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Page last updated at 06:20 GMT, Friday, 12 December 2008

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## Gang members in violence summit

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they invited 220 people along to Glasgow Sherriff Court on 24 October for a gang summit.

At least five people were invited from each of the 55 gangs targeted in the city.

Two sessions were held - one in the morning for those aged 15 and under, and one in the afternoon for those aged 16 and over.

About 150 gang members agreed to attend and were brought to the court by minibus with police officers on board to stop any violence.

### Pursuit warning

During a carefully scripted meeting the gang members heard from a senior police officer, an Accident and Emergency consultant, members of their community and the parent of a victim.

They were also shown an interactive map which identified Glasgow gangs, their members and the territory in which they operated.

The senior police officer then told the gang members that if any of them - including members not present - committed an assault or murder, they would be pursued as a whole group.

The VRU said this often had the effect of pushing gangs to police their own behaviour.

At the end of each session, gang members were given the freephone number of a "one-stop shop" where they could access education, health services, careers advice and social services.

To date some 63 of the 150 gang members who attended the October sessions have taken up the offer of help, with more coming forward every day.

The VRU are planning to hold at least four more sessions until every member of the 55 city gangs targeted has attended.

Det Ch Sup John Carnochan, head of VRU, said: "Gangs are not necessarily a bad thing - gangs are formed by people coming together with a common purpose, so Strathclyde Police is a gang, journalists are a gang, politicians are a gang.

"It's what the gang does when it comes together that is the issue. If they were meeting to play football, or basketball, or baseball, no-one would mind.

"But the reason they meet is violence, and that cannot and will not be tolerated."

Justice Secretary Kenny MacAskill said: "For too long now areas of Glasgow have been blighted by gangs and gang violence.

"But enough is enough. It cannot go on. The law needs to be enforced but it's also time to try something new, something bold, and sort the problem at source.

"I believe this initiative can make a difference and that is why the Scottish Government has invested £1.6m to make the project a reality."

“ The law needs to be enforced but it's also time to try something new ”

Kenny MacAskill  
Justice Secretary

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