

# **ENHANCED CONSTRUCTIVE RESETTLEMENT PROJECT**

**FINAL EVALUATION REPORT FOR NEW HORIZON YOUTH  
CENTRE AND LB CAMDEN YOUTH OFFENDING SERVICE**

*Executive summary*

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Enhanced Constructive Resettlement (ECR) pilot project ran between 2018 and March 2022. Funded by the London Borough of Camden and the Mayor of London's Violence Reduction Unit, it was delivered by New Horizon Youth Centre (New Horizon), in partnership with the Camden Youth Offending Service (Camden YOS) and Camden and Islington NHS Trust (C&I). ECR was based on the Youth Justice Model of Constructive Resettlement, defined as 'collaborative work with a child in custody and following release that builds upon his or her strengths and goals to help them shift their identity from pro-offending to pro-social'.<sup>1</sup> The ECR delivery team consisted of two fulltime equivalent caseworkers and a part-time psychologist.

ECR aimed to reduce the high reoffending rates of a small cohort of young people aged 15-25 in Camden, supporting them to improve life chances and fundamentally change lifestyles. Of the 24 young people supported, almost all were male and most were under 18 when they started with ECR. Two-thirds were from Black ethnic backgrounds. On average, young people received support for 18 months; six were supported for more than two years. When ECR closed, open cases were taken on by New Horizon's Youth Outreach Project.

In October 2021, New Horizon commissioned [Sally Cupitt Consulting](#) to undertake an independent evaluation of ECR. The evaluation aimed to:

- Assess the model's impact and the extent to which it achieved its intended outcomes.
- Identify learning, including around the delivery model and around partnership working between the voluntary and statutory sectors.
- Provide a simple cost-benefit analysis based on case studies and an initial exploration of factors affecting feasibility of replication or scale-up of the ECR project.

This evaluation is based on programme monitoring data for all ECR clients, and in-depth analysis (including interviews with a range of stakeholders) of eight young people's cases. Access to data was more limited than had been anticipated.

## THE ECR OFFER

- ECR supported young people through **caseworker support sessions**, supplemented by practical and material support. Sessions were approximately weekly; Covid-19 social distancing restrictions sometimes limited their frequency.
- The ECR **psychologist** supported young people with more complex psychological needs and undertook casework when ECR was under capacity.
- ECR support for young people was **not time limited**. Dormant cases would be reopened immediately should a young person get back in touch requiring support.
- Engagement with young people's **wider networks of professionals** was a core part of ECR. Caseworkers referred young people to services and accompanied them to meetings. They advocated for young people to help put their views across and access support. ECR tried to improve communication across networks to promote joined up support.

## THE APPROACH

- Key aspects of the ECR approach were that the work was **trauma informed** and **put the young person first**. Caseworker sessions were co-created, with young people discussing with their caseworker what their support could consist of. The project also involved young people in staff recruitment and evaluation design.

A central focus on **psychological input**, both for young people and for ECR staff, was also key. The psychologist offer was valuable for young people, especially for those with high need and for whom other forms of support were limited. The placement of a psychologist within the ECR team was unusual, sometimes tricky, and ultimately very useful. Although some caseworkers found the intense psychological input difficult at first, the team came to appreciate it, and it informed their practice. There was some confusion with other professionals as to how the role of the psychologist would work alongside other mental health offers, although this was largely resolved. The psychology part of the ECR service was withdrawn in 2021 in part due to a lack of agreement around funding for it.

1. [How to make resettlement constructive](#), Youth Justice Board, 2018

“I’ve met so many people through the system, I’ve been all up and down, from the care system, to the jail system to the probation system to the young offender. And I’ve never really rocked with people the way I do especially with [ECR staff] ... I have a good relationship with them and I know I can chat to them if the worst came to the worst. ... I’ve met a lot of workers over the years, and especially [my caseworker] and the team around her, and a couple of others, I can honestly say they are the nicest people I’ve ever met. ... They are good hearted people and they have done a lot for me.



## ENGAGING YOUNG PEOPLE

Engaging young people was important, and the necessary precursor to the achievement of other outcomes. On the whole, young people engaged well with their ECR caseworkers; some had strong relationships with them. One commented:

*“I’ve met so many people through the system, I’ve been all up and down the system, from the care system, to the jail system to the probation system to the young offender. And I’ve never really rocked with people the way I do especially with [ECR staff] ... I have a good relationship with them and I know I can chat to them if the worst came to the worst. ... I’ve met a lot of workers over the years, and especially [my caseworker] and the team around her, and a couple of others, I can honestly say they are the nicest people I’ve ever met. ... They are good hearted people and they have done a lot for me.”*

Factors that helped build and maintain engagement were:

- ECR **staff being able to relate** to young people, and being **tenacious** in encouraging young people to engage.
- The provision of **regular, non-judgemental** support that was **responsive** to immediate need and **accessed voluntarily**.
- Caseworker sessions that were **customised and co-created** with young people.
- Careful **management of contact with other services**, as necessary collaborative work with other agencies occasionally led to a loss of trust with young people.

Difficulties in engaging young people were sometimes faced when:

- They were in the community with more freedom and less monitoring (as opposed to custody)
- Young people could not be contacted in custody (for example, because of pandemic-related restrictions)
- There was turnover in the ECR staff team
- Young people experienced acute mental health difficulties.

## OUTCOMES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

Young people experienced a range of outcomes. It was often not possible to attribute these entirely to ECR; other factors or other professionals contributed to some changes.

ECR supported young people to **access and engage with other services**. Of the eight young people whose cases we explored in depth:

- Three accessed or better engaged with **educational or training courses**, while two others secured places on courses due to begin later in 2022. Two young people passed courses or gained qualifications and one of these went on to secure employment.
- Four accessed **leisure opportunities** including gym membership and music sessions.
- Four engaged with **healthcare services** and two with **solicitors**.

Other outcomes for our sample of eight young people included:

- Two were **rehoused**, with ECR support being instrumental in these moves.
- Young people's experiences of some **transitions** – for example, from custody to the community or vice versa, or from children's to adult services – were improved and smoother than they would otherwise have been without ECR.
- There was a **reduction in offending** for five of eight young people. Although its relative contribution is difficult to determine, ECR may have contributed to the reduction in offending in four cases. There was evidence that ECR contributed to one young person being given a **non-custodial sentence** and some indication of this in two further cases.
- Some young people were supported by ECR to identify their **strengths, interests and goals**.
- Some young people were better able to **manage their anger and distress**.

There was some evidence that receiving ECR support over a longer time period and while living in the community led to more outcomes. Young people's family members and young people's own past experiences of trauma variously acted as enablers of, or barriers to, change.

### **THE ECONOMIC VALUE CREATED BY ECR**

We used methods similar to cost-benefit analysis to look at the value created by ECR and found that ECR is likely to create considerably more **economic value** than it costs. To do this, we quantified and then monetised key outcomes for eight young people. We extrapolated high-confidence findings in a very conservative way to the whole user group.

### **PARTNERSHIP WORKING AND OUTCOMES FOR ORGANISATIONS**

The partnership between New Horizon, Camden YOS and C&I was strong. The relationship between New Horizon and the YOS was particularly close; the two organisations have a long history of mutual respect, predating ECR, as well as aligned values and approaches. ECR also worked closely with other organisations that support young people. Joint working was facilitated by regular contact, valued specialist knowledge held by ECR staff, a clear delineation of roles and tasks, and cross-agency communication.

Although not a core focus of ECR's work, the project brought learning to other organisations:

- Despite being an already high-performing YOS, Camden described some changes in their work, including **better engagement with young people** and further impetus to their **child-centric** ways of working.
- ECR helped bring the **young person's perspective** to their wider professional network, offering a contextual and trauma-informed understanding of young people.
- In some cases, ECR staff reported success in getting other organisations to **meet their obligations** to young people supported by the project.
- There was evidence that some services, including council housing departments and colleges, had provided **more appropriate support** to young people, better tailored to their needs and interests, as a result of ECR.
- Some stakeholders felt that ECR had contributed to **wider sectoral changes**, such as greater interest in child-centred approaches and more attention on transitions. This may be the case, although other concurrent initiatives will have had an effect too.

### **REPLICATING ECR**

There is significant interest currently in the wider application of constructive resettlement approaches such as ECR. Factors likely to affect the feasibility of replication or scale-up of the project are:

- The **nature of local need**, both in terms of need for, and young people's interest in, the service.
- The **nature of the proposed activity**, including its cost, size, scope and intended geographical remit.
- The **local service context**, in terms of what services exist, whether they collaborate and the capacity and culture of the local youth offending service.
- The **proposed implementers**, including the sector they are in, their leadership, skills and expertise, and their relationships with local partners.
- The **local socio-political context**, in terms of the extent to which an ECR-type project would fit with local plans and priorities.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

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- ECR young people
- staff at New Horizon Youth Centre and Camden Youth Offending Service
- the former ECR psychologists
- staff from external organisations





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