

# SIDE STEP

HIGH LEVEL SOCIAL RETURN ON INVESTMENT ANALYSIS

Research Scotland

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## ABOUT THIS SROI

This short document explores the social value of the outcomes achieved by the Side Step programme. The social value of outcomes is explored at a high level, setting out the main outcomes achieved, the likely prevalence of these (based on estimates) and the potential value of these outcomes.

This paper does not set out a full social return on investment analysis. Detailed SROI work involves considerable time input and a lot of information about impact in relation to the length of time the outcome may last, how much of the outcome can be attributed to the programme itself, and the value participants would place on this outcome.

A social return on investment analysis involves exploring:

- Inputs - what resources were needed to deliver the programme
- Beneficiaries - how many people benefited from the programme
- Outcomes - what difference did the programme make
- Value - how much were these outcomes worth
- Attribution - to what extent did the programme contribute to the outcomes.

This SROI focuses on the Side Step programme over three years, from 2018 to 2021.

## INPUTS

The total annual investment in the Side Step programme is £265,000. Over the three year period the SROI focuses on, the investment was £795,000. Over this time, the programme was supported by partners within Glasgow City Health and Social Care Partnership and Police Scotland, who provided additional in-kind support.

## BENEFICIARIES

From 2018 to 2021 Side Step worked with:

- 69 young people, providing intensive support;
- 112 young people, providing early intervention and prevention; and
- 80 family members.

Almost all the young people that engaged with the service were known to the police or social work services. Those who were not known to police were involved in group activity which directly linked to peer referrals within schools or the wider community.

Young people referred to Side Step demonstrated a range of offending behaviours linked to Serious Organised Crime including:

- organised violence;
- supply and distribution of drugs;
- targeted robbery;
- theft to order (bicycles, cars, electrical goods);
- possession of drugs;
- possession of weapons;
- assault (including assault of a police officer and assault with danger to life);
- breach of the peace;
- culpable and reckless behaviour;
- driving without a licence;
- driving without insurance;
- fraud;
- racism; and
- vandalism.

There is no single pathway into SOC. The main risk factors are broadly categorised by the Home Office into four categories:

- criminality - individuals who show particular offending patterns, such as early prolific offending and those involved in gangs;
- ability - specialist skills or access to professionals;
- networks - access to criminal networks through a range of contexts, such as family, relationships and business contacts; and
- identity - upbringing, adverse childhood experiences.

The evidence particularly highlights that trusted social connections are essential to creating and maintaining a SOC group, and that age sometimes has a part to play in helping these establish. Scotland's SOC strategy has a significant focus on children and young people, to divert and prevent their exploitation by SOC. This is due to evidence that SOC groups often target vulnerable individuals, including children and young people, who are expendable and replaceable<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.cycj.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/SOC-report-final-Feb-2020.pdf>

## OUTCOMES AND VALUE

This section explores what difference the Side Step project made, and estimates the social value of these.

When exploring value, it is important to note that SROI explores an estimated value of outcomes, to society, to individuals and communities. It can be based on 'willingness to pay' - how much individuals would pay to achieve these outcomes or estimates of how much it costs to deal with issues within public sector systems.

Importantly, SROI analysis does not mean these costs are 'saved' or prevented, but rather is a way of putting a financial value on societal outcomes. The approach links with the principles of the Christie Commission, which emphasised the need to reform public services to prioritise expenditure on services which prevent negative outcomes from occurring<sup>2</sup>.

### **Diversion from Serious Organised Crime**

There is clear evidence that Side Step diverted young people directly from being involved in Serious Organised Crime. Over three years Side Step records show:

- 25 participants were diverted from current engagement in SOC;
- 19 were diverted from future involvement in SOC; and
- 54 were diverted from offending.

Placing a value on diverting young people who are involved in or on the cusp of SOC is challenging. The routes young people take into SOC are many and varied, and there is no one journey to SOC.

It is not possible to determine exactly what would have happened without intervention from Side Step. This SROI and supporting evaluation does not have a 'control' or comparison group to show what outcomes would be without intervention.

Instead, we have reviewed wider literature exploring journeys through SOC and making educated assumptions and estimates about what an 'average' journey may involve, in order to place a value on outcomes. We have assumed that not all young people would fall into every stage of the journey. These are set out below.

It is important to note that the proxy values and number of estimated beneficiaries are estimated, and provided as a broad indication of the potential value of Side Step through diverting young people from Serious Organised Crime. Good practice in SROI would suggest that these figures are used as a basis for discussion with the staff team and partners, to explore perceptions of value further.

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.gov.scot/publications/commission-future-delivery-public-services/>

	Community safety	Committal of first offence	Average of 9 sanctions	Secure care	Criminal conviction and imprisonment
<b>Rationale</b>	Evidence from Police Scotland shows substantial time spent dealing with a small number of high volume offenders – including writing crime reports, taking statements and producing reports for hearings.	Two thirds of SOC offenders receive their first criminal sanction under the age of 18.	On average, SOC offenders had been sanctioned on 9 occasions for 21 to 27 offences before committing a SOC crime.	Around 60% of young people in secure care in Glasgow are there due to offending. Glasgow City Council found that 71% of young people involved in Side Step were kept out of secure care for at least 6 months, including a number deemed high risk by the children's panel <sup>3</sup> .	Normally, a SOC conviction results in a minimum custodial sentence of three years.
<b>Evidence about cost</b>	<b>£36</b> hourly cost of a police officer  One Glasgow estimates 3 hours per week, for each young person	<b>£645</b> for Children's Hearing  <b>£337</b> for a social work report for court	<b>£476</b> for a supervised attendance order  <b>£9,711</b> for a restriction of liberty order/ electronic tagging	<b>£6,069 to £6,330</b> per week  = <b>£157,794 to £164,580</b> for 6 months	<b>£2,148</b> crime to sentencing cost to justice system  <b>£32,371</b> annual cost of prison
<b>Sources for cost information</b>	One Glasgow, 2022	Audit Scotland, Dealing with offending by young people  Audit Scotland Reducing Offending 2012	Scottish Government, The societal cost of alcohol misuse, 2008	Glasgow City Council Social Work costs 2022  GCC information also shows trend of reduced use of secure care	Audit Scotland Criminal Justice System Overview 2011  Scottish Prison Service Annual Report 2011/12
<b>Proxy used</b>	<b>£36</b> for three hours per young person, per week = £108	<b>£982</b> <i>Total hearing and report</i>	<b>£5,094</b> <i>Mid point</i>	<b>£161,187</b> <i>Mid point</i>	<b>£99,261</b> <i>Total over 3 years</i>
<b>Estimated number of beneficiaries over three years<sup>4</sup></b>	54 diverted from offending, over 3 years (156 weeks)	54 young people diverted from offending	25 directly involved in SOC	Estimated 71% of 25 directly involved in SOC = 17/18, adjusted down to 13 to reflect wider trends in secure care	Estimated 5 young people
<b>Total value</b>	<b>£909,792</b>	<b>£53,028</b>	<b>£127,350</b>	<b>£2,095,431</b>	<b>£496,305</b>
<b>Total</b>			<b>£3,681,906</b>		

<sup>3</sup> Review of Side Step, Glasgow City Council, 2017

<sup>4</sup> These are best estimates based on the information available. Side Step partners will be able to work to refine and better understand these over time, with further tracking.

The value in terms of diverting from SOC through Side Step is high, at almost £3.7 million - for the young people supported over 3 years from 2018 to 2021.

We have been cautious in assessing the cost of the journey through SOC within the system. The costs are reserved when compared with some other estimates of costs. For example, in 2012 Scottish Government economists estimated that:

- the average cost to the system per prolific (3 previous) offender is £180,000
- the average cost to the system per long term (> 4 years) offender is £147,000<sup>5</sup>.

Supporting 25 young people to divert at an early stage from prolific/ long term offending using this estimate could equate to a value of up to £4.5 million.

Here, it is important to remember that SROI is about placing a value on outcomes, not about identifying savings which can be realised in financial terms.

**Total value: £3.7 million to £4.5 million**

### Improved mental health

Action for Children statistics show that 30 young people improved their emotional and mental health through involvement in Side Step and one was protected from self-harm or suicide. Poor mental health, suicidal thoughts and self-harm were commonly experienced by Side Step participants.

Detailed work exploring the value of supporting young people with mental health has been undertaken by the Department for Communities and Local Government's (DCLG) Troubled Families Unit. An SROI undertaken by this team found that the financial value of reducing young people suffering from mental health issues was £271 per year<sup>6</sup>. In 2019 the Department produced a tool for others to use to assess the social value of their interventions and updated this value to £284. The value of this improvement for 30 participants, over three years, at £284 per year could therefore be in the region of **£25,560**.

**Total value: £25,560**

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<sup>5</sup> Referenced in Measuring Preventative Spend, Safer Communities Scotland  
<http://www.safercommunitiesscotland.org/wp-content/uploads/community-safety-costs-in-scotland.pdf>

<sup>6</sup>[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/560512/Troubled\\_Families\\_Local\\_Authority\\_Cost\\_Savings.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/560512/Troubled_Families_Local_Authority_Cost_Savings.pdf)

### Reduced substance misuse

Action for Children statistics show that 27 young people worked towards addressing harmful substance misuse problems through Side Step. The work undertaken by the Department for Communities and Local Government estimates that the annual cost of alcohol dependency for each individual is £1,656<sup>7</sup>. This would suggest a value in the region of £4,968 over three years, for 27 young people - approximately £134,136.

**Total value: £134,136**

### Skills development

Action for Children statistics show that 41 young people engaged in education or training through Side Step, 13 improved their attendance and developed their potential at school and 12 developed their employment skills. Research<sup>8</sup> suggests the value of improving education and employability skills is approximately £2,068. For 41 young people, the total estimated value would be £84,788.

**Total value: £84,788**

### Protection from sexual exploitation

Action for Children statistics show that three young people were protected from sexual exploitation. There are profound human costs of child sexual abuse, the impacts are large and far reaching, and it is very challenging to place a value on the prevention of sexual exploitation. Work undertaken by the UK Government<sup>9</sup> and published in December 2021 recognises the physical and emotional harm experienced by survivors of child sexual abuse, while recognising the importance of exploring the value of preventing sexual exploitation. It estimates that using conservative and robust assumptions, the average cost of a single victim of contact child sexual abuse in 2018/19 was **£89,240**. This estimate recognises that the costs are spread over time, that there is a lag after victimisation to realise physical and emotional harm costs and includes both historic and future costs.

This suggests that the value of protecting three young people from sexual exploitation could be in excess **£267,720**. Most of these costs (almost two thirds) are borne by victims and survivors, through lost output, physical and emotional harm.

**Total value: £267,720**

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<sup>7</sup> The drugs misuse figure is higher at £4,215 but the way it has been calculated is different as it includes reductions in drug related offending, which are already covered in the reduction of offending section within this SROI.

<sup>8</sup> Chowdry and Fitzsimons (2016) Cost of Late Interventions, <https://www.eif.org.uk/files/pdf/cost-of-lateintervention-2016-technical-report.pdf> p.15-16

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-economic-and-social-cost-of-contact-child-sexual-abuse/the-economic-and-social-cost-of-contact-child-sexual-abuse>

### Wider outcomes

Action for Children figures show a small number of participants benefited in other ways, including:

Outcome	Proxy value	Total value
18 took part in pro-social activities - play, sport and recreation activities	£701 <sup>10</sup>	£12,618
7 improved their support networks, parenting or family life	£7,532 <sup>11</sup>	£52,724
4 improved their physical health	£3,537 <sup>12</sup>	£14,148

**Total value: £79,490**

### Total value

The SROI suggests that the total estimated value of the outcomes of the Side Step programme could be in the region of £4.2 million to just over £5 million, over the three year period from 2018 to 2021.

Theme	Total estimated value	Beneficiaries
Reduced offending and SOC	£3,681,906 to £4,500,000	25 to 54
Improved mental health	£25,560	30
Reduced substance misuse	£134,136	27
Skills development	£84,788	41
Protection from sexual exploitation	£267,720	3
Wider outcomes	£79,490	18+
<b>Total</b>	<b>£4,273,600 to £5,091,694</b>	

It is important to note that this SROI focuses on the outcomes which are demonstrable from the Action for Children statistics and evaluation and for which quantifiable values can be set. There may be other wider additional benefits to the system which are not quantified within this SROI, including wider community benefits, community safety, family benefits, broader individual health and wellbeing, supporting young people towards positive destinations and protecting young people from criminal exploitation.

<sup>10</sup> Unit Cost Database (2019)

<https://www.greatermanchesterca.gov.uk/media/2007/unit-cost-database-v20.xlsx>

<sup>11</sup> HACT (2014) Valuation - Connection to family

<sup>12</sup> HACT Social Value Bank (SP01407): <http://www.hact.org.uk/valuecalculator>



## Attribution

As part of an SROI, it is important to explore the extent to which the Side Step approach can directly attribute the outcomes achieved to its activities. It is important to recognise the input of partners, and wider environmental factors, to achievement of positive outcomes.

Partnership work and active collaboration is a crucial element of the Side Step approach. The project works closely side by side with Police Scotland, social services, Skills Development Scotland, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services, schools and community groups. Normally, Side Step is working with young people who are disengaged from other services, meaning that attribution could be high. The main role that partners have is in referring young people to the service, although in some cases young people are also receiving support from other services such as the social work intensive support service.

Attribution for the outcomes achieved has therefore been set at a general level of up to 75% for Side Step. This places the value at up to **£3.2 million to £3.8 million**. However, detailed work has not been undertaken to verify this level of attribution, or explore whether there are different attribution rates for different outcomes. This figure has been used as a reasonable starting basis for further discussion and refinement.

## SROI value

This social return on investment analysis is a high-level, initial assessment of the broad social value of the Side Step programme in Glasgow. It is not a full SROI analysis and its findings should be used with care.

Between 2018 and 2021, the Side Step programme cost £795,000.

Overall, the total value of the outcomes achieved by the programme between 2018 and 2021 - at 75% attribution - ranges from £3,205,200 to £3,818,771.

The SROI ratio is therefore approximately between **£1: £4.03** and **£1: £4.80**.