions, with the noticeable exception of students likelihood to seek support, which increased post-sessions.

In terms of students' confidence level (which tended to be high initially), the findings show little change on a scale from 1-10 in terms of knowing how to support a friend or finding support for a themselves or a friend. However, students did increase their confidence level in knowing what makes a good friend (yr 6-8) or a good relationship (yr 9-10)

In response to an age-related scenario about a friend being treated badly by her boyfriend[37], the proportion of older students who said they would call Childline (before 23%

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[37] The scenario was as follows: 'Imagine there is a girl you know well who is always getting shouted at by her boyfriend. He is really horrible to her – putting her down, embarrassing her in front of friends, ignoring her,

vs. after 41%) or search online (before 20% vs. after 42%) saw a statistically significant increase. Students tended to express more empathy towards the friend following Tender sessions, but a considerable, although smaller, proportion continued to think 'she should leave him and if she doesn't it means she probably likes the way he treats her' (before 53% vs. after 44%) or that 'she is weak and if she stays with him she has only got herself to blame' (before 21% vs. after 18%).

The younger age group also saw an increase of students who said they would call Childline (before 19% vs. after 30%), but the difference was not statistically significant.

- **Feedback on sessions**

Students in year 6-8 and year 9-10 completed the feedback section of the after questionnaire about their experiences of participating in Tender sessions. The feedback from these students was overwhelmingly positive, especially in years 6-8. Students felt listened to and included by Tender facilitators. The majority enjoyed the sessions, had learnt new things and wanted more sessions in the future, again especially in the younger age groups.
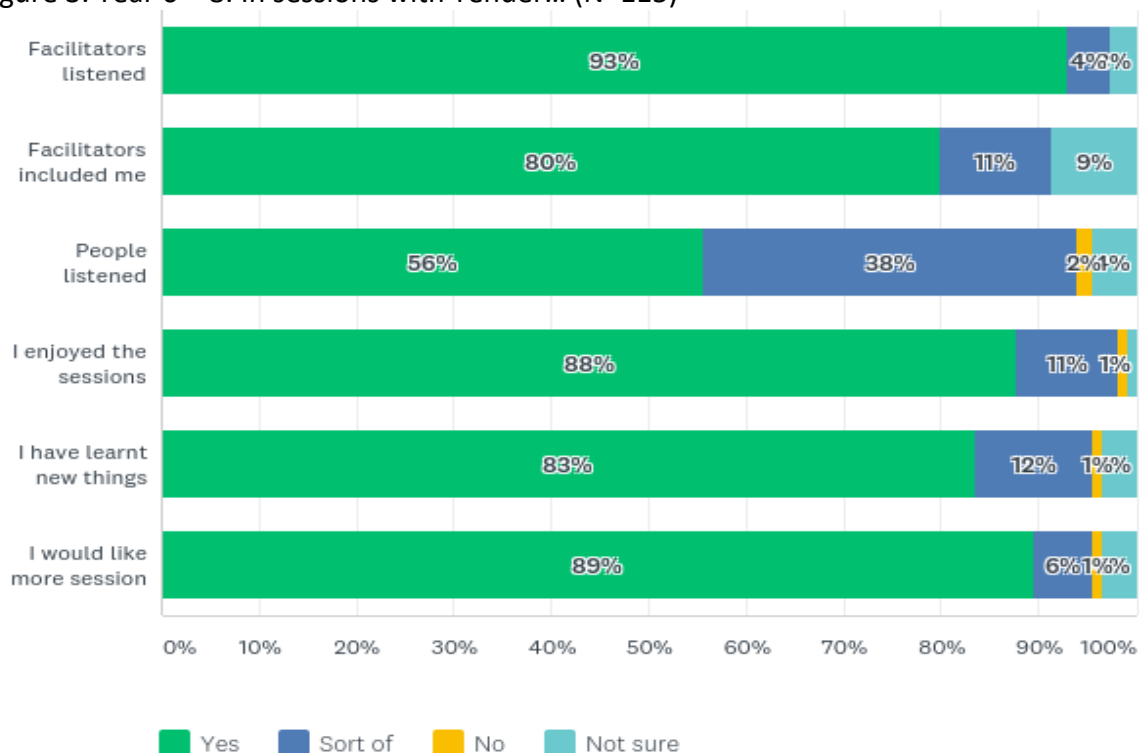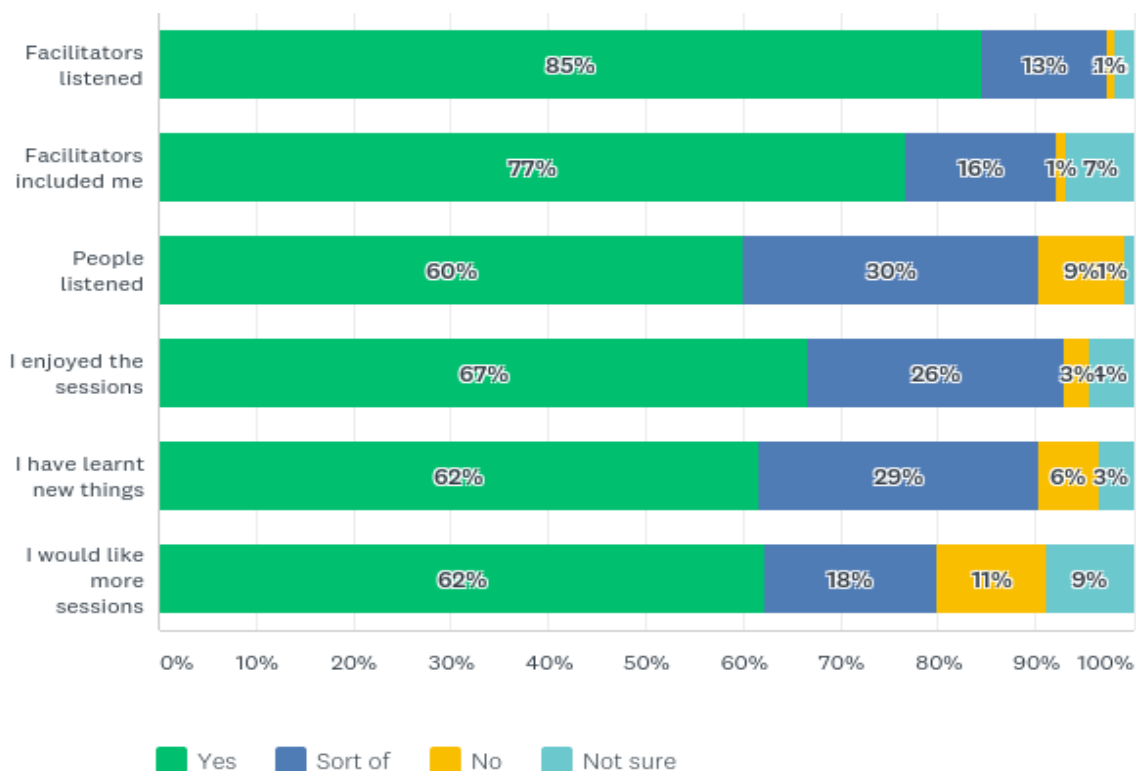
Figure 3. Year 6 – 8: In sessions with Tender… (N=115)

Figure 4. Year 9 – 10: In sessions with Tender… (N=117)

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then being really nice and making her feel guilty to get his own way. If this were happening I would think… (tick all you would think)'

Chart legend: Yes (green), Sort of (blue), No (yellow), Not sure (teal)

	Yes	Sort of	No	Not sure
Facilitators listened	85%	13%	1%	1%
Facilitators included me	77%	16%	1%	7%
People listened	60%	30%	9%	1%
I enjoyed the sessions	67%	26%	3%	4%
I have learnt new things	62%	29%	6%	3%
I would like more sessions	62%	18%	11%	9%

Students said they liked the sessions because of the games they played or because the sessions were fun.

'I liked playing games and learning about different types of abuses' (year 8, PSHE)

Students also mentioned that they liked talking, listening and discussing different topics during the sessions. Some young people commented positively on the non-judgmental atmosphere, the respect shown and being able to talk about their feelings.

'I liked that everyone listened to each other and treated everyone with respect' (year 6, targeted group)

'I liked how everyone was engaged and I had the opportunity to say what I was thinking' (year 9, PSHE)

Students also mentioned liking the facilitators and how they interacted with the students. The facilitators were described as 'kind', 'respectful' and 'awesome'.

A few students mentioned things they didn't like about Tender sessions, some said they did not like other people in their group talking or interrupting activities, or specific things like 'role play', 'work' or 'writing'. A couple of students in the older age group mentioned feeling awkward talking about some issues or that some of the sessions had felt repetitive.

Appendix 4: Online staff questionnaire

Developing the tools

An online survey was developed for school staff and teachers within the four participating schools. The questionnaire drew on a staff survey the evaluation team had previously designed to explore teachers experience and attitudes to homophobic bullying in Leeds. The WSA staff questionnaire focused on staff perceptions of different types of harassment and bullying that may take place in their school, and the frequency of sexual harassment and serious youth violence between students. It also explored school staffs' perception of school culture and leadership, as well as their knowledge and confidence in addressing gender-based and youth violence.

The survey was confidential, and staff were reassured of confidentiality both in the email invitation to participate and at the beginning of the survey itself.

Data collection

Recognising that Tender works with different staff groups and different numbers of staff in the four schools, senior staff in the three primary schools were asked to forward an email invitation (with a link to the online survey) to, as a minimum, teachers and teaching assistants in year 5 and 6, but ideally to all their members of staff. The secondary school was asked to email the survey link to all their staff members, including support staff.

In total, 51 members of staff completed the first survey across the four schools during autumn term 2018.

As planned the post survey was administered during the summer term 2020. However, due to the Covid-19 pandemic and the resulting school closure, only two of the four schools forwarded the email invitation to their staff. A total of 35 members of staff from two primary school completed the post survey.

Table 7. Participating schools (names changed)

	Autumn 2018		Summer 2020	
	Number	**Percent**	**Number**	**Percent**
Meadowside Primary	4	8	0	0
Woodhurst Primary	21	41	21	60
Queen's Park Primary	9	18	14	40
St Joseph's Secondary	17	33	0	0
Total	51	100	35	100

The low completion rate for the second survey, combined with a high staff turn-over across the schools (a quarter of respondents had worked at their school for less than two years), mean that the proportion of school staff who completed the questionnaire twice is low. Findings from the two questionnaires should consequently not be viewed as pre / post intervention findings, but rather as an indication of staff perceptions at two points in time.

Findings from the two staff questionnaires

- **Issues experienced in schools**

The vast majority of staff said they encounter physical and verbal harassment between students in their school. Almost half (49%) said they encountered such behaviour either most days or weekly in the 2018 survey. This was still the case in the 2020 survey (50%).

Incidents involving physical violence, such as kicking, hitting, physical assault, theft or carrying a knife, were generally rare in schools. But 12-15% of staff at both time points said they encountered such issues most days or weeks. Boys, often low attaining or disadvantaged boys, were considered most likely to be affected by serious youth violence and gang involvement.

In 2018, sexual harassment and bullying, such as sexual jokes, gestures, name calling, unwanted touching or spreading rumours, were encountered by 5 out of 17 staff (29%) in the secondary school staff either most days or most weeks. No primary school staff mentioned encountering sexual harassment daily or weekly in 2018. Girls, but also gay and lesbian students, were most likely to be impacted by sexual harassment, bullying and abuse. In 2020, 4 school staff out of 13 respondents (31%) from one primary school said they encountered sexual harassment and bullying between students most days or weeks. In the other primary school, 5 people (out of 19) said they encountered sexual harassment a few times per term or per year, while three-quarters of staff said they 'almost never' encountered sexual harassment.

- **Staff confidence and knowledge**

At both time points, over 80% of staff considered themselves to have a good understanding of how gendered violence and abuse can affect children and young people.

However, prior to the intervention less than half of staff, especially primary staff, felt well informed about where students can get support if they have experienced abuse and violence. In 2020, the majority of primary staff who responded to the survey said they were well informed about avenues of support.

- **School culture and leadership**

Overall, one-third of staff respondents had witnessed attempts to harass or bully members of staff in both 2018 and 2020. Students and parents, and to a lesser degree other staff member (male and female), were reported to have been involved in staff harassment. Staff were considered to have been harassed on the basis of their gender, age or because of their position of authority.

The majority of staff said that there was clear leadership for tackling sexual bullying, harassment and abuse in their school (2018 and 2020). However, in 2018 only half of the secondary school staff considered that this was the case in their school.

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In 2018 almost half of respondents were unsure whether staff who experience sexual bullying, harassment and abuse are well supported by school leaders. In 2020, one-third of respondents in the two primary schools from which responses were received were unsure.

- **The acceptability and knowledge of the WSA project**

The first survey in 2018 found overwhelming support for issues such as relationship abuse, gender equality, sexual bullying and serious youth violence being addressed in school (88%). In the 2020 survey, a smaller proportion (69%) of those responding from the two primary schools, believed that schools were the right place to address such issues.

Prior to Tender's WSA intervention, a large proportion of staff, especially in the primary schools, had not received any training on gender-based violence or serious youth violence. In 2020, half of the respondents had received training delivered by Tender. The feedback from such training sessions was positive.