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## GBP5m bid to bring peace between city gangs; EXCLUSIVE

**BYLINE:** LUCY ADAMS CHIEF REPORTER

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A RADICAL GBP5m scheme to bring together hundreds of rival gang members will be launched today in an unprecedented move to end street **violence** in Scotland's largest city.

Modelled on so-called "intervention" events trialled in American cities, the Community Initiative to Reduce **Violence** (CIRV) aims to bring together rival gang members to explain a zero-tolerance approach to future fighting and offer immediate access to an array of support services.

Of the young men from the east end of Glasgow aged between 12 and 26 involved in the first two summit meetings, some 43per cent have already agreed to engage with services including anger management and employment programmes.

The initiative, which has been planned over the past 18 months, will now be gradually rolled out to many of the estimated 3000 gang members thought to be engaged in gang **violence** across the city. In the east end alone officers plan to invite between 600 and 700 gang members to take part.

The initiative is based on the Boston Ceasefire project which has dramatically reduced crime in the US city.

The first two gang summits, which will now be emulated across the city, took place last month at Glasgow Sheriff Court and involved talks from Stephen House, chief constable of Strathclyde Police; Rob Yanders, the basketball player; and Jack Black, the motivational speaker.

At the summits, police showed gang members the intelligence they have already gathered on them, including photographs and territorial boundaries mapping the 170 gangs across the city. Health workers illustrated the injuries suffered by gang members and ex-offenders and the mother of a boy badly injured in a gang fight explained the impact of **violence** on their lives.

Detective Chief Superintendent John Carnochan, head of the national VRU, said: "It was a gamble as to whether the young people would even turn up, but they did and some 43per cent of the young people that turned up have been

back in touch for referrals to services. I confess to being really cynical about how well gang members would react but it was an incredible event and everyone was really moved. The principal objective is to reduce gang **violence**, that's it. If, in the interim, we happen to get more people in jobs, in education and with better lives, then that is a byproduct. This is not a pilot nor an initiative. This is a fundamental change in the way we do our business."

The project aims to find alternative lifestyles for young people linked to gang culture. Social services attend to offer support for those with substance misuse and family issues. Education and employment opportunities are also offered.

Ultimately, the message to young people, which will be used across the city, is that **violence** has to stop - and that there will be a zero-tolerance approach to gang members who don't comply.

The voluntary meetings and multi-agency approach will also be used to engage with the parents of gang members and younger siblings.

The Scottish Government will today announce a combined funding package of GBP1.6m, with GBP3.4m provided by services in kind.

Kenny MacAskill, the Justice Secretary, said: "For too long now areas of Glasgow have been blighted by gangs and gang **violence**. For some young people the gang is like a family, to them it means having people to look out for them and protect them in a way they've perhaps not been used to. But enough is enough. It cannot go on.

" I believe this initiative can make a difference and that is why the Scottish Government has invested GBP1.6m to make the project a reality."

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