



Evaluating Drama-based Crime Prevention: Young People's Affective Engagement with Performance

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Executive summary

Terriers is a play written by Maurice Bessman and directed by Miriam Mussa. Since 2008, *Terriers* has been seen by over 120,000 young people from secondary and primary schools across Merseyside and the UK (*Terriers Play 2016*). This research project aims to evaluate *Terriers* as a drama-based intervention that combines a performance of *Terriers* with educational follow-up activities. These activities take various forms depending on the venue, but usually involve a post-performance facilitated discussion led by the play's actors, out of 'character' and in their own clothes (the Q&A). The agencies responsible for delivering and developing *Terriers* – originally the Merseyside Police, supported by Liverpool Football Club, and more recently the Royal Court Liverpool Trust [RCLT] – have also developed educational resources for pre- or post- performance use by teachers and educators. The latest toolkit was commissioned by RCLT in 2014. It was funded by the Big Lottery and produced by As Creatives. This research project follows the launch of this toolkit as part of the 2014-15 tour and focuses particularly on work with schools and colleges.

Methodology

Our research sought to qualitatively explore how *Terriers* creates, engages and influences audiences, with the intention of understanding the social impact of the intervention, including its potential contribution to crime prevention. This involved:

- Understanding what *Terriers* aims to achieve
- Investigating and analysing young people's experiences of 'engaging' with *Terriers* and related follow-up activities
- Exploring how *Terriers* creates 'audiences'

Methods adopted included: ethnographic observation of performances and follow-up activities at several venues, including a case study school; participatory, arts-based activities to analyse young peoples' experiences and the meanings they give to the *Terriers* intervention; analysis of RCLT documents, including annual reports; semi-structured interviews with eleven adult stakeholders (mainly identified by RCLT and including one group interview); and an online survey of schools participating in the 2015-16 Merseyside tour (response rate 41%).

The term 'production team' is used in what follows as a means of referring to all of those directly involved in the development and delivery of *Terriers*, including the Writer, Director, Tour Manager/Technical Manager and Development Manager. It also includes the actors, who are identified by character: 'Luke' (also the Choreographer), 'Eve' and 'Chelsea'. The other stakeholder interviewees are: Teacher 1, Teacher 2, Safer Schools Officer and Regeneration Officer.

The term 'co-researcher' refers to five self-selecting young people at the case study school, who worked with two members of the research team. This participatory research approach meant that young people had a meaningful level of involvement in the evaluation of *Terriers*. Other research methods at the case study school were designed with the aim of capturing students' initial, raw and immediate responses to the *Terriers* performance. These included: the opportunity to record images and words on large canvases; short interviews using a fixed camera in a black cab; and an opportunity to offer short 'soundbites' to co-researchers, who filmed using iPads.

What does *Terriers* aim to achieve?

The *Terriers* Development Plan (Royal Court Liverpool Trust and Merseyside Police Matrix Team 2013: 5) suggests that *Terriers* can contribute to various aims identified by the Royal Court and Merseyside Police. Similar aims and objectives were proposed in data collected for this research project. These were grouped under five themes for the purposes of analysis:

- Deterring young people from 'gangs' and gun crime
- Personal, social and health education
- Community development and informal education
- Inclusion in the arts
- A high-quality performance

Engaging the imagination

The arts provide powerful ways of capturing people's imagination. The co-researchers at the case study school self-selected to take part in the research and all did so because of their interest in the arts. Several of the adults interviewed also discussed how theatre is a powerful tool to engage. Theatre can be a new experience for young

audiences watching *Terriers*. A strong theme throughout the research was that watching the play was an immersive experience. It was also suggested that watching the *Terriers* play often provoked an emotional response. Direct and reported observations indicate that the audience express a series of different reactions throughout the performance. Reactions to the play were overwhelmingly positive at the case study school, and young people successfully identified the themes within the play that were highlighted by the production team. Overall, this supported the importance of *Terriers* in conveying key educational messages to a target audience through an emotional and affecting piece of theatre.

Authenticity and identification

Across the datasets, it was common for *Terriers* to be described as 'realistic' or 'authentic'. Reported observations suggest that there is sometimes confusion amongst audience members as to what is real when it comes to the writing, the acting and even the props. The design of *Terriers* and its distancing from more conventional and didactic Theatre in Education models is an important strategy in terms of the play being able to provide an immersive experience. This section returns to themes previously raised concerning the power of the arts to promote reflection. Whilst the realism of some of the narratives is queried, there is little doubt that audience members are able to identify with at least some of the issues raised.

Relationships and support structures

This section begins with a continuation of the discussion around audience members' identification with particular characters in the play. Here it explores how this extended to the relationships between characters. It moves on to consider how this can be a useful means of raising discussion about the power and control that might be exerted in personal relationships. Familial relationships are also briefly discussed, followed by a discussion on the notion of a 'gang' being 'like a family'. There is some questioning of young people's experiences and understandings of 'gang culture' before the section moves on to explore the complex, nuanced ways that the play deals with peer pressure and friendships. The section then looks at relationships between young audience members and the actors themselves, suggesting that the cast might act as role models.

Discussion of the relationships between young people and teachers comes next as the section explores how much support is provided within schools.

Audiences and audience creation

During Autumn 2015 and Spring 2016, *Terriers* toured to Merseyside, Croydon, Manchester, Hampshire and Telford. The play was performed for schools and pupil referral units, in a prison and for public audiences at the Royal Court Theatre, including a 'VIP' event aimed at stakeholders. No other community events were reported to have taken place in Liverpool this year (in contrast to previous years), but community performances were staged in Croydon (Royal Court Liverpool Trust 2016). The play is represented by the production team as having universal appeal. This section considers reports of audience reactions, but also assessments of how different age groups and audiences in different locations respond to the play. Some issues associated with targeting specific groups, in particular primary age children, are discussed. Good practice in ensuring that young people not in mainstream education are not excluded from the performance is highlighted.

Performance or project?

The above discussion highlights an issue that became increasingly apparent over the lifetime of this research project: is *Terriers* best understood as a 'performance' or a 'project'? The 2013-16 Development Plan described *Terriers* as 'a partnership project delivered by Merseyside Police and Royal Court Liverpool Trust' (Royal Court Liverpool Trust and Merseyside Police Matrix Team 2013: 2). Some interviewees directly involved with *Terriers* explained that they now resisted the use of the term 'project'. This section begins by exploring some of the reasons for this reluctance. It moves on to look at post-performance activities including the facilitated discussion (or Q&A) and the educational toolkit. Positive and negative assessments of these activities across the datasets are explored, along with suggestions for improvement or development.

Are objectives achieved?

Deterring young people from 'gangs' and gun crime

- Unpicking the relationships between young people's friendships, lawbreaking and 'gang involvement' is not straightforward, and the notion that involvement in 'delinquent youth groups' equates with serious youth violence has been challenged (Aldridge et al. 2008; Shute et al. 2012). It is difficult to be confident that the term 'gang' has a consistent meaning in the data collected for this study, or that there is a simple relationship between educating young people about 'gangs' and gun crime and a reduction in violence or offences involving firearms.
- Whilst it is not possible to directly establish any relationship between *Terriers* and changes to levels of recorded crime, Merseyside Police and the Merseyside Police and Crime Commissioner have expressed confidence in the initiative as part of broader crime prevention and reduction strategies.
- Data collected from secondary schools suggest that the value of the play is in creating a catalyst for discussion. Data from the case study school show that the message many young people took from *Terriers* was that they should not consider joining 'gangs'. Data collected as part of the school and college survey also suggest that the message was 'accessible' and understood by the young people with whom they worked.
- Engaging young people's imaginations and providing 'realistic', nuanced characters that resonate with them is an important aspect of reflection and learning. There are also some theoretical arguments to suggest that this process of imaginative engagement and reflection could support desistance, especially if reflection is guided by skilled practitioners (Hughes and Ruding 2009).
- Some education professionals were enthusiastic about the capacity of the play to promote discussion. The data also reveal some reservations about the capacity of the actors to support an in-depth facilitated discussion, particularly with large audiences of young people. It is also difficult for the production team to ensure follow-up activities are used or used well.

Personal, Social and Health Education

- Education professionals were very positive about the play. It was suggested that drama offered a beneficial way to introduce difficult issues, potentially offering more impact than if introduced by teachers alone.
- The newly introduced theme of sexual exploitation was mentioned frequently across datasets, and members of the production team speculated that the character of 'Eve' prompted particular interest from young women because they identified with her.
- The responsivity of schools, or other organisations opting to stage a performance, to possible disclosures from young people was also judged to be important. The data collected for this project confirmed that schools had structures in place to deal with such disclosures, but also raised some questions about maximising the opportunities presented by *Terriers* to ensure disclosures are made.
- Some stakeholders believed the short Q&A should prompt discussion about sources of support, as well as the issues raised by the play. The take-up of the educational toolkit intended to promote more in-depth discussion was relatively low in our small sample, and, at the case study school, the co-researchers reported that not all classes were given sufficient time to work on activities.
- The production team also discussed barriers to staging an impactful performance, such as disruption during the performance by teachers leaving half way through or teachers undertaking other activities during the performance. Data collected from teachers as part of this study suggests that these recurring issues may be difficult to resolve.
- This does not necessarily mean teachers do not value *Terriers*. In fact, interviewees and survey respondents spoke enthusiastically about the play and their experiences of working with the production team.

Community Development and Informal Education

- Data about work in communities are limited and based only on reports. These showed mixed messages about its success. The importance of engaging parents

and older adults in education initiatives was discussed by stakeholders, and it was common to locate *Terriers* within broader multi-agency crime prevention strategies.

- The availability of high quality and attractive youth services and educational opportunities could support the achievement of *Terriers* objectives, but responsibility for this obviously lies beyond the remit of the production team.
- Ensuring the 'exit routes' proposed by the play are discussed with reference to local services in follow-up activities could also be significant, although this is again difficult to control directly, especially as the play moves beyond Merseyside.

Inclusion in the Arts

- The potential of *Terriers* as an arts inclusion initiative is underemphasised in the existing annual reports.
- The suggestion that *Terriers* brings high quality theatre to new and unfamiliar audiences was well-supported across the datasets.
- Although the specific examples given were few and anecdotal, it was suggested that *Terriers* has the potential to act as a 'hook' to introduce young people to broader creative and even professional opportunities. This is due to the broader networks and activities of the Royal Court Liverpool Trust and its employees, as well as the appeal of the play itself.
- Young people's ability to identify with the cast is also valuable here. The casting of the play introduces young people in Merseyside to professional actors who sound like themselves. Ethnic diversity within the cast and production team offers positive black and minority ethnic (BAME) role models. It also enables a positive, informal educational experience for audiences who are unused to encountering BAME professionals in the neighbourhoods where they live and learn.
- The introduction of public performances also enables the play to be shown to a wider audience. Groups that might be unable to host a performance of *Terriers* due to small numbers (and accompanying considerations of cost-effectiveness) are invited to bring young people to these performances.

- Ensuring young people not in mainstream education are not excluded from the performance, or from exposure to the play's messages, was identified as a positive development by some interviewees and the co-researchers.

A High Quality Performance

- The high performance values of the play were widely recognised and praised across the datasets.
- There are clearly some tensions between the desire to maintain high performance values and achieve social impact in line with the other objectives, particularly the limitations imposed by working in non-professional theatre spaces and the need to minimise times for set construction and pre-performance checks.
- It is also important to recognise that the data collected for this study support the suggestion that there is an interrelationship between high performance values and the achievement of other objectives. The quality of the play was commonly presented as key to its popularity and ability to engage young people.
- This suggests there is a need to protect *Terriers* as a 'performance' as well as develop *Terriers* as a 'project'. Some interviewees and survey respondents were keen to identify additional issues for the play to tackle. There may be a limit to how often new 'topical' themes can be introduced at the request of stakeholders without threatening the authenticity and impact of the narrative, as well as the integrity of *Terriers* as an art work.
- There may also be some areas of useful compromise, such as the inclusion of a recorded performance in the educational toolkit. This would support educators who are unable to attend a school or public performance in using the toolkit effectively. This could potentially promote greater take-up of the educational toolkit and, assuming performances could proceed with less direct supervision, some resolution of threats to an immersive performance in schools and colleges.
- Responses from education professionals and the data collected at the case study school suggest that the live performance is valued by both staff and students. It seems unlikely that a recording for use by teachers would be viewed as an adequate replacement for the *Terriers* play.

Introduction

Terriers is a play written by Maurice Bessman and directed by Miriam Mussa. It was commissioned by the Merseyside Police in response to concerns about gun and gang crime, which intensified locally following the murder of 11-year-old Rhys Jones in Croxteth in 2007.

The play is performed by six actors, who play the characters of 'Aldo', 'Chelsea', 'Drew', 'Eightball', 'Eve' and 'Luke'. Each character has a distinctive narrative within the play. The opening scene, which is set dramatically to music and has no dialogue, shows both Luke and Drew being shot. They next appear in an undefined 'afterlife', where they can see and hear the other characters, but only interact by asking questions (effectively functioning as a 'conscience'). Under the guidance of Luke, the gang leader he shot before his own retaliatory murder, Drew comes to understand the futility of both their deaths and attempts to influence Aldo's decisions to prevent him from making the same mistake.

Meanwhile, Aldo struggles to decide if he wants to fully commit to the gang with which he is becoming increasingly involved or find another path. Supported by Chelsea (described to us by Maurice Bessman as 'the moral heart of the play'), he finds the courage to resist the influence – and, as the audience ultimately learns, treachery – of Eightball, the young adult leader of 'The Terriers'. Whilst the conclusion is redemptive, Eightball's interactions with Aldo, Chelsea and their vulnerable friend Eve, with whom his exploitative relationship becomes increasingly apparent, allow a powerful portrayal of risks facing 'gang-involved' young men and women.

Since 2008, *Terriers* has been seen by over 120,000 young people from secondary and primary schools across Merseyside and the UK (Terriers Play 2016). The play has also been performed for young people and the general public in community venues and theatre spaces in London, Manchester, Telford and Winchester. Public performances and stakeholder events have been staged at the Royal Court Theatre in Liverpool. *Terriers* has also been staged at a number of prisons and young offenders' institutes across the North West.

This research project aims to evaluate *Terriers* as a drama-based intervention that combines a performance of *Terriers* with educational follow-up activities. These

activities take various forms depending on the venue, but usually involve a post-performance facilitated discussion led by the play's actors (the Q&A), out of 'character' and in their own clothes.

The agencies responsible for delivering and developing *Terriers* – originally the Merseyside Police, supported by Liverpool Football Club, and more recently the Royal Court Liverpool Trust [RCLT] – have also developed educational resources for pre- or post- performance use by teachers and educators. The first educational CD-ROM was produced by the Ariel Trust in 2010 (see Moglione 2011). The latest toolkit was commissioned by RCLT in 2014. It was funded by the Big Lottery and produced by As Creatives. It comprises warm-ups, lesson plans and hand-outs for students, and is intended to be adapted for use by individual schools, colleges or pupil referral units.

This research project follows the launch of this toolkit as part of the 2014-15 tour and focuses particularly on work with schools and colleges.

Background

Recent decades have seen a growing national and international interest in the ways in which young people might benefit from arts and drama-based education. Such approaches are thought to be particularly pertinent when working with marginalised groups (e.g. Bamford 2006; Khan 2013). It is suggested that they can provide the dual advantage of enabling positive personal change amongst participants, for example, by increasing self-confidence or willingness to engage with educational opportunities, and by enhancing the communities in which they live for ‘the benefit of all’ (Newman et al. 2003: 313).

There has simultaneously been an increased emphasis on the potential of arts and drama-based interventions to contribute to the rehabilitation of ‘young offenders’ and the improvement of outcomes for young people identified as ‘at risk’ of offending. They tend to be seen as cost-effective ways of improving the circumstances of young people in areas that might pose as triggers to offending, such as lack of engagement with the educational process and/or appropriate role models (see, for example, Angus McLewin Associates 2011; Catterall et al. 2012; Hughes 2005; Stone et al. 1997; 1998).

Whilst these claims are impressive and appealing, demonstrating ‘effectiveness’ of arts and drama-based initiatives is problematic. Methodological difficulties beset this area of work (Etherton and Prentki 2006; Johnson et al. 2011; Reeves 2002), not least because, as Newman et al (2003: 318) acknowledge, ‘[t]he methods and the emotional dispositions of artists and evaluators frequently lie at very different poles’. Concerns about the value of ‘traditional’ quasi-experimental methods and outcome focused evaluation in yielding genuine knowledge of effective interventions have increased interest in qualitative evaluation methodologies.

Qualitative work might lead to discovery of the more subtle and nuanced benefits of arts initiatives. Such benefits are often intangible and, as Thompson (2009: 7) argues, we must understand ‘affects’ before being able to comprehend any ‘effects’, such as social impact, since by ‘[b]y failing to recognise affect – bodily responses, sensations and aesthetic pleasure – much of the power of performance can be missed’.

It has been suggested that qualitative research in this field has traditionally been over-reliant on the anecdotal (e.g. Etherton and Prentki 2006). Problematic too is the issue that '[e]ncounters with the creative arts are frequently described in terms closer to epiphany than to a simple learning experience' (Newman et al. 2003: 312-313). There have been calls for increased rigour to allow practitioners involved in arts-based criminal justice interventions 'more convincingly to demonstrate the value of their work to government, funders and philanthropic givers' (Arts Alliance 2011: 6). Research methodologies that focus on the *coproduction* of knowledge rather than the *assessment* of practice offer rich possibilities for understanding and achieving shared goals (see Kelly et al. 2015 for further discussion).

Methodology

Our research sought to qualitatively explore how *Terriers* creates, engages and influences audiences, with the intention of understanding the social impact of the intervention, including its potential contribution to crime prevention. This involved:

- Understanding what *Terriers* aims to achieve
- Investigating and analysing young people's experiences of 'engaging' with *Terriers* and related follow-up activities
- Exploring how *Terriers* creates 'audiences'

A multi-method approach was utilised to explore the impact of the play and follow-up materials from a diversity of perspectives. This included participatory research with Year 10 pupil 'co-researchers' at a case study school. This school was chosen because its Safer Schools Officer at the time had an established relationship with the RCLT and was a champion of the *Terriers* play. Co-researchers were involved in evaluating reactions to the play at the school using innovative arts-based methods. The research project also incorporated semi-structured interviews and a focus group with a number of stakeholders and an online survey of all schools and colleges who were participating in the 2015-16 tour of the play. The researchers carried out ethnographic observations at several performances of the play as well as analysing a range of documentation supplied by the RCLT including strategy documents and a previous evaluation (Moglione 2011; 2012; Royal Court Liverpool Trust and Merseyside Police Matrix Team 2013; Royal Court Liverpool Trust 2014; 2015; 2016).

Participatory and arts-based activities

Two members of the research team worked with the case study school and Year 10 students using a participatory research approach so that young people had a meaningful level of involvement in the evaluation of *Terriers*. This was slow to build up momentum and involved considerable time and effort, but as this is often the case in this style of approach, it was neither a surprise nor a hindrance to the project. On 22nd October 2015, the researchers, together with two of the play's actors, presented the aims of the research in a Year 10 assembly. There were around 150 students in Year 10, and many of them had seen the play previously (when they were in Year 7). A

number of students expressed interest in the research project, but the recruitment process was somewhat stymied because half term fell the following week. A series of research meetings, which took place during lunchtimes at the school, gathered momentum through November. Five self-selected students attended regularly and took the role of 'co-researchers'.

The co-researchers helped plan the evaluation event that took place on 30th November 2015, directly after the *Terriers* performance at the school. This lasted for 1.5 hours and refreshments were provided for students. A number of methods were used to capture students' reactions. In order to manage the large number of students, they were divided into groups that rotated through various activities including a Q&A session with the actors. The evaluation methods included:

The blank canvases

Six large blank canvases were supplied along with fabric pens in a range of different colours and nib sizes. Students were encouraged to express their reactions to the play on these canvases. A considerable number of students engaged with this activity – girls in particular – and appeared to greatly enjoy it. The researchers encouraged participants to draw as well as write on the canvases.

The black cab

A black cab was parked in the playground at the back of the school. The researchers engaged a film production company to set up a video camera in the cab. Interested students took it in turns to get into the back of the cab and to film their reactions to the play. The cameraman sat in the front of the cab and asked suitable questions of participants about their reactions to the play. These self-selecting participants included a mix of boys and girls. Most students entered the cab in pairs.

Filmed soundbites

Researchers supplied co-researchers with iPads so that they were able to ask their fellow students for 'soundbites' on the play and film them. One student chose to film the whole of the evaluation event and to speed up the film so that it was compressed to just a couple of minutes.

Co-researcher contributions

A further series of lunchtime meetings with the co-researchers took place through December to undertake analysis of the data collected at the evaluation event. These meetings also comprised discussions of the co-researchers' reactions to the play, and during these they disclosed stories of the violence that they had experienced in their lives. The use of the follow-up classroom activities was also discussed. The researchers met four more times with the co-researchers during spring and summer 2016, and the group gave a presentation at a research event at Edge Hill University on the research methods used in the project. The co-researchers described a sense of achievement from their involvement in the project; they developed a range of skills during the process and provided an additional dimension to the research project.

The co-researchers will also be invited to contribute to future dissemination activities. The possibility of producing a postcard of summary findings for the case study school has been discussed with the co-researchers. The achievement of this plan will depend on available funding.

Interviews with key stakeholders

Eight semi-structured interviews were carried out with stakeholders between June and September 2016. Seven interview participants were identified by RCLT. One interview participant known to the research team, but not identified by RCLT, was approached after responding to the school survey, due to difficulties accessing other identified stakeholders. In what follows, stakeholders are identified by role:

- Writer
- Director
- Tour Manager/Technical Manager (dual role)
- Development Manager
- Teacher, Secondary School, Liverpool (henceforth, Teacher 1)
- Teacher, Secondary School, Knowsley (henceforth, Teacher 2)
- Safer Schools Officer
- Regeneration Officer, Housing Association (henceforth, Regeneration Officer)

Participants were questioned on their involvement with *Terriers* and reasons for being involved, views on the effectiveness of the intervention and barriers to success as well as their thoughts on the role of the arts in transforming lives. The term 'production team' is used in what follows as a means of referring to all of those directly involved in the development and delivery of *Terriers*, including the Writer, Director, Tour Manager/Technical Manager and Development Manager. It also includes the actors, who are identified by character, as below. We incorporated some comments provided by members of the production team after interviews took place into a second draft of the research report.

Group interview (i.e. focus group)

A focus group was held with three of the actors during the rehearsals for the Autumn 2016 tour. This explored similar issues to the interviews with stakeholders and involved actors playing 'Luke' (who is also the show's Choreographer), 'Chelsea' and 'Eve'. These actors are subsequently identified by character.

School and college survey

An online survey of schools and colleges participating in the 2015-16 tour was opened in June 2016, using the Bristol Online Survey tool. This enabled some comment on the typicality of the case study school while also gathering more information about how *Terriers* creates audiences. RCLT provided details of 39 schools and colleges in Merseyside that had participated in the 2015-16 tour. This was revised to a list of 38 prior to distribution, due to a cancellation. Each institution was allocated an individual password (ensuring that the survey could only be completed after an invitation and only once by each institution) and contacted by email, using the RCLT mailing list. Several reminder emails were sent between June and September 2016. One additional school made contact to explain they had had to cancel the performance of *Terriers* and was subsequently excluded from the sample. It should also be noted that the list provided to the research team did not equate exactly with the list of 33 schools and colleges identified in RCLT's 2015-16 annual report, nor did it cover schools or colleges outside Merseyside (Royal Court Liverpool Trust 2016).

Fifteen schools and colleges responded to the survey, giving an overall response rate of 41%. Respondents were offered the option of complete anonymity, but most chose

to identify themselves or their school to the research team. All respondents were invited to forward password details to a suitable colleague if they were unable to complete the survey. In one case, the same contact name was provided for two schools. Responses for those schools were returned by staff reporting different roles. Three survey respondents also took part in interviews, and care has been taken to ensure that any quantified claims involving both datasets take this into account. Numbers of responses have been indicated for quantified claims as questions were optional. Some institutions that did not complete the survey indicated that they had independently returned feedback to RCLT, during the normal tour cycle, but these data are not included in this report.

Ethnographic observations and analysis of documentation

Ethnographic observations of the dramatic performance and the Q&A were carried out by the researchers at a number of venues, from December 2013 through to January 2016. This provided a useful grounding for the design of survey and interview tools as well as providing insight at the analysis stage. We have also studied a range of documentation provided by the RCLT including their stakeholder engagement strategies. These have been useful in helping us understand how audiences are created for the play and how consistency is promoted through their partnerships and networks. We have also received RCLT reports on the *Terriers* play (Royal Court Liverpool Trust and Merseyside Police Matrix Team 2013; Royal Court Liverpool Trust 2014; 2015; 2016) and the findings of two previous evaluations carried out by Gill Moglione (2011; 2012).

Further plans

The adopted methodology offers the potential for follow-up and longitudinal work, but no plans have been developed at this stage.

What does *Terriers* aim to achieve?

To understand the social impact of *Terriers*, it is helpful to begin by exploring *Terriers* as a drama-based intervention. In other words, to attempt to understand how the objectives of the *Terriers* performance and follow-up activities are understood by those directly involved with *Terriers*, by project stakeholders and by audiences.

Aims and Objectives

The Royal Court Liverpool Trust and Merseyside Police Matrix Team (2013: 5) suggested that developing *Terriers* supported the aims of the Merseyside Police and Royal Court in the following ways:

Police

1. Work with our partners to protect individuals and communities from the blight of gun crime
2. Seek to support individuals and communities by removing the vulnerabilities through focussed action planning and multi-agency activity
3. Working in partnership to raise awareness of the threats from gun crime and wherever possible identify routes away from the offending cycle
4. Reduce the number of First Time Entrants to the Criminal Justice System

Royal Court

1. Work in partnership to ensure our work has greater social impact and depth for all
2. Ensure our work reaches artistic excellence and is accessible for all
3. Inspire and encourage more young people to take part in the arts
4. Use the arts to significantly enhance people's lives and help to change perceptions and behaviours

Similar aims and objectives were proposed by project stakeholders and audiences in the data collected as part of this research project. These have been grouped under five themes for the purposes of analysis:

- Deterring young people from ‘gangs’ and gun crime
- Personal, social and health education
- Community development and informal education
- Inclusion in the arts
- A high-quality performance

It should be noted that summarising how the aims and objectives of the project were discussed in various datasets was not straightforward. Agencies within multi-agency partnerships have varied priorities, which means they – like the Police and the Royal Court above – may see different kinds of value in *Terriers*. This was acknowledged by the production team when asked how they understood ‘success’ and what ‘success’ might look like to their partners, and the ability of *Terriers* to appeal to different audiences was presented as a strength. The five themes we have chosen reflect the range of responses within the data, as well as the aims identified in the Development Plan. This ensures the views of stakeholders and the breadth of potential contributions can be considered.

Deterring young people from ‘gangs’ and gun crime

Terriers was originally funded by the Merseyside Police in response to concerns about ‘gangs’ and gun crime in Merseyside. All four of the Police aims identified in the Development Plan (ibid.: 5) relate to gun and/or youth crime, including raising awareness of the threats of gun crime, preventing young people from becoming involved in the criminal justice system or identifying ‘routes away from the offending cycle’. Those involved with the play, and the promotional material on the *Terriers* website, continue to emphasise these messages:

What do you do when you’re fifteen and live on an estate where you get street cred for being in a gang? What do you do when you’ve got the chance of a decent future but the pull of the gang is too strong? And what are you gonna do when one of the gang passes you a gun and tells you, honour is at stake; use the gun to show you’re one of us? *Terriers* is a play which deals with these problems. (*Terriers* Play 2016)

Similar themes were also identified in responses to the school and college survey. When we asked why the team were invited to perform, 47% of the responses (7 of 15)

made direct reference to ‘gangs’ or gun crime. It should be noted that the Police aims include a general youth crime prevention aim – reducing the number of first time entrants to the criminal justice system – as well as gun crime focused aims. Whether or not strategies used to deter young people from ‘gangs’ and gun crime will deter young people from crime more generally is criminologically complicated. The concept of a ‘gang’ is also contested, as it is used to refer to a variety of formal and informal structures and groupings, with quite different associations to criminal activity (e.g. Alexander 2008; Goldson 2008). It is, therefore, problematic to assume that the term ‘gang’ is being used in the same way by everyone in this report. The final section of the report returns to such questions and considers the potential impact of *Terriers* in this area.

Personal, social and health education

The Royal Court aim to ‘use the arts to significantly enhance people’s lives and help to change perceptions and behaviours’ and the Merseyside Police aim to ‘seek to support individuals and communities by removing the vulnerabilities through focussed action planning and multi-agency activity’ resonate with the objectives identified by schools and colleges (Royal Court Liverpool Trust and Merseyside Police Matrix Team 2013: 5). Most of the respondents to the online survey emphasised broader social issues and support when explaining why they invited the team to perform. As one respondent to the school and college survey suggested, the play can be seen as:

A different way to get the message across to young people with regards to the many dangers that they face in their communities. Not just the obvious gangs, drugs, weapons, but also peer pressure, sexual exploitation, sexting, etc. (Survey Respondent)

These issues also form part of the current outward facing publicity for the play:

Terriers explores the immense pressure Aldo, and boys like him, are under from gang mates and his girlfriend. The play throws up the moral dilemmas and life changing decisions that some young boys and girls have to make. (*Terriers* Play 2016)

For some teachers, this broader emphasis on supporting young people's healthy personal development was tied directly to curriculum objectives relating to Personal, Health and Social Education (PSHE) or Citizenship Education:

Terriers are invited in as part of our PSHE programme. They deliver awareness and engage our pupils with current social issues. (Survey Respondent)

It's part of the Year 9 Citizenship Scheme of Work – it's entitled the Criminal Justice System. We look at young people and crime, the law and young people, anti-social behaviour, gangs and peer pressure, joint enterprise as well as the role of the police and the court system. (Survey Respondent)

Interviewees also reported that relevance to curriculum objectives underpinned the development of educational resources produced with the Ariel Trust and, most recently, As Creatives.

Community development and informal education

The Police aims listed above also indicate that multi-agency support for individuals and communities can form part of a crime prevention strategy. The research project outlined below focused particularly on work in schools and colleges, but work in communities was discussed in the interviews. One partner suggested that they had commissioned performances of *Terriers* in targeted primary schools, and also funded performances for young people's parents and for older adults in community centres and in sheltered schemes:

People were feeling scared in the community, and so [...] we wanted to put *Terriers* on for older residents as well. (Regeneration Officer)

This was presented as part of a broader strategy to address 'neighbourhood issues' and provide 'community reassurance'. The Regeneration Officer suggested that promoting intergenerational understanding could help to address fear of crime. It was also suggested that the play offered an 'educational approach' for young people and parents that could sit alongside enforcement-led approaches to crime and anti-social behaviour. Members of the team from RCLT also emphasised this kind of informal

education as an objective when discussing developing new audiences. Taking the play to new venues such as community centres was seen as an opportunity to prompt conversations between young people, parents and other adults. This has the potential to support the Police aims relating to awareness raising and community support. Along with the development of other new audiences such as prisons, this work also relates to the Royal Court's identified aims in the Development Plan, particularly the need to 'work in partnership to ensure our work has greater social impact and depth for all' and 'use the arts to significantly enhance people's lives and help to change perceptions and behaviours' (Royal Court Liverpool Trust and Merseyside Police Matrix Team 2013: 5).

Inclusion in the arts

The Royal Court also aims to: 'ensure our work reaches artistic excellence and is accessible for all' and 'inspire and encourage more young people to take part in the arts' (ibid.: 5). Some of the survey respondents and most of those interviewed also expressed a belief in the importance of exposing young people who might otherwise not had access to theatre to a high quality performance. As the Director indicated:

For the future of the theatre, they're our potential theatre-goers, potential theatre producers, potential new actors. (Director)

It was suggested that inclusion in the arts could be a happy by-product of taking the *Terriers* tour to a variety of schools and communities, but the Development Manager suggested this had also become a legitimate independent objective now funding had diversified:

The Arts Council is interested in good-quality art reaching people who don't necessarily see it, making it accessible to everybody. [...] They're interested in how *Terriers* is reaching disadvantaged communities and people who've never seen theatre, and then how that is then leaving a legacy for them to involve themselves in theatre more often. It does that anyway. And then, the police are obviously interested in getting us into crime hotspots. That's what we're doing. (Development Manager)

The idea that actors could function as 'role models' to young people interested in careers in the arts was also raised. This is discussed below.

A high quality performance

Finally, some interviewees emphasised the importance of high performance values for their own sake, which reflects the Royal Court's identified aim to 'achieve artistic excellence' (ibid.5):

I think everybody wants it to be big and maybe, you know, have loads more dancers in it and stuff like that, but if [...] for 90% of the time, we're touring it around schools, then it's not possible. You're sort of limited to what you can set up in an hour and then go and drive to the other side of the city to set up in an hour. (Tour Manager/Technical Manager)

This was particularly true for those creatively involved in the play (e.g. the actors, Writer, Director and Tour Manager/Technical Manager), but interview data and school survey responses also indicate that some teachers were keen to use the play as a means of teaching the technical aspects of drama.

Structure of the report

The artistic dimension of the project is explored more fully in 'Engaging the imagination' below. The unique abilities of the arts are examined here in the first of five sections that discuss the data collected through the research project. 'Authenticity and identification' looks at how the realism of the *Terriers* play, its acting, language and costumes, leads to audience members recognising particular characters and identifying with aspects of the narratives. This appeared to be an important aspect of encouraging reflection and learning. 'Relationships and support structures' begins by looking at the audience reaction to the relationships portrayed in the play before moving on to explore relationships outside the play and the support structures that are in place in schools to assist young people with some of the issues raised in *Terriers*. 'Audiences and audience creation' includes discussion of the most 'appropriate' age of audiences and consideration of how and why research participants think the play might be targeted at specific audiences. 'Performance or project?' explores the different ways that *Terriers* is described and the implications that this 'naming' has. The section then explores descriptions and assessments of the facilitated discussion (or Q&A) which takes place after the performance, and the use of the educational

toolkit. The report concludes by reflecting on the extent to which *Terriers* is able to achieve the ambitious objectives outlined above.

Engaging the imagination

The arts provide powerful ways of capturing people's imagination. The co-researchers at the case study school self-selected to take part in the research and all did so because of their interest in the arts. For some of the co-researchers this interest included the visual arts as well as performing arts. At one of the lunchtime meetings, a co-researcher told the group what drawing and painting did for him: 'literally, I've been in art and apart from the first five minutes when I couldn't find my way through hell, I was calm'. Three of the co-researchers referred to drama as a release and an escape, 'a way of venting' and a place where they were 'actually allowed to shout'. One remarked that when she engaged in artistic pursuits she felt really engaged 'like you're in your own little world, like nothing can touch you whilst you're doing this'. Several of the adults interviewed also discussed how theatre is a 'powerful' tool to engage. This section begins by exploring this idea. It then moves on to look at how theatre is often a new experience for *Terriers'* audiences. Affect and emotion are then discussed before some of the visual data from the case study school is presented.

An immersive experience

A strong theme throughout the research was that watching the play was a completely immersive experience and 'you can kind of be yourself in your own little bubble as you're watching it' (Development Manager). The audience's senses are 'prodded, through different means, through the emotions and through the physicality and the wow of the movement and the performance in front of them as well, and the lights' (Teacher 1). As such, it was reported that the audience reacts in a physical manner with their 'mouths open' (Writer) and 'on the edge of their seats, like they wanted to be involved' (Development Manager). Even in community settings, when the audience can get up and leave, the Director suggested that they tended to be engaged and 'leaning in' to the extent that you can 'hear a pin drop at the right time'. This is reflected in the school and college survey: 80% of responses (12 of 15) suggested that the student audience was strongly engaged, and the same number (12 of 14) suggested they 'strongly enjoyed' *Terriers*. (One respondent was unable to assess engagement or enjoyment, having missed the performance.) Reported feedback on staff reactions suggested staff were also 'very engaged', 'very positive' and 'keen to rebook'.

The play opens with a dramatic and well-executed dance scene. It was suggested that this movement and physicality at the beginning of the play 'is a really effective way to grab [the audience's] attention' (Teacher 1), which 'completely hooked' the audience (Tour Manager/Technical Manager). The Director also talked about consistently positive reactions to the episodes of slow motion in the piece. She described how she often uses slow motion as a tool to create an affective experience – i.e. one that is emotional and moving – and to try to get the audience to feel what the character is thinking. This experience of thinking deeply 'feels real', rather than the actual slow motion, 'because that's not real, it's slow motion' (Director).

The power of dance and movement to engage young people was also commented on within the survey:

Blown away! They were strongly engaged and wanted to see the play again. They loved the set and its surprises, they loved the stylised movement and choreography. (Survey Respondent)

They love it and 'buy in' to the characters. They love the humour, music, lighting and movement. They also love the emotional parts!!! And always want to see it again! (Survey Respondent)

The relationship between seeing, thinking, feeling and sensing that is provoked by the combination of music, dance, lights, professional writing and acting is complex, and it can be difficult to unpick which element created the affect. Overall, the positive responses from audience members talked about a combination of all these elements within this '3D piece of theatre' (Teacher 1).

A new experience

Theatre can be a new experience for those who watch the *Terriers* play. The Director had heard young people leaving the performance declare: 'That was the best film I've ever seen!'. The Tour Manager/Technical Manager was aware that they were 'taking a piece of theatre, essentially, to young people that have maybe never been, or [are] ever going to be, in a theatre or know anything about it'. Where this is a new experience, or where prior experience of theatre involved 'a pantomime at Christmas' (Safer Schools Officer), audience members may not be aware that it is rarely 'de

rigueur' to shout out whilst watching a performance. The Writer, however, sees this as a positive response: 'They're just expressing like they would do when they're watching the telly'.

Whilst *Terriers* is not an interactive theatre performance, the over-riding consensus of the production team is that those watching it should be allowed to express themselves freely throughout the performance and not be silenced in any way. During the school tour, teachers were advised not to 'shush' the pupils in the audience:

The hardest thing sometimes is getting the teachers and adults to stop telling the kids to shush. It's theatre, they're allowed to emote [...] I mean if you go to the theatre, you should emote. (Director)

We obviously explain to them before it 'please, no matter what happens or the kids are doing, do not just go over and just try and get them to shut up or move them. Just leave them to do what they're doing. Let us be the ones to control them in a way with the play'. ('Eve')

So they do shout out at times but the, the actors, sort of encourage that. I know when I've spoken to them before, a lot of teachers think it's got to be silence in the auditorium when you've got a – because there's a product – well actually no. Not for this kind of thing. (Safer Schools Officer)

The production team want the audience to engage emotionally when watching the play, and it is therefore important that people are able to express themselves without their feelings or reactions being policed. The Development Manager stated that the play changed her perspective on theatre and how it should be 'viewed' rather than 'watched'. The fact that there is purposively no introduction before the play starts, and no ground rules set out to the audience beforehand, allows young people to be led by their emotions and talk about the play to their peers throughout, to react and to shout out.

The actors commented that a stage performance is very different to watching a film in the cinema, where you are inclined to miss important elements of the plot if people are chatting around you. With a live performance, there is the capacity for the cast to be responsive. Every show is slightly different, and the actors can take their lead from the

audience and can 'hold this moment for a bit longer because [they] seem interested or they're laughing here or they're all shouting now' ('Luke'/Chorographer).

The cast members enjoy the performance more when they are getting a response from the audience because this lets them know that the audience is engaged. In fact, the performers believe that their 'best performances [are] when the kids are really going for it and the audience are getting involved' ('Chelsea'). The audience's reaction is therefore important to the very quality of the play as well as to its impact. As the Safer Schools Officer commented, 'I think if they showed that play and there was no reaction from the audience it will have failed. It must have been a bad performance, something's wrong really if there's no reaction from any of the kids because, because it is so up and down the journey of it'. Conversely, that young people are engaged enough to travel on this journey with the actors may be because it feels authentic to them, and because they identify with the play's characters and themes. This is discussed below.

An affective experience

Watching the *Terriers* play appears very often to provoke an emotional response. Observed audiences expressed a series of different reactions throughout the performance, which reflected reports of reactions within interviews and the school survey. Young people expressed frustration or anger with the actions of a character and vocalised their discontent throughout the performance, either directly to the actors or to their peers.

The bit where Aldo takes the gun. A couple of the boys are, you know, they're telling him not to take the gun, which is quite, you know, shocking, because at the beginning they're all for the Eightball character.
(Development Manager)

You'll hear the girls like, they'll be like, some of them are swearing and everything in the audience, like, 'cause they're getting that into it, like, 'Ah she's a bitch her, I would rag her head', and all that. Saying things like that, you know, in the audience because they are getting into it'.
(Eve')

The Director suggests this is often a spontaneous response to the action in the play and one which might actually surprise the very person who had shouted out:

Sometimes when people shout out, I get a buzz off that, when they go, 'Oh don't...' and then they realise [that they've voiced this thought] 'Ohh'.
(Director)

This instinctive response from audience members might also be said to demonstrate that the audience cared about the characters in the play and identified with them in a relatively short space of time (see below for further discussion on identification). Audiences appear to champion the decision of Aldo and Chelsea to move away from 'The Terriers' gang. The Development Manager suggests that when both characters stood up for themselves there was very often 'clapping and applause and laughter, and, you know, they're all quite happy and relieved'. This could also be seen to evidence that the audience had understood one of the central messages of the play (i.e. not being involved with 'gangs').

Laughter is sometimes used by the Writer and Director to ease tensions within the performance and to allow the audience to release their emotions. Frequently, after particular scenes, the cast will have to 'wait a couple of minutes for them to quieten down again' (Tour Manager/Technical Manager). At other times there have been episodes of laughter which is a 'nervous laughter [at] moments when they feel uncomfortable' ('Luke'/Choreographer). These can be at both expected and unexpected junctures of the play. The actors talked about how boys may feel uncomfortable about letting their feelings show. This might result in 'a bit of a nervous reaction from some of the lads' ('Luke'/Choreographer). Girls, on the other hand, according to the actors, might be less inclined to attempt to hide their affective reactions. They commented that when: '[Eightball]' looks and talks you can just see the girls' skin crawling' ('Luke'/Choreographer). On occasions, audience members were overcome with emotion and the play brought them to tears. As the Development Manager comments 'You know it makes people cry, and people have cried watching *Terriers*'. The general feeling amongst the actors was that adults reacted more emotionally than young people. As 'Chelsea' said, 'I think adults are just a bit more open with showing their emotions than the kids are'.

and support structures section, portmanteaus of characters' names, such as 'Eveball' were also recurrent (see Figure 6).

The responses were overwhelmingly positive and Figure 2 includes a range of these enthusiastic words and images such as 'brilliant', 'amazing' and 'well good' together with smiley faces. A drawing of a gun is coloured in a soft orange and the text beside it reads: 'Load your gun with hopes not bullets!'



Figure 2: Selected *positive* text and images from the canvases

Even the more negative responses (Figure 3) tended to reflect the darker themes in the plot, rather than reactions to the actual performance. These included sad emoticons/emojis and images of guns and broken heart symbols, as well as words such as 'death' and 'violence'. In the videos, pupils described the *Terriers* play as 'upsetting', 'sad' and 'scary', and explained that this was because the issues it presented are actually a very real part of their lives.





Figure 3: Selected *negative* text and images from the canvases

The immediate responses from the case study school revealed that young people had successfully identified the play’s key themes. For example, elements of the canvases illustrated young people’s assessments of the consequences of ‘gang membership’ and the use of weapons; they also referred to peer pressure and sexual exploitation (see Figure 4).



Figure 4: Selected *thematic* text and images from the canvases

Although the responses are typically brief, this evidenced nonetheless that students had processed and understood the drama. A belief in the benefits of the approach is also reflected in the school and college survey, where respondents suggested that the play develops an awareness of issues and prompts discussions. Several respondents also highlighted ongoing discussion, with students talking about *Terriers* days or even weeks after the performance. Overall, then, this supports the importance of *Terriers* in conveying key educational messages to a target audience through an emotional and affecting piece of theatre.

Authenticity and identification

This section begins by looking at the tendency of audiences to describe *Terriers* as 'realistic'. It explores the fact that there is sometimes confusion amongst audience members as to what is real when it comes to the writing, the acting and even the props. The design of *Terriers* and its distancing from more conventional and didactic Theatre in Education models is an important strategy in terms of the play being able to provide an immersive experience. This section returns to themes previously raised concerning the power of the arts to promote reflection. Whilst the realism of some of the narratives is queried, there is little doubt that audience members are able to identify with at least some of the issues raised. Unfortunately, given the dark and difficult issues tackled, as the Development Manager told us, 'there is something in there for everybody'.

A 'realistic' performance?

A recurring theme in young people's immediate responses to the play at the case study school was the 'realistic' nature of the storyline, the acting and the clothes worn by the actors (see Figure 5). Given that the play incorporates dance, 'slow motion' scenes and a supernatural element (i.e., two of the main characters are dead and are communicating from the afterlife), this emphasis on realism is particularly notable.

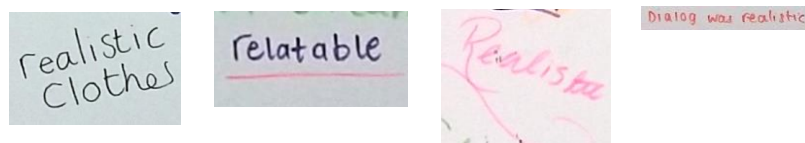


Figure 5: Selected *realism* text from the canvases

It was certainly the intention of the play's Writer and Director that *Terriers* should be as authentic as possible. As such, they distance themselves from the more didactic, 'teach and preach' forms of Theatre in Education. The Writer explained how he would 'try and bury' the play's message in a story and let the audience work it out, 'rather than wagging the finger'. This means that the audience has to reflect on the play's content in order to 'work it out'. Viewers become active participants in interpreting the storylines and characters' actions. This was supported by comments made by

teachers in the interviews and the school and college survey, with one survey respondent noting how the play 'never once patronised' its audience.

The Development Manager also described her memories of more traditional, instructive, theatre in education approaches when she was at school. These included 'hammy' acting and stops within the performance at which point the audience would be given facts about the issue at stake. *Terriers*, she explained, is different:

There's no talking to the audience. I think it's quite real as well, because you feel like you're in it. You feel like the cast are the real people themselves [...] actually, when I first saw it, I was surprised to see them when they came out in their normal clothes. So, at the end of the play when they come out in their normal clothes, I was a bit like, 'Who are they?' (Laughter) Because they didn't look anything like – and I did think that they were gang members. (Development Manager)

The young people who watch the play often have the same misapprehensions, as it frequently transpires in the Q&A sessions that routinely follow the play. The Safer Schools Officer explained that students think that the actors, 'if they're not them characters themselves, they've been involved in gang kind of activity because the acting's so good'. The confusion over what is and is not 'real' extends to the props used in the play. Members of the production team highlighted a ubiquitous question from the Q&A session: is the gun real?. This is explored further in the 'Performance or project?' section below.

Reflection

The Director provided an anecdote about a group of young people in alternative education who were reluctantly brought in on a bus to see the play. Staff reported that they were 'all rowdy on the way there, shouting [...] "Sir, sir," this and this'. On the way back, though, 'for the half-hour journey, no-one said a peep'. The Director understood this silence to be due to the young people reflecting on what they had experienced. The Development Manager saw this as a particular power of the arts: 'whether you read a book or you go and see a piece of theatre or a piece of comedy, you could be thinking about it weeks later and something will be relevant to you'. In this sense, she understood *Terriers* to be 'a piece of art' as well as being educational. She recalled

that, in Croydon, 'a young person tweeted us maybe two or three weeks after we'd been there and just made a comment about the play. And we were like, "We've been gone for three weeks, but they've been thinking about it, because they've just tweeted us just now". So, I think it has the ability to do that, theatre'.

Recognition without stereotypes

The actors are chosen carefully for the play. The Director provided some insight into the casting process:

Sometimes when I'm auditioning, even when I'm auditioning some of these guys to play, they give me the stereotype. I said, 'I don't want the stereotype,' I said, 'because that's not real to young people either'. It's just, no. (Director)

Crucially important to the authenticity of the play and the 'naturalistic' acting is the language employed. A number of the interviewees and survey respondents discussed how successful it was that local actors with local accents were used. As the Safer Schools Officer expressed it, 'they speak to the kids in the right way'. Careful research was carried out for the play with young people who had been involved in 'gangs' or who were on the edge of 'gangs'; here their use of language was seen as important as well as their stories. The Writer noted that, 'If the language is not right for these kids, they just switch off'. It has to be 'street', but because of the fact that the play is going into school, the language has to be free from any profanity. The play is certainly successful at employing highly charged, authentic language without having the characters swear. For instance, the Director and Writer described how some schools raised concerns about 'foul language'. Of course, this was a misconception: the play does not contain any bad language, but the authentic way that characters speak provides the impression that it does.

The careful research carried out by the Writer extends to characters' clothes and hairstyles. Advice on particular current fashions is given by local shops, and observations are made on more general cultural shifts: gang members might currently grow their hair rather than appearing uniformly shaven-headed, looking 'a bit more chic' than they did a few years ago. The slang, too, is updated from time to time by the Writer and Director. These subtle changes allow the play to remain authentic and, as

one interviewee described it, 'fresh'. This is why the Writer and Director are reluctant to record a DVD of the play, despite requests by schools: 'The minute it goes on DVD, it's locked in time' (Writer).

Realistic narratives?

There have been criticisms in terms of the authenticity of the main narrative of the play. The Writer reported how one viewer, a teenage girl, told him that one of the characters 'got out of the gang too easy'. He explained that what is shown on stage is 'only an aspect of some people's lives' and more will be happening 'off-stage'. He is also keen to give the young audience hope for their own futures given that they may well see parallels between their own lives and those of the characters:

So if we say Eve, in her future she ends up on the street on the game, you know, she's a crack addict, they think, 'What's my life?'. [...] So you have to say, 'There's a way out, actually. The way you are isn't the way you're going to have to be forever'. (Writer)

It was also noted that the urban street 'gangs' of Liverpool, and elsewhere in the UK, tend to be more informal than the structured 'gangs' portrayed in *Terriers* (see below for further discussion). However, it was acknowledged that the play needs to use a 'convenient, tidy model' (Safer Schools Officer) in order to deliver its message in such a short time (60 minutes). It remains relevant in the ways that 'they are still doing the same kind of things [...] the drugs are still involved' and so young people are 'watching the kind of people that you're associating with and getting dragged into things' (Safer Schools Officer).

One theme that was not raised in the play or responses to it, was that of 'race' and ethnicity. This was surprising given that the Writer and Director were involved in establishing Liverpool's only black theatre company, but also because political representations of 'gang culture' tend to be racialized (e.g. Alexander 2008). The case study school, and indeed the group of co-researchers, was diverse in its mix of ethnicities (which does not reflect all Merseyside schools) but there was no mention of 'race' or ethnicity in the performance evaluation data or co-researcher meetings. It might also be considered surprising that the stakeholders we spoke to, including the Regeneration Officer and Teachers, did not mention the opportunity that the play might

provide to discuss how issues of 'race', ethnicity and racism are significant to young people's lives in all the areas in which *Terriers* is performed. By contrast, the play's portrayal of gendered relationships was widely discussed.

In fact, the decision to avoid dealing with 'race' and ethnicity thematically in the play was a deliberate choice. The Writer reported that:

Both [Director] and I are acutely aware that gang culture is racialized, and consequently race and ethnicity were never issues we wanted to raise with *Terriers*. We felt/feel strongly that if the play were, for example, to have an all black cast, and was playing to a majority white audience, as it often does, that audience would still understand the story, but could divorce themselves from its message feeling it was not really about them. Clearly an all black cast says 'gangs' are thematically a race issue.
(Writer)

The Director echoed this view. She highlighted differences in the ethnic composition of the cities where specialist police units had been introduced as part of the Tackling Gangs Action Programme (TGAP) in 2007 – Birmingham, London, Greater Manchester, and Liverpool – which may be different again from those who claim 'gang membership' or are identified as 'gang members' in those cities. This is particularly significant in Merseyside, given that monitoring data collected for the TGAP initiative suggest Liverpool is distinctive in relation to 'gangs' and ethnicity, as police-identified gang members were 'predominantly [w]hite' (Dawson 2008: 2).

Academic studies paint a yet more complex picture, exploring ethnic variation across neighbourhoods within cities, nuanced differences between ethnic groups and – significantly – the risk that official definitions underpinning identification of 'gang members' can reproduce a racial bias that is damaging in its effects (see Alexander 2008 for discussion). As Alexander (*ibid.*: 12) summarises, there are four crucial issues to consider:

- 1) There is considerable confusion over what constitutes 'a gang' and what experiences, activities and identities this label encompasses.
- 2) 'The gang' carries with it a series of moral, institutional and political judgements about the nature of group identity.

3) Contrary to the evidence, the history of the term has linked 'gangs' with black, minority ethnic and immigrant young men.

4) This results in the potential ascription of 'gang' labels to all groups of BME young men, while defining out acts of group based violence or criminal activity by majority/white youth.

The data collected for this study support the suggestion that *Terriers* has a broad appeal (discussed in more detail in 'Audiences and audience creation' below). It is possible that avoiding engaging directly with the issue of 'race' and ethnicity has enabled the play not only to avoid reproducing damaging stereotypes, but to allow diverse audiences to identify with the performance. The Writer suggested that the play had performed many times to almost exclusively black audiences with a 'seemingly' white cast (in fact, *Terriers* currently has four BME or BAME actors, though only one is distinguished by her skin colour):

Those black audiences, watching a 'seemingly' white cast, still understand the story and in the Q&A express very clearly the view that, despite a 'white' cast, *Terriers* has big links with their own communities and speaks directly to them about their lives. (Writer)

Meanwhile, school survey respondents working with young people identified by Ofsted as predominantly white British also suggested that themes were 'relatable' and 'very relevant'.

It also appeared that different themes in the play appealed to different audiences. So for a North West school outside of the city of Liverpool, the teacher who regularly books *Terriers* noted that the issue of 'gang culture' is one that appeals to her students as an issue of academic rather than personal interest. It is the other issues, including peer pressure and drug misuse, that are more directly relevant, and 'particularly the relationship one, which is a bit of a key focus in schools at the moment'. For other schools, however, including the case study school, the issue of 'gang violence' was one that young people did identify with, even if they do not have personal involvement in 'gangs'. One of the co-researchers spoke about the inner city area where he lives:

I'm not saying that my family's involved in all that, but I've heard people die over the road from where I live. And it's scary – knowing that this sort

of stuff happens less than a hundred yards from your bedroom window. Which my bedroom window's on the back and it looks over to Robson Street where someone got shot and murdered. I'm not even gonna say shot anymore - murdered. You get shot, yeah, but you're taking a boy, you're taking someone's son. (Co-researcher)

This description of the crime as 'murder' is a notion that the co-researcher took directly from the *Terriers* play. The character Luke challenges Drew's use of euphemisms in a way very similar to the co-researcher's self-correction: Drew talks about how he was shot; Luke argues that he was murdered and should 'tell it like it is'.

Identifying with characters

Other young people spoke about their recognition of particular characters in the play. They discussed 'bullies' that they knew who reminded them of Eightball, not least in the ways he would 'use women in a way of getting what he wants or he'd manipulate people into getting what he wants, or use a woman to sell something – to pay off a debt' (Co-researcher). The character of Eve was also one that fascinated young people and seemed to be readily recognised. The Development Manager suggested:

They'll say things like [...] 'She's getting beat up by Eightball. She doesn't know what to do. She's probably got something going on her life.' I think that's actually quite telling, because how would they know that? Where are they picking up these assumptions? Is it because they're involved in something similar? Is it because their friend's involved in something similar, or a family member? (Development Manager)

The actor who has played Eve for several years also discussed reactions from girls after watching the play. She and the actor who used to play 'Chelsea' had also been privy to disclosures: 'She came up and she was like, "That happened to a girl in my class or one of my friends or something. Erm, she's been videoed and it's on the internet and all this." She just started, like, telling me all this stuff' ('Eve').

Themes of sexual exploitation and abusive relationships, like references to cannabis farms, are relatively recent additions to *Terriers*. The Writer added them in response to conversations with educators. However, their inclusion only required 'very subtle'

changes to the script (Tour Manager/Technical Manager), and the Writer would be reluctant for the play to 'change a story' to accommodate changing priorities. However, it does seem to promote useful discussion within schools. One teacher reports her experience of boys and girls having heated debates about 'sexting' and the ways that boys might treat girls in relationships. She thinks it can help the boys to reflect and 'perhaps evaluate laddish behaviour a little bit more' (Teacher 2). This issue is discussed in the next section.

The play has also been performed in prisons where, according to the actors, it sparked identifications among the prisoners. The Writer reports being at a prison performance where the play was well received. Because of its authenticity, audience members assumed that the Writer had direct experience of the material in the play:

So they all give a clap and then they go, 'Spot on, lad. Have you got form yourself?' I said, 'No, I haven't got form'. They said, 'But you know people, don't you?' You almost have to say, 'Yes, I do,' and you do know people, but you're not using their lives. (Writer)

It was also suggested that watching the performance could make older adults more empathetic towards young people and some of the difficulties that they may face (see the section 'Are objectives achieved?' below for further discussion). It is the authenticity of the play's characters, and not least the skills of the actors that portray them, that seems to lead to identifications from audiences and thus provide what one interviewee termed a 'safe' way of introducing 'difficult' issues. The relevance of particular issues will vary from audience to audience as the report explores further below, in 'Audiences and audience creation'.

Relationships and support structures

This section begins with a continuation of the discussion around audience members' identification with particular characters in the play. Here it explores how this extended to the relationships between characters. It moves on to consider how this can be a useful means of raising discussion about the power and control that might be exerted in personal relationships. Familial relationships are also briefly discussed, followed by a discussion on the notion of a 'gang' being 'like a family'. There is some questioning of young people's experiences and understandings of 'gang culture' before the section moves on to explore the complex, nuanced ways that the play deals with peer pressure and friendships. The section then looks at relationships between young audience members and the actors themselves, suggesting that the cast might act as role models. Discussion of the relationships between young people and teachers comes next as the section explores how much support is provided within schools.

A love story?

The Writer spoke about one of the final scenes in the play when Chelsea asks Aldo to leave 'The Terriers' gang. She tells Aldo that she is only with 'The Terriers' because he is. At this point, the Writer said, the girls in the audience go 'Ahh, they're in love'. He noted, 'That's what they like. I mean, that's the other thing I've got in. It's a love story, isn't it?'. It is clear that the audience at the case study school recognised this. One of the predominant, repeated images on the canvases was a love heart with an arrow through it. The students had also repeatedly written portmanteaus of characters' names, so Eve and Eightball became 'Eveball'; Chelsea and Aldo become 'Chaldo'. The romantic theme extended to audience members expressing their own attraction to the characters (or perhaps to the actors playing them) on the canvas: 'Luke is fit' and 'Mmm Aldo' (Figure Six).

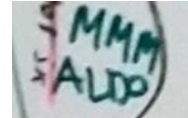
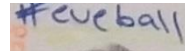
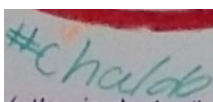




Figure 6: Selected text and images on *relationships* from the canvases

Whilst Chelsea and Aldo's relationship might be construed as romantic, Eve and Eightball's is much more problematic. Eightball continually exploits Eve and again this tended to be recognised by the audience: 'He seduces her and he manipulates her' said one co-researcher. Another added that 'he basically talks about girls as in bragging'. They could identify with this, seeing it 'in everyday life', and they made links between Eightball and a boy in their class who 'talks crudely. And like Eightball [...] he talks like that and he'd do actions, and he'd skit people for certain sexual things – for not doing certain sexual things' (Co-researcher). The co-researchers also discussed how love 'can make you do things that you don't want to, like join gangs'.

Teacher 2 told us that whilst elements of Eve and Eightball's relationship were 'quite shocking', it was 'good for then opening up discussions about relationships and power and control in relationships'. She understood this to be a really useful area to discuss with teenagers and generally a difficult one to tackle 'without concrete examples that you can use to illustrate your discussion'. She also noted that classroom discussions about the relationships in *Terriers* would frequently become quite heated in terms of the way that the male characters fit into 'sometimes quite stereotypical roles' and 'the way that they're treating the girls'. This meant that some of the more 'articulate, argumentative girls' would 'get quite cross' (Teacher 2).

'Like a family'

The play also explores relationships other than romantic ones. One of the most moving scenes in the play is when the recently deceased Drew is watching his own funeral

and he witnesses the impact that his death has had on his mother and his little sister. Teacher 1 reported that this is an area that they would explore in class after the play. One of the co-researchers related this to his own life:

If I were to die my mum would be distraught. [...] I mean, for me to die, or for any one of her babies, cos I'm not just her son, I'm her baby. And she give birth to me. For her to bury me – I brought it onto myself but I've also brought it onto my family. (Co-researcher)

This is the only glimpse of family life that we are offered although we do hear that Chelsea's father runs the local youth group and this gives the impression, as the Writer confirmed in our interview, of a 'solid family'.

It is the 'gang' that takes precedent over families in the play. One of the co-researchers talked about his idea of 'gang culture':

You can think that gangs are your family. You know, like, they're related to you, they're better than blood, they're your firm. And that they'll take a bullet for you if you take a bullet for them. But it never happens. You take a bullet for them, you're dead. (Co-researcher)

A survey respondent noted the power of the play to address this myth:

[The] issue of gang culture being 'like a family', where they may feel wanted and valued - this was dispelled as we witnessed betrayal and treachery of the highest order! (Survey Respondent)

However, there remained confusion among the young people we spoke to in terms of what a 'gang' might look like and how someone might become involved in a 'gang'. For instance, one of the co-researchers held the following notion:

If someone walked up to you and was like, 'I'm all mad, you're going to join our gang' and all that, you'd be scared of them. (Co-researcher)

The concept of a 'gang' is contested and associated with varied definitions (e.g. Alexander 2008; Goldson 2008). Whilst the representations of 'gang culture' in the play are judged to be authentic by many stakeholders, including those directly involved with criminal justice services, they do not necessarily directly represent the sorts of

'gangs' young people might actually find themselves in. Involvement in 'The Terriers', for the younger male characters at least, appears to be territorial. This relates to the idea that 'gangs' operate spatially and that young people will join the 'gang' associated with their postcode – what Kintrea et al. (2008: 4) refer to as 'super place attachment' in studied inner-city areas. The Writer suggests that, in London, 'postcode wars' are prevalent, and others also emphasised the importance of relationships and peer networks in perpetuating territorial affiliations. In the play, the older 'gang leader', Eightball, directly encourages Aldo's greater involvement in 'The Terriers'. Unpicking the relationships between young people's friendships, 'gang involvement' and involvement in crime or serious violence is not straightforward, and the notion that predatory 'grooming' is prevalent is not universally accepted (Shute et al. 2012). The Safer Schools Officer describes a 'more informal' set up in terms of his experience of young people getting into trouble in Liverpool. He suggests that people can get 'dragged into things' because of the people they are associating with, and this has much to do with 'peer pressure' as well as place.

Peer pressure and role models

The Development Manager told us that she had always regarded the 'core issue' of the play to be 'gun and gang crime'. However, a young person had disagreed with her and said, 'No, it's peer pressure'. The video data and the canvases also saw multiple references to peer pressure, a theme that was relatable for many audience members, and one which often appears to be entangled with friendships.

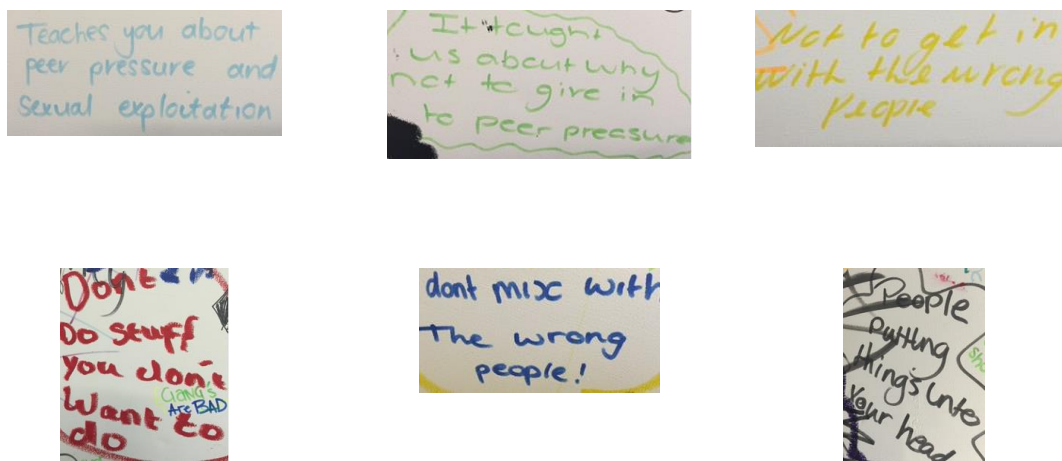


Figure 7: Selected text and images on *peer pressure* from the canvases

The co-researchers discussed their experiences of attempting to 'fit in' with their peers:

Everyone's got this idea that they've got to be like a popular person. I'm not saying that I haven't – I've bought hundreds of pounds' worth of clothes that I didn't like because I wanted to fit in. (Co-researcher)

At times this involved behaving in antisocial ways:

I got made to do things I didn't want to do, like smash windows [...] I felt like I had to impress them. (Co-researcher)

One interviewee discussed how he could relate to the interactions between characters because of memories of childhood friendships:

Where I went, we all went to [...] a couple of different secondary schools from the school that I was at. And all of a sudden your mates that you were mates with in one school, you weren't their mates because they were at the other school now and when you play football with each other you used to try and kick them up the park. (Safer Schools Officer)

The play is able to tackle the complex and nuanced relationships between friends. The Writer described how the audience responds to some of these, in this instance between the two female characters:

Those two girls are fighting, one's pulling the other one's hair and she's being bullied. If you ever watch that, we watch the audience. The girls are riveted with this. They're not interested in what the boys are doing. There's a gun going on, there's stuff going on. (Writer)

Teacher 1 told us that the issue of friendship tensions is 'another important thing that they deal with really well'. She said:

Loyalty to friends is important, but at what point do you know that somebody really isn't your friend? And then what do you do? (Teacher 1)

For the co-researchers at the case study school, although friendships were important in school, outside they would often avoid interactions, opting to stay at home and play video games in order to avoid any confrontation.

It was the intention of the Writer and Director that the very act of watching the play might give young people inspiration for living a different, richer life. There might be a possibility of encouraging young people to develop interest in the arts and perhaps go into acting (see the section 'Are objectives achieved?' below for further discussion). For the Director, it is important that the male actors in particular are regarded as role models for the boys in the audience: 'Lots and lots of them have no male role models, and it really is tough'. Who, she asked, 'is showing them how to be a man?' This is one reason that the actors change into their own clothes for the Q&A session after the performance, so that the audience can see that they are actually very different from the characters they have been portraying. One of the actors ('Luke') explained: 'subconsciously you just really wanna give them every, sort of, clothes just to separate ourselves from them'. Thus another important element of the play is the audience members' relationships with the actors. Comments on the canvases suggest some identification with the actors, even if they tend to focus on appearance. For instance, one participant wrote: 'Hey there I like ur hair Who does your hair i wanna go there'. Another actor ('Eve'), discussing the disclosures that have been made to her and other actors by the students told us: 'It just shown that they've related that much, enough to come up and actually feel that they could actually say that to us'.

A safe haven?

Once the performance and Q&A session are over, the onus is on teachers to continue the conversations raised in the play. Again, relationships are important here, in this case between teachers and students. Teacher 2 described how these relationships might differ widely. In her school, the follow up work is delivered in Citizenship lessons which are led by diverse staff. She described how a drama teacher had really enjoyed this work:

He felt that the scheme was very relevant to the pupils' lives and really enjoyed doing that. He had a very good relationship with his group [...] so he was able to draw them out. (Teacher 2)

She admitted that there were 'huge' differences in terms of how other teachers approached the work:

So for example this year I've got art teachers teaching, IT and wood- DT technology teachers. Now, their strength in the classroom is very, very different from teachers who are used to having more controversial discussions on sensitive top- subjects. So they haven't, depending on their experience as a teacher, particularly if they're new to the profession, they may feel a little bit uncomfortable because these are quite sensitive issues and difficult to deal with. (Teacher 2)

The student co-researchers at the case study school frequently discussed their ambivalent relationships with the school, in turns describing it as 'one of the best schools in the city' and discussing how it is a place they dread. Each of them discussed episodes of personal experience of violence and intimidation during the school day. One lamented the fact that although school was a 'safe haven' for some young people, for him it had 'turned into something where you're dreading going because you don't want someone to call you a faggot. Or you don't want someone to go, "Oh I'll smash yer head in..."'. Another co-researcher was concerned that teachers might be unlikely to tackle violent behaviour because they were intimidated by some of the students with criminal family connections.

When asked about the provision in the school for pupils who might be struggling emotionally, psychologically or behaviourally, the co-researchers were mixed in their assessments of its accessibility and quality. They explained there is a dedicated staff member with specialist pastoral responsibilities in addition to teaching duties (they refer to her as an 'anger therapist'), but no provision is made for her in terms of a room. The teacher, according to the co-researchers, has to carry out consultations in an open-plan area where other pupils can freely walk past 'screaming' and 'being planes'. They suggested this environment was not suitable for sensitive disclosures. The school also had identified safeguarding officers – teachers who 'deal with anything from a few name-calling, self-harm, to suicide, etc., sexual abuse or abuse at home' – and a clinical psychologist (described as 'brilliant') who works at the school part-time. Teacher 1 spoke positively about the pupil support centre at her school, where 'pupils are encouraged to talk, and do talk openly, and gain the support'. When considering

the support available in local schools, the Regeneration Officer believed that 'teachers are doing as much as they can', but suggested schools are limited in how they can tackle the issues that the play raises. The analysis section below, 'Are objectives achieved?', returns to this theme.

Audiences and audience creation

During Autumn 2015 and Spring 2016, *Terriers* toured to Merseyside, Croydon, Manchester, Hampshire and Telford. The play was performed for schools and pupil referral units, in a prison and for public audiences at the Royal Court Theatre, including a 'VIP' event aimed at stakeholders. No other community events were reported to have taken place in Liverpool this year (in contrast to previous years), but community performances were staged in Croydon (Royal Court Liverpool Trust 2016). Although non-school audiences had been engaged prior to the involvement of RCLT, this represents impressive expansion of the existing tour and considerable achievement against the plans outlined in the 2013-16 Development Plan (Royal Court Liverpool Trust and Merseyside Police Matrix Team). This section looks at how appropriate these audiences are deemed to be by interviewees and survey respondents. It begins by considering the universal appeal of the play before moving on to consider the wide age range of audiences that *Terriers* plays to and exploring differences in opinion held by various stakeholders regarding whether *Terriers* is equally appropriate for all of these audiences. Certainly different age groups tend to receive different messages from the play. Some interviewees also discussed how to ensure it is reaching the 'right' audiences.

Universal appeal?

The Writer and Director expressed pride in their work and emphasised the longevity of the play and its continued appeal. Despite the emphasis on local dialect and slang discussed above, the play is understood by both as a 'universal' story. Various interviewees reported that it had been well received by young people in London and has also garnered interest internationally, in Europe and South Africa.

It's just developed and developed, which has meant we've gone further and further afield, and now we've gone across the country. We've been down to Croydon, been to boroughs in London, Manchester, we've been all over the place. [...] The thing is, it's a global story. (Director)

We've had police come from Norway, from Holland, and France, and they're trying to work out a tour there. So I would say it was successful

in giving a universal story. I don't tend to write about Liverpool at all because I'm not that interested in writing about the city. Others do that, you know. So I'd sooner tell a story that can travel. (Writer)

This view was also reflected by others in the production team – including the Actors, the Tour Manager/Technical Manager and the Development Manager – all of whom commented on the strong reaction from London audiences in particular. The Tour Manager/Technical Manager suggested that there is 'definitely a different reaction' between Merseyside and London, with southern audiences being 'more lively'. He indicated this was 'great for the actors because they buzz off it'. The actors speculated that, far from being an impediment to understanding, the scouse accent was a 'novelty', which promoted engagement.

The accent's more of a novelty, so straightaway they're concentrating more, they're listening 'cause they want to just hear the accent. So they're getting, like, more information immediately. [...] There's a lot of comparison [...] 'Oh Eightball, you'd have like that leader, maybe Eightball, but over here the leader Eightball would do this instead. Maybe he wouldn't stand outside and give you that weed himself. He'd probably make somebody else do it'. ('Luke'/Choreographer)

As noted above, similar questions were raised by some interviewees about representations of Liverpool. The suggestion that young people enjoyed speculating on differences between illegal activities and the 'gang structure' in London and what they presumed was a straightforward 'Liverpool' alternative implies that the regional distance may actually have helped, rather than hindered, a belief in the authenticity of the narrative. 'Luke'/Choreographer also suggested that this identification and differentiation helped young people 'really begin to analyse the play a lot more' and that this in turn brought reflective contributions to the Q&A and 'big insights from dead [i.e. very] young people as well'.

Which age group?

There was little consensus amongst the educators who responded to the school and college survey about the most appropriate age groups for the play. A number of respondents felt it was suitable for all secondary school age groups. Several

respondents suggested that the play should be shown when young people are particularly vulnerable to peer pressure or were judged to be more likely to get involved in 'gangs' (usually identified as Years 7-9):

Year 9 - they are definitely the right age, it gets them thinking about peer pressure and the relationships between males and females in terms of power and control. (Survey Respondent)

I think that the play is best suited to early teens. Years 7-9. Youngsters who are still forming opinions and who can be most swayed by peer pressure and a desire to fit in. (Survey Respondent)

Others suggested older age groups, in one case 'due to the age and content', but more frequently because of its curriculum relevance. Overall, one third of responses to the question 'to which year group do you think the play is best suited' made reference to the potential contribution to curriculum objectives, although the specific curriculum varied (PSHE, Drama and Citizenship were all mentioned):

From feedback given by Year 11s - it was evident that they found the performance extremely powerful, and also wrote their theatre review for the GCSE drama paper 2 element of the course. Year 10 students did this also. In terms of subject matter and the different techniques and strategies used I firmly believe that Terriers was suited to Year 9, 10 and 11 equally. There wasn't one single student who expressed a dislike for the performance. (Survey Respondent)

Consistent with this, some teachers who suggested it was universally suitable highlighted different benefits for different ages:

Year 7: initial impact. Year 9: to view with new eyes of changing from childhood into teenage years. Year 10, 11, 12 and 13: to view from an artistic and dramatic perspective for those who have opted for Drama to appreciate production concept. (Survey Respondent)

One area of contention in the various data sets related to the performance of plays in primary schools. The Regeneration Officer and one survey respondent did suggest that the play was suitable for primary age children, and a number of survey

respondents suggested that the play was suitable for young people in Year 7. However, the primary school context presented some concerns for the actors and the Tour Manager/Technical Manager in terms of the experience of performing:

I think we went into the primary schools off the back of one of the Safer Schools Officers saying that it would be good to target these children [...] I think it's just too much for them. I think the story goes over their head most of the time, and they'll laugh, just for the sake of laughing, maybe, if the actors are laughing on stage. I'm not a big fan of the primary schools. (Tour Manager/Technical Manager)

Given these concerns, the team has now moved away from direct provision in primary schools, offering the opportunity for primary school audiences to attend shared performances at the Royal Court Theatre (Royal Court Liverpool Trust 2016: 5). The need to ensure that young people are supported in understanding the messages of the play may still apply.

Age and message

The majority of responses to the school and college survey (12 of 15) suggest parental permission is not sought prior to showing the play. Where schools or colleges did, only one respondent indicated that permission had ever been refused. Several respondents suggested they sought general permission at the start of the year or sent letters of information home. Others judged it unnecessary to seek special permission due to the age of the intended audience or the nature of the content.

Although the play deals with hard-hitting issues it does not use any inappropriate language. It is an accurate reflection of the way some young people act and behave. Although it may be sometimes uncomfortable to watch - it is relevant and powerful. (Survey Respondent)

This comment supports the view that deliberate creative decisions facilitate access to schools and colleges. The Actors and Director both gave examples of schools objecting to gestures perceived to be lewd, or asking that swearing be removed, when the play was deliberately written without swear words (see 'Authenticity and

identification' above). Another respondent also suggested that it was not 'graphic' enough to require parental consent. Again, this suggests that the 'stylised' presentation of violence discussed above enabled a broader audience for the play than a more direct portrayal of the same themes.

Across the datasets, it was noted that the issue of sexual relationships, because it is so subtly written, tends to 'go over the heads' of younger viewers who tend to focus more on the storyline of 'gangs' and issues of peer pressure. As the Development Manager explains, 'when a young person's seen it in Year 7, they might see it again in Year 11 or Year 10, and they'll always ask, "Is that the same play?" And actually, it is, but they're just seeing it from a different perspective'. One of the co-researchers supports this view:

We watched it in Year 7 and we never took much from it [although he and his peers also discuss having thoroughly enjoyed the play in Year 7], but this year [Year 10], especially with a few things that have happened around the city and the country in the last few years, you could take it in more and you can understand. (Co-researcher)

This is also reflected in the interview with the Director, who suggested that younger audiences required more support to reflect on the play and understand its key messages. She advises against thinking 'Oh, well, I've had Terriers in, so that's me ticking my box', suggesting 'No, you've got a lot of work to do'. A previous evaluation suggested that this challenge underpinned the development of educational resources at an earlier stage in the development of *Terriers* (Moglione 2011). This idea is explored in more detail in the later analysis section, 'Are objectives achieved?'

Relevance

The respondents to the online survey tended to agree that the range of issues within the play were relevant to young people in their schools, although not all believed their young people were involved with 'gangs'. Some deliberate attempts to target young people believed to be 'at risk' of future offending were reported:

So what we do is we will speak to the primary schools and we will pick like the most relevant 30 children that would benefit from that performance. And then we take them to the community centre and then, yeah, *Terriers* will do the performance and then do a question and answer session. We kind of like keep in touch then with the primary school teachers, you know, whether they found that they [have had] impact. (Regeneration Officer)

By contrast, one survey respondent suggested that they would seek special permission before showing the play to young people who might find the play disturbing because of direct relevance to their lives:

If we have individual students that have family fatalities linked to the storylines then they are spoken to beforehand and given the opportunity to not take part. (Survey Respondent)

Concern that touring mainstream schools could mean young people who might identify most with the characters and storylines would miss out was also expressed:

We have a, a constant dialogue as to who they, sort of, see- because they're dealing with students who most of them are no longer in school. [...] Most of these- most of the characters that you're talking about in the *Terriers* play are not ones who have been in mainstream school. They're, they're ones who would be either removed from school in a unit or not even attending a unit. (Safer Schools Officer)

Students at the case study school also commented that young people not in education should be able to see the play. In this context, the creative work of the team in ensuring that young people attending pupil referral units (which have much smaller cohorts) were able to access shared performances in public spaces such as libraries or the Royal Court Theatre should be highlighted and commended.

Performance or project?

The above discussion highlights an issue that became increasingly apparent over the lifetime of this research project: is *Terriers* best understood as a 'performance' or a 'project'? The 2013-16 Development Plan described *Terriers* as 'a partnership project delivered by Merseyside Police and Royal Court Liverpool Trust' (Royal Court Liverpool Trust and Merseyside Police Matrix Team 2013: 2). Some interviewees directly involved with *Terriers* explained that they now resisted the use of the term 'project'. This section begins by exploring some of the reasons for this reluctance. It moves on to look at post-performance activities including the Q&A session and the educational toolkit.

What's in a name?

The Tour Manager/Technical Manager was concerned that being known as 'The Terriers project' risked confusing the name of the 'gang' in the play with the team:

We don't like to see ourselves as 'The Terriers' or 'The Terriers Project', because whenever we go into the schools, receptionists will say, 'Oh, the Terriers are here'. 'No, we're not the Terriers.' (Tour Manager/Technical Manager)

Meanwhile, the Director felt the term 'project' was misleading. She suggested:

We've had it written down everywhere for ages and we keep saying it's a project. And I'm going, 'It's not a project, it's just a play in my mind.' (Director)

In response to this comment (which was made when the Director briefly entered the Actors' focus group), 'Luke'/Choreographer suggested that 'the toolkit and Q&A and all that' made *Terriers* distinctive, because 'I've been in plays before, but nothing like Terriers'.

One distinction may be that the production team do not deliver all follow-up activities and cannot be fully responsible for the 'take-up' of resources. The Director and the Actors both described *Terriers* as a play which could start a discussion. This view was also reflected by some stakeholders:

I think what they're doing is they're making people start to have that conversation, aren't they? [...] I think Terriers do what they are meant to do. I think their success is they can spread and get this performance out to as many people as possible each year, so, for example, you know, it can't ever stop because you're only going to hit one year group in that school. So you've got to go back the next year and hit the next year group, and then you've got to go back the year after and hit the year group after that. They've got to continue, because what happens then is those conversations will continue. (Regeneration Officer)

This partner was extremely positive about the play, but questioned the impact of the Q&A that usually follows the play (as discussed below). Greater ambivalence about the post-performance activities than the performance itself was also reflected in the school survey and in other interviews. The following sections explore this in more detail.

The facilitated discussion (or Q&A)

Following the dramatic conclusion of the play, the actors leave the stage (or stage space depending on venue) and return in their own clothes. They then take questions from the audience and lead a discussion. This was identified as an important aspect of the overall production:

The Q&As... they can be hit and miss, but they're still a very, they're a very, very important aspect, which is something that maybe other performances don't have. (Tour Manager/Technical Manager)

Post-performance discussions normally take place in all venues except theatres, including community centres and prisons. There are clear expectations about the role of the actors in this discussion:

Actually, although it's called a Q&A, it's more of a facilitated discussion, I think. So, if a young person does ask a question about a cast member or a character, the cast will put it back on them and say, 'Well, what do you think that meant?'. Because they're not there to provide answers; they're there to get young people talking about the issues raised in the play, which I think works quite well. (Development Manager)

The production team reported enthusiastic responses and stimulating discussions in prisons, but the importance of ensuring that there is space for discussion after the play was particularly emphasised as a key element of work with young audiences. This was reflected in comments made by educators and project partners as well as the production team:

I feel drama is a very useful tool in providing a space to learn about and discuss social issues in an engaging way. The quality of the post play discussion is particularly important to ensure that the play's impact is disseminated in a meaningful way. (Survey Respondent)

Views on the success of observed discussions were, however, mixed. Some were equally positive about all aspects of the performance:

I found the Terriers Team very friendly, with a very strong team work ethic. Their commitment and focus was second-to-none throughout the performances they delivered. They were highly inspirational to our students who ranged from 13-18 years old. The cast were extremely professional and excellent role models to aspiring young actors. The Q&A sessions were very valuable and the cast were keen to receive feedback from our students. (Survey Respondent)

Others suggested that there were limitations relating to venue, audience size, and the confidence of young people to speak before large groups.

I feel it's an excellent medium to explore social issues. It can be hard to generate good question and answer sessions afterwards as pupils are wary about expressing views in front of 240 pupils. It would be really good if workshops were provided in addition but this would logistically be very difficult. (Survey Respondent)

The Director explained that a more informal setup had sometimes been possible in community venues, and suggested this had worked successfully.

With one youth centre, we kind of had all the cast in different rooms, and then you just end up organically creating. There was a little hub, and

there was questions getting answered, and organically it happened. And I think that is the best way to do it. (Director)

Another set of challenges related to the focus of the discussion, or the extent to which the discussion supported identified objectives. As noted above, young people were often interested in the staging of the performance, asking whether props were real. They also were impressed by the actors' skills. When an actor previously cast as Eightball was found to have advanced martial arts skills, the Director and Choreographer integrated this into the performance. One consequence of this was that: 'every time we started the Q&A they'd go, "Can you do that flip again?"' ('Eve').

Young people engaged with the narrative and particular characters, and it was suggested that they sometimes took the opportunity to voice opinions or show insight, rather than ask direct questions. The actors described this: 'they sort of ask a question, it's a statement, like "why was she letting him force her to keep hold of the gun and the weed"' ('Luke'/Choreographer), saying "'if that was me, I'd just say no" and things like that' ('Eve') or 'they'll go like, "'cos the thing is she was stupid because she thought that he pure cared about her, where he really didn't care about her and that's the only reason why he was keeping hold of it for her"' ('Luke'/Choreographer). The Development Manager suggested the insight shown at these points could sometimes be 'quite telling' – an idea we return to when discussing disclosures below.

The Director explained that one of the most established cast members ('Luke'/Choreographer) has experience in youth work, and his ability to manage the Q&A was described as 'really good' by one of his cast mates. It was, however, suggested that the quality of the discussion about crime prevention and desistance could be improved by broader professional involvement:

The quality of the discussion however is limited by the fact that it is led by the actors and directors - who may not have had direct experience of gang culture or the research surrounding it. It may be more effective to include a (trained up) ex-gang member or teacher to facilitate this discussion. (Please note - we are not a school, this suggestion may not apply to school based performances.) (Survey Respondent)

As noted, it was suggested that adults in audiences might ask practical questions directly relating to support services or exit routes, but such questions were less likely to come from young people. Young people's interest in the relationships in the play could make it more challenging for the actors to bring the discussion round to features of the narrative tied to crime prevention objectives. The Regeneration Officer suggested it was therefore difficult for the actors to 'ask the right questions back':

It would be better if people could come on the stage at that point and go, 'Well, what did you think about those circumstances? Would you know that you can go to the police and, you know, give something anonymous about that information? Or do you know that, you know, I don't know, you can do a first aid course if you thought one of your friends could get stabbed at some point?'. I just think it needs to lead on. (Regeneration Officer)

These comments highlight some of the difficulties facing *Terriers* as a 'project' (i.e. conceptualising *Terriers* as an intervention that aims to achieve particular objectives). The actors suggested:

It's more about starting a discussion about smaller things what lead up to that. So if the teachers can come in in the Q&A and they might have their two little pence and that's great then. ('Luke'/Choreographer)

From a 'project' perspective, the performance and post-performance activities could be understood to work best together. The actors welcomed teachers contributing in the Q&A because 'we leave and the discussion needs to continue' ('Luke'/Choreographer). However, ensuring conversations continue is not in the direct control of the production team.

The educational toolkit

As a previous evaluation noted, the development of educational resources offered a means of stimulating and shaping discussions after the performance (Moglione 2011). RCLT and Merseyside Police Matrix Team (2013: 6) recently commissioned a creative agency to work on the production of a new CD ROM that is relevant to the National Curriculum. The new educational toolkit was designed by As Creatives, in consultation

with teachers, youth workers and other multi-agency partners, and launched during the 2014-15 tour. RCLT were keen to explore its take up and impact as part of this research, and ten questions on the toolkit were included in the online survey sent to schools and colleges identified participating in the 2015-16 Merseyside tour by RCLT. Although findings should be read with some caution in light of the survey response rate (41%), they suggest there is work to do in ensuring the resource is widely taken up and used in Merseyside.

Approximately half of the survey responses (8 of 15) reported that the new toolkit was not used in the respondent's school or college. Approximately a quarter of respondents were uncertain if it was used or not. Only three respondents reported that it was used. No respondents reported being involved in the toolkit's design. The Development Manager speculated on differences between regions, suggesting that the production team was aware of higher levels of take-up in other areas (e.g. Telford), than Merseyside. Despite high profile launch events at the Royal Court Theatre in Liverpool, one survey respondent commented: 'the play is beneficial, the toolkit is not advertised enough'. Another suggested: 'wasn't aware it existed! Will start to use from now on!'

More positively, the three respondents who reported using the toolkit judged it to be a valuable resource. All had used it personally in this year or a previous year. It was used in between one and three lessons and for more than 30 minutes (in two cases more than 45 minutes). Two respondents who used the toolkit in Drama lessons agreed that the resource aimed to allow students to 'explore issues' or 'to use drama to explore issues safely'. A teacher who used it in Citizenship lessons suggested that there were some 'good ideas and resources', although these needed to be adapted for 'colleagues whose subject specialism might be teaching Science or Maths'. The success of the toolkit against these goals was judged by these respondents to be either 'very good' (by two) or 'good'.

It should be noted that this use differs significantly from its use in the case study school. Here, the toolkit was used in PSHE lessons. These were delivered in the fifteen-minute morning registration period four days a week. This presented various challenges, as the co-researchers discussed. For instance, there was much to be done in this short time frame:

The teacher's got to get the register done, then she's got to wait for any students that haven't come in, then she's got to hand out the books and the folders, and anybody who's got no pens or ties, or uniforms. And then by the time she's done that it's five minutes to the bell, and we're starting the lesson.... (Co-researcher)

Moreover, it can be difficult for students to be engaged with the complex and sensitive toolkit material early in the morning. As one co-researcher suggested: 'you're literally waking up and going straight into a lesson. That 15 minutes was just to calm yourself down'.

Are objectives achieved?

Judging if *Terriers* is a 'success' is not straightforward, since it depends on a clear understanding of what success would involve. This section returns to the five themes originally identified from the range of data collected as part of this project and describes what is claimed in terms of their achievement.

Deterring young people from 'gangs' and gun crime

Recorded levels of offences involving firearms have fallen in Merseyside (and nationally) over the lifetime of the project (Allen and Dempsey 2016). Including Merseyside, four large urban police force areas recorded 57% of the firearm offences recorded in the year ending March 2015 (ONS 2016). There were 12 firearm offences per 100,000 of the population in the Merseyside police force area during this period. This rate was lower than the other large urban police force areas: Greater Manchester, Metropolitan and West Midlands.

It is not possible to determine the extent to which *Terriers* contributed to local outcomes. However, the continued funding from Merseyside Police and the Merseyside Police and Crime Commissioner during a period of budget cuts undoubtedly demonstrates confidence in the initiative. This is also illustrated in the Merseyside PCC's personal support for the project. Jane Kennedy became an Ambassador for the project in 2013 and has publicly supported the initiative on various occasions. She suggested:

It is fantastic to see Merseyside Police and their partners engaging with young people about the problem of gun and gang crime in such an innovative way. It is vital that all partners work together to provide a coordinated approach to this issue and ensure we are keeping our communities safe, particularly in the face of ongoing financial pressures.
(Merseyside PPC 2013)

The production team is measured in relation to the ability of *Terriers* to directly reduce gun crime or young people's involvement in 'gangs'. The Tour Manager/Technical Manager and Director both highlighted positive feedback from the police, but as the Director acknowledged:

The police have said that as far as they're concerned, over the past eight years [that] they've funded this project – there are a million other initiatives that they do – and they've seen a reduction in the gang and gun crime. They've seen a reduction over the years. They can't specifically pinpoint it, but they [...] will say, well, that is part of all of the stuff that they're doing. (Director)

Other stakeholder interviewees also suggested it was unrealistic for the play to address these issues in isolation. Teacher 1 suggests that a young man involved in a fatal knife attack 'will have seen the Terriers when he was in Year 7', and 'might have seen it when he was in Year 9, but he was still part of that gang'. This issue also created a division of opinion with the team of co-researchers with two of them thinking it would not stop people being in gangs and one other believing that 'the shock of it all' was enough to 'change people's minds' (Co-Researcher).

Unpicking the relationships between young people's friendships, lawbreaking and 'gang involvement' is not straightforward, and it cannot be assumed that the term 'gang' is used in the same way across the datasets. As Shute et al. (2012: 40) suggest:

Gang membership amplifies risk of offending and has a higher prevalence in socially excluded communities; however, it remains a generally rare, short lived and non-ethnically specific phenomenon that is co-terminous with neither offending *per se* nor serious violence, which also remains rare.

Where young people are involved in more serious crime or violence, there are theoretical reasons to support the idea that drama-based intervention could encourage desistance, although these relate to the themes discussed in this report, rather than the idea that young people can be 'scared straight'. An emerging body of criminological research has highlighted the importance of questions of identity to processes of desistance. Maruna and Farrall (2004) for example, distinguish between primary desistance (i.e. a period without committing crime) and secondary desistance (i.e. when an ex-offender changes how they see themselves and constructs an alternative 'non-offending' identity). In other words, they suggest that understanding why people stop committing crime is not only a matter of *choice*, but related to *self-identity*: how we understand ourselves and make sense of our experience. Importantly, some

theorists would argue that identities can change *in advance* of behaviours. McNeill and Weaver (2010: 17) note that ‘the connections between behaviours, attitudes and identities are complex and contingent’.

Not all criminologists believe a reconstruction of identity is necessary for desistance, particularly when there has been limited involvement with crime or limited engagement with criminal justice services (see McNeill and Weaver 2010 for discussion). Nonetheless, this does raise interesting questions about the potential contribution of drama-based approaches to crime reduction strategies. Hughes and Ruding (2009: 221), for example, argue that participatory theatre workshops can promote deep reflection on ways of thinking and behaving. They suggest:

Theatre that challenges the thinking and behaviour of young people asks them to take an imaginative leap into a world that may have very different routines, roles, values from their familiar environment. Whilst it is important to avoid setting up a false opposition between the realistic and fantastic here, this imaginative leap might be facilitated by permission to ‘forget’ familiar habits of thought and behaviour and ‘real’ or remembered events rather than recreating and confronting them.

This echoes many of the points made above about authenticity and identification in this report. Here it is suggested that engaging young people’s imaginations and providing ‘realistic’, nuanced characters that resonate with them is an important aspect of reflection and learning. The stylised ‘slow motion’ and dance scenes are the ‘icing on the cake’ (Director) in terms of creating a new world. Of course, for many young people, the world of ‘The Terriers’ gang is removed from their everyday lives, but they are no less able to make links between it and their own experiences and relationships. It is also important that Hughes and Ruding (*ibid.*: 221) suggest that facilitating ‘imaginative leaps’ requires skilled practitioners who can work ‘off manual’ and ‘respond in the moment’, rather than reproducible ‘model’ interventions. This raises again the questions about the capacity of the actors to support a facilitated discussion in the Q&A, particularly with large audiences of young people, and whether follow-up activities are used or used well.

In the *Terriers* Development Plan (Royal Court Liverpool Trust and Merseyside Police Matrix Team 2013: 8), Detective Chief Superintendent Paul Richardson suggests that

'people of my generation may see the play as too powerful for children aged 8-10 but if it is to be preventative we need to reach that age group'. As noted above, this was supported by some interviewees, who argued that showing the play to younger age groups is important if *Terriers* is to act as a crime prevention intervention.

We have a lot of the gang members who are reaching like 14 or 15 and their siblings are the young people who are in the primary schools. And this is why we need to just to go into the primary schools. [...] We do the knife arch in primary schools, in some of our schools in North Liverpool because of the amount of knives that they are picking up off some of the 10 and 11 year olds. (Regeneration Officer)

Reports of the work in primary schools was, however, varied, and more research is needed to explore its efficacy. Any attempts to identify and exclusively target the most 'at risk' young people of primary school age also require careful consideration given the potential for counterproductive 'labelling' (Aldridge et al. 2008). Concerns that very young people may not be able to understand and reflect upon the play were described above, and reportedly underpinned the development of the previous educational resource (Moglione 2011). Our research did not establish if and how the current toolkit is used in primary schools, as all the respondents using the toolkit used it with older age groups. As noted above, direct provision in primary schools has now been withdrawn, although audiences are still invited to shared performances at the Royal Court Theatre (Royal Court Liverpool Trust 2016).

Data collected from secondary schools did suggest that the value of the play is in creating a 'fabulous catalyst for the discussion' (Director). A school survey respondent believed that: '[t]he play stimulated discussion and made a real impact in changing attitudes towards gun and gang violence'. The video data and canvases from the case study school also show that the message many young people took from *Terriers* was that they should not consider joining 'gangs'. They were described as 'dangerous', 'wrong' and were connected with 'crime' and 'violence'. Data collected from education professionals also suggested that the message was 'accessible' and understood by the young people with whom they worked. The co-researchers also raised the possibility that 'gang membership' might be 'fun' and offered a sense of security, suggesting that being 'scared' could be a trigger for joining 'gangs'. The responsibility

of schools, or other organisations opting to stage a performance, to possible disclosures from young people was judged to be important: ‘as long as whoever is putting on the piece knows that it might open up a can of worms, then they should cater for that’ (Writer). Mechanisms of support beyond the play are crucial in this respect, as the next two sections explore in more detail.

Personal, social and health education

The play raises important issues beyond crime prevention. The school survey suggests that *Terriers* is shown as part of the Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) programme at some schools, although the play was also judged to be relevant to related subjects, such as Citizenship, and to English and Drama. The personal well-being strand of the PSHE curriculum in England covers issues such as sex and relationships education, drugs and alcohol education, and emotional health and well-being. As the Department for Education (2015: 4) acknowledges:

The direct impact of PSHE lessons is often difficult to prove, as many factors which contribute to pupils’ well-being and behaviour lie outside of the school environment.

Research on drug education suggests that a curriculum that encourages ‘interactive learning on life skills, underpinned by an understanding of social influences and social context of decision-making’ is more likely to be successful than ‘scare tactics and fear-based approaches’ (Mentor 2011 cited in Department for Education 2015: 6). This resonates with the approach articulated by those involved with *Terriers*, and particularly the rationale articulated in the educational toolkit. The toolkit authors suggest that ‘[a]ll the activities in the toolkit support PSHE and there is an emphasis on tackling Ofsted’s criticisms in a 2013 report on PSHE that: ‘few (students) had developed the skills to effectively apply their understanding, (of staying safe) such as the assertiveness skills to stand up for themselves and negotiate their way through difficult situations’ (As Creatives and Royal Court Liverpool Trust n.d.: 1).

As the ‘Engaging the Imagination’ section explores, the school-based research demonstrated that young people understood that the play conveyed messages relating to ‘staying safe’ and ‘negotiating difficult situations’ (i.e. the Ofsted concerns identified above). A canvas image suggested: ‘it teaches you about peer pressure and

sexual exploitation', which prompted one of the co-researchers to suggest that the play was 'for enjoyment [...], but people took things from it as well'. Interview data collected from Teacher 2 and the School Support Officer and school survey data also suggested that the play could support these goals:

Increases our students' knowledge of how to keep themselves safe.
(Survey Respondent)

It is a hard-hitting, thought-provoking play for the students which contains the relevant topics of today. (Survey Respondent)

Education professionals were very positive about the play. It was suggested that drama offered a beneficial way to introduce difficult issues, potentially offering more impact than if introduced by teachers alone:

Students reacted very well to the play. It was a discussion point for many weeks after the play. (Survey Respondent)

We have worked with the Terriers [team] for a number of years. The message they give through the performance is a powerful one and has more impact than if the message was delivered by teachers. (Survey Respondent)

There were, however, some areas of contention between educators and performers identified across the datasets. The production team have regularly highlighted some of the barriers to staging a successful performance in their annual report (Royal Court Liverpool Trust 2014; 2015; 2016: 4):

- Teachers using iPads or laptops during performances or marking work.
- Disruption during the performance by teachers leaving half way through and sitting in the middle of the audience or staff walking into the performance space and through the middle of the stage.

Similar barriers were also identified in interviews with the actors, Director, Development Manager and Tour Manager/Technical Manager.

Data collected from teachers as part of this study suggests two things: first, that these recurring issues may be difficult to resolve; and second, that this does not necessarily mean teachers do not value *Terriers*. One of our teacher interviewees spoke enthusiastically about the production. She had also adopted the educational toolkit, and her positive comments to related questions on the school survey are summarised above. She nevertheless suggested, whilst regretting its impact on the performance, that school timetables make it impossible to avoid a teacher-changeover, and the layout of the school theatre space make it difficult to avoid disruption. Another teacher responding to the school survey suggested that it was not always easy for *Terriers* advocates in schools to ensure that the preferences of the production team were followed:

They engaged in a manner appropriate to the content and their ages. Some of our staff struggled with the noise aspect of this. I was thankful to [Tour Manager/Technical Manager] for discussing prior to the performance that staff should not intervene unless asked to. (Survey Respondent)

The report has also suggested that *Terriers* opening up a 'safe' way to discuss 'difficult' issues may lead to disclosures from audience members. Schools and colleges have various statutory responsibilities in relation to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in their care. Government guidance on safeguarding also suggests that 'everyone who comes into contact with children and their families and carers has a role to play in safeguarding children', but '[n]o single professional can have a full picture of a child's needs and circumstances' (Department for Education 2016: 5).

The data collected for this project confirmed that schools had structures in place to deal with disclosures, but also raised some questions about maximising the opportunities presented by *Terriers* to ensure disclosures are made. As noted above, some stakeholders believed the short Q&A should prompt discussion about sources of support, as well as the issues raised by the play. The take-up of the educational toolkit intended to promote more in-depth discussion was relatively low in our small sample, and, at the case study school, the co-researchers reported that not all classes were given sufficient time to work on activities. The actors and Development Manager suggested that the character of 'Eve' attracted interest in the Q&A and speculated that

this could be because young women identified with her situation. 'Eve' suggested that disclosures had occasionally been made, as discussed in 'Authenticity and identification'. In addition to ensuring there is a mechanism for responding to disclosures made immediately after the play, this may be an issue to consider further, in consultation with schools, colleges and other venues where the play is staged.

Community development and informal education

This research focused particularly on the *Terriers* 2015-16 school and college tour and did not aim to directly evaluate the success of work in communities. The interviews generated some reports of this work, but these were not consistent with one another. The Director and Regeneration Officer suggested that community performances were extremely valuable and produced a powerful reaction from the audience:

Some of the elders were crying and said [...] 'it's actually made me think, Oh God, is this how vulnerable some of these kids can be, and this is how they can be drawn in'. (Director)

The comeback is usually, 'I didn't realise it was so hard for young people [...] how can they make these decisions in life?'. Like even we, as adults, really struggle to make some hard-hitting decisions and can be easily persuaded. (Regeneration Officer)

The Director also suggested that younger children had seen the play in a community context, when their parents and guardians were able to judge its suitability. (In the specific example she gave, an audience member suggested: 'they've seen worse round here'.) Meanwhile, the Safer Schools Officer reported that an attempt has been made to perform *Terriers* for parents, but 'sadly it was very poorly received'. He suggested that another school had 'got the youth club to bring people in and that was better attended rather than just parents from a school'.

There are again sound theoretical reasons to support a strategy that promotes greater dialogue and understanding between different groups in a community. Relating back to the ideas about desistance above, McNeill (2014) has recently argued for a concept of tertiary desistance, 'referring not just to shifts in behaviour or identity but to shifts in one's sense of belonging to a (moral) community'. Social crime prevention strategies,

which aim to prevent crime by addressing the social 'causes' of crime, also emphasise the importance of social bonds and networks to forms of informal social control (Crawford 1998). It is often claimed that community arts projects have the potential to effect social change by encouraging 'cross-cultural community understanding' and 'a stronger sense of locality' by 'bringing different groups together' (Newman et al. 2003: 318).

The potential of the play to influence relationships and support young people in resisting peer pressure is emphasised in the data and explored in some detail above. The Development Manager also discussed the benefits of a multi-agency approach to tackling the issues raised by the play:

We are trying to do a little bit more joined up work and partnership working, so we can get more people involved [...] to talk to young people about the other alternatives available to them. (Development Manager)

She stressed the need for better joined-up working between organisations and support services. The Safer Schools Officer and Regeneration Officer were in full agreement. The former suggested that, in order to prevent young people 'going that way', he believed that 'agencies - all agencies' need to 'keep chipping away', suggesting: 'that's the only way it can happen, by everyone working together. No one agency can do it on their own'. He also discussed how parents could be more involved in 'a lot of the education stuff we deliver to kids'. This might extend beyond *Terriers* and include 'all the drugs stuff or the knives and weapons stuff, all the Internet safety stuff'. He concluded, 'it'd be great if the parents could be educated'. The Regeneration Officer and one school survey respondent echoed this view, with the latter suggesting: 'we also invited parents to see them play. It is as relevant and educational for parents as it is for students'.

The Regeneration Officer also reflected on opportunities that would be required to support realistically desirable 'exit routes' for the characters in the play.

So, for example if there is enough opportunity, so mechanics courses or inspirational kinds of courses that they could sign up to and educate themselves [...], that would be the way they would transfer from their current position. (Regeneration Officer)

She believed there were educational opportunities available, as well as places to ‘get the kids off the street’. However, she also suggested that a broader context of funding cuts had threatened the quality and quantity of local youth provision (see, for example, Jones et al. 2016 for discussion). Clearly, responsibility for local services rests beyond the production team. The availability of high quality and attractive youth services and educational opportunities is nonetheless related to the achievement of the objectives already discussed, especially given the noted association between living in a disadvantaged neighbourhood and ‘gang membership’. Ensuring the ‘exit routes’ proposed by the play are discussed with reference to local services in follow-up activities could also be significant, although still difficult to control directly, especially as the play moves beyond Merseyside.

Inclusion in the arts

There is considerable national and international interest in the ways in which arts and drama-based education might benefit young people, especially those with limited access to cultural opportunities (Bamford 2006; Khan 2013). Widening participation in the subsidised arts – i.e. ensuring they are ‘inclusionary’ – is a perennial policy concern (Evans 2016). It has also been claimed that the arts can contribute to a broader concept of ‘social inclusion’ by working with excluded groups or in excluded communities to address problems relating to health, education, employment and crime (Jermyn 2004). The data collected for this project suggests that the potential contribution of *Terriers* as an arts inclusion project is underemphasised in the existing annual reports. Although the specific examples given were few and anecdotal, it was shown that *Terriers* has the potential to act as a ‘hook’ to introduce young people to broader creative and even professional opportunities, as well as its more well-evidenced ability to bring theatre to new audiences. This is due to the broader networks and activities of the Royal Court Liverpool Trust and its employees, as well as the appeal of the play itself.

The *Terriers* Development Plan (Liverpool Royal Court Trust and Merseyside Police Matrix Team 2013) outlines an ambitious plan to bring the play to multiple new audiences. Some aims are still to be achieved, but recent annual reports show impressive achievement against those goals (Royal Court Liverpool Trust 2014; 2015; 2016). The play is now shown in a variety of spaces, to audiences that would otherwise

struggle to watch a performance (e.g. in a prison) or who might not have been exposed to theatre before. This was also identified by teachers as a potential benefit of bringing *Terriers* to their school:

A lot of children never get a theatre experience so in terms of live theatre [...] they get an experience that is more or less like going to the theatre.
(Teacher 2)

Pupil referral units and other organisations that are unable to host a performance of *Terriers* due to small numbers and considerations of cost-effectiveness are also invited to bring young people to shared performances at the Royal Court Theatre and other venues. Ensuring young people not in mainstream education are not excluded from the performance, or from exposure to the play's messages, was identified as a positive development by some interviewees and the co-researchers.

The potential of the actors to act as role models for young people was highlighted by some educators and reflected in the data from the case study school. Both the Writer and the Director also saw this as having a class dimension:

And the other thing about that as a, kind of, social thing, was to say to those young people, 'You can actually be an actor with your accent'. It's going less and less now on telly, isn't it? It's dominated by the middle classes. The whole thing is dominated by the middle classes. It's like we've got to have the same fight all over again for all sorts of things in society, just while we're talking about that. To say to them, 'You can actually have a career with that accent'. (Writer)

The Director also believed that, in a Merseyside context: 'the 'authentic, colloquial language' and 'the fact that the actors come from the same areas, and backgrounds of the schools and communities we visit' helped young people identify with the actors and encouraged their potential as role models. Ethnic diversity in the production team and cast is also valuable. This has the potential to offer BAME role models to young people interested in the creative arts. It also enables a positive, informal educational experience for young audiences who may not be used to encountering BAME professionals in the neighbourhoods where they live and learn.

The Director when talking about her broader role with the Royal Court Liverpool Trust, suggests:

And we also engage with lots of summer play-schemes. So like 5 to 11-year-olds who've never been in the theatre, they've walked in and gone, 'Wow', and then watched a show with kids in. So for the future of the theatre, they're our potential theatre-goers, potential theatre producers, potential new actors. (Director)

This recognition is reflected in some of the data collected for this project. At the school performance attended by the research team, we chanced upon a young man who told us he had taken up dancing after seeing the performance. Similar anecdotes were made in other interviews:

Definitely it's had a massive impact [...] We've had a 6th former now, well he's just left this year, and he still talks about the Terriers incessantly, and for his year 11, he took some of the words from the script, and [...] replayed the section when they are in heaven or limbo-land and looking down at the funeral, and then they developed a bit more of their own story from that point, their own work. (Teacher 1)

Significantly, the broader partnerships between the Royal Court Liverpool Trust and schools and colleges are worth highlighting here. It seems that some young people do become engaged with the youth theatre after seeing the performance, which can be understood to represent a genuine opportunity and, potentially, a pathway to an otherwise unimagined professional future.

A high-quality performance

The importance of high performance values is regularly echoed in the interviews with the production team, and is central to the Royal Court's aims, as defined in the Development Plan (Royal Court Liverpool Trust and Merseyside Police Matrix Team 2013). The actors, Writer, Director, Tour Manager/Technical Manager and Development Manager all discuss *Terriers* as a 'performance' as well as 'a project'. The responses from external stakeholders frequently echo the Tour Manager/Technical Manager's first impressions: that he was 'blown away, basically'

on first seeing the production. When asked to summarise their first impressions, stakeholders emphasised performance values, such as the quality of the sound and the lighting or the set, as well the message of the play:

Powerful, impact... colour, larger than life... deep emotions dealt with sensitively and in an entertaining way, so really clear message, and lots to think about. (Teacher 1)

I'd been told that it was very engaging so I was looking particularly to see if the young people enjoyed it and, yes, I thought it was excellent, really, really good, really positive comments. I was particularly pleased [...] I'd told the drama department it was in, I'd got the technician in who obviously sees quite a lot of live theatre and I got really good comments from all of them. (Teacher 2)

I think it is hard-hitting. [...] You know the music, the kinds of... the way that the actors kind of perform, you know like it's enjoyable to watch, but I think it is really relevant. (Regeneration Officer)

I thought it was fantastic. [...] Straight away it got me not only as an educational tool, it's a good story. It's a good play that people would watch just for the just for the story and the play and the quality of the acting itself. And then when you add on top of that the educational message, it's fantastic. (Safer Schools Officer)

Survey respondents were also effusive in their praise for the performance and the cast:

Wonderful performance, staff excellent, organisation great. Already booked the Terriers for the Autumn term. (Survey Respondent)

Terriers is a fantastic performance which cover a variety of issues. I like the way the arts are used as a tool to portray these issues. The cast are very talented. (Survey Respondent)

There are clearly some tensions between the desire to maintain high performance values and achieve social impact in line with the other objectives. As the Tour Manager/Technical Manager explains:

Well, I think (Director) always wants to do new and exciting things with the direction. ('Luke/Choreographer) wants to make the choreography as big and beautiful as possible, and I'd rather work with 500 lights than two, but, you know, there is a limitation, and yeah, I think working in the schools is the main one. Sometimes, some schools have got great theatre spaces, but, you know, you are limited to what you can do, creatively. (Tour Manager/Technical Manager)

The production team had been responsive to what the Regeneration Officer called 'community intelligence' from schools, the police and other partners, by ensuring that social issues identified as increasingly relevant were incorporated into the play. The Development Plan suggested that:

Key schools and areas had been identified as having particular issues with gun and gangs, sexual exploitation of young girls and cannabis farms. These key issues were reflected in a revision of the script of the play by writer Maurice Bessman (Royal Court Liverpool Trust and Merseyside Police Matrix Team 2013: 3).

This was judged as positive by the Regeneration Officer, but it does raise an interesting question about who is 'control' of the narrative. Stakeholder interviews and the school survey produced a number of suggestions of alternative issues that could usefully be covered, including greater emphasis on sexual exploitation, anti-racism ('perhaps a Polish or Syrian character') and also knife crime. Those creatively responsible for the play resisted the suggestion that the play could be consistently manipulated without damaging its coherence as an arts piece:

'If you want knives,' I said, 'I would write you a completely different play about knives, but I'm not writing Terriers about knives.' Terriers 2, you know. (Writer)

The data considered as part of this report suggest that the quality of the performance, and the integration of its creative elements to produce an immersive and affective experience, is central to its educational value and potential social impact. Greater communication about some issues may, however, be of value. As discussed above, the Writer and Director were reluctant to provide a DVD, as this would fix the play in

time and undermine their attempts to ensure its authenticity and relevance. As the interview with a teacher discussed in 'Performance or project?' makes clear, a DVD for teacher use, but not student use, could potentially address some of the barriers to the success of the educational toolkit, since it was difficult to ensure that all teachers who were to use the toolkit had seen the play. Although this was not directly discussed, it seems possible that this could also allow fewer teachers to attend performances and minimise the disruptions that produce frustration in the production team and risk undermining the quality of the performance. The move to staging more public performances at the Royal Court Theatre may also be of benefit in this respect.

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