Lesson 2: The effects of organised crime and paramilitaries in communities

This lesson relates to the impact that paramilitary organisations are having on people in Northern Ireland. Pupils consider what organised crime is and the activities it involves. They think about who are the most vulnerable in society and at greatest risk from paramilitary organisations. The lesson also allows pupils to explore why paramilitary-style attacks occur and consider whether they are ever acceptable.

### Planning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prior Learning</th>
<th>Pupils should have gained prior knowledge and understanding of:</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• what justice is;</td>
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<td>• what lawfulness is;</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• what the Northern Ireland justice system is; and</td>
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<td>• what paramilitary groups are.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Learning Outcomes</th>
<th>Pupils will be able to:</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• demonstrate understanding of the impact that paramilitary groups have on their local communities; and</td>
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<td>• demonstrate understanding of the link between paramilitary activity and the high rates of mental health issues in Northern Ireland.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities Focus</th>
<th>Pupils will have opportunities to develop the following:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Working with Others</td>
<td>• Respect the views and opinions of others and reach agreements using negotiation and compromise</td>
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<tr>
<th>Thinking, Problem Solving and Decision Making</th>
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<tr>
<td>• Make and justify decisions</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Offer solutions and weigh up options</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Examine options and weigh up pros and cons.</td>
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<th>Attitudes and Dispositions</th>
<th>Pupils will be encouraged to develop the following:</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Concern for others</td>
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Resources

**Animation: Criminality and Paramilitaries in Communities**

- Unit 7: Lesson 2 Resource A – Mental health in Northern Ireland
- Unit 7: Lesson 2 Resource B – Mental health statistics
- Unit 7: Lesson 2 Resource C – Ending the harm – photos
- Unit 7: Lesson 2 Resource D – Ending the harm – real-life stories
- Unit 7: Lesson 2 Resource E – Impact statements
- Unit 7: Lesson 2 Resource F – Circle of impact

Flip chart paper
Post-it notes

Department of Justice Ending the Harm public awareness campaign website: [www.endingtheharm.com](http://www.endingtheharm.com)

**Suggested teaching and learning strategies**

**Launch**

Lead a class discussion, using prompt questions and effective questioning techniques:

1. **What is criminality?**
2. **What are paramilitaries?**

You may now wish to show the animation *Criminality and Paramilitaries in Communities*.

Possible answers and discussion points:

1. **People committing crimes; people not following the law; any behaviour that is against the law**
2. **Groups in society who threaten citizens; organisations based in Northern Ireland that work like gangs; people who believe they are fighting for a cause; a group that acts like an army**
Activity 1: Organised crime groups

- Together explore a definition of organised crime:
  
  ‘Organised crime can be defined as serious crime planned, co-ordinated and conducted by people working together on a continuing basis. Their motivation is often, but not always, financial gain. Organised criminals working together for a particular criminal activity or activities are called an organised crime group.’

- Working in groups of 2–3, ask the pupils to give examples of criminal groups (other than paramilitaries) who are involved in organised crime.

- Next, ask them to list what types of activities these organised crime groups are involved in. (As a prompt, you could give them the first letter of some of the activities.)

Possible answers and discussion points:

- **Examples of criminal groups** – gangs in the UK or USA; mafia in Italy; drug cartels in Mexico

- **Activities of organised crime groups** – drug dealing; dealing in counterfeit goods; money laundering

Activity 2: How does paramilitary organised crime affect people in Northern Ireland communities?

- Give out copies of Resource A and give the pupils time to complete the task, discussing the statements in groups and then as a class.

- Next, display or hand out the graphs from Resource B and either Task 1 or Task 2 (which is a more accessible option that includes word banks). Those pupils completing Task 1 should identify:
  - the highest and lowest figures;
  - the range (difference between the highest and lowest figures);
  - the general trends for the graphs (for example upwards or downwards); and
  - any anomalies (anything that does not match the general trend).

You may wish to interpret Graph 1 together as an example.

- Ask the pupils individually to write down three things they have learned from the activity.
Possible answers and discussion points (Task 1):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Graph 1</th>
<th>Graph 2</th>
<th>Graph 3</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What type of information is displayed in this graph?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Cost of anti-depressants per person in the UK</td>
<td>Suicide rate per 100,000 for men and women in Northern Ireland</td>
<td>Number of suicides by area level of deprivation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highest figure</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>46</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lowest figure</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>13</td>
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<td>Range</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General trend</td>
<td>Upward trend</td>
<td>Upward trend</td>
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<tr>
<td>Anomalies</td>
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<tr>
<td>Northern Ireland has the highest cost of anti-depressants per person</td>
<td>Significant rise in number of male suicides in 2006</td>
<td>Level 5 deprivation area had a lower number of suicides</td>
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Activity 3: Ending The Harm Campaign videos

- If appropriate for your class, show the four video clips of the victim, mother, paramilitary and witness from www.endingtheharm.com. These are from the Ending the Harm public awareness campaign ‘Paramilitaries don’t protect you. They control you’. Please note that the clips contain distressing scenes. Alternatively, play the four sound clips that represent each point of view available at www.soundcloud.com/ending-the-harm-campaign/sets/ending-the-harm-1

- Label four flip chart sheets on the wall with the titles Victim, Mother, Paramilitary and Witness. You could also print photographs of the four characters, available in Resource C.

- Ask the pupils to choose an emotion for each character (for example anger, hurt, denial, fear or relief), write it on a Post-it note and stick it on the appropriate sheet.

- Facilitate a discussion around the emotions they have assigned. For example, ask ‘Are these emotions positive or negative? Who benefits from a situation like this? Who is harmed?’

- Go to the Real-life stories section of the Ending the Harm website and show the clips of Paul Smyth and Dr Brendan Sinnott. Give the pupils copies of Resource D and ask them to answer the questions as they watch.

- Discuss the answers together. For example, ask “Was there anything that shocked or surprised you?” or “other than the victim, who else is affected?”
Possible answers and discussion points:

**Video Clip 1**

1. Vulnerable young people who may have substance abuse and mental health issues, been through the care system or prison. He also states that any young person could be vulnerable to it.

2. (a) As a form of justice
   (b) They are really about keeping control and an atmosphere of fear in communities and in society.

3. They see their child go through violent trauma. They can also suffer the stigma in the community, as people may assume their child has done something horrendous to warrant the attack.

4. There is a societal shrug – people assuming they ‘didn’t get it for nothing’. We have a collective responsibility as a society to speak out against this.

**Video Clip 2**

1. To inflict as much pain as possible without killing the victim

2. He feels they are much more painful, brutal, and can be fatal.

3. It changes their lives forever. It is soul destroying. They feel the pain and anguish of the victim.

4. The victim may not be able to live independently.
   They may require long-term pain relief.
   This may lead to drug addiction, which causes more problems with the law.
   The mental suffering is enormous.

- Cut out the impact statements from Resource E, and give a copy to each group of 3–4 pupils. Ask them to work together to sort the statements into three categories: Psychological Effects, Physical Effects, and Impact on Society.
- Refer back to the statements and graphs from Activity 2. Ask the pupils if they can identify how these might link to the people discussed in Activity 3.
- Give each group a copy of Resource F. Ask them to complete each section with statements from the previous activity and/or their own ideas.
- Facilitate a discussion around the impact of paramilitary activity on victims, families and the wider community.
## Debrief

Discuss the following:

1. **Are attacks by paramilitary groups on people in their own community ever acceptable?**

2. **What do you think could be done to encourage those people who turn to the paramilitary groups to go to the police instead?**

### Possible answers and discussion points:

1. **Someone might think that if a person is causing disruption in their local community that attacks are justified.**
   
   *It should be left to our justice system to decide the punishments of the individual. People should feel safe and secure in their own communities and not feel threatened by paramilitary self-elected groups.*

2. **Promote a positive police presence in the communities, for example through family fun days and fundraisers. Highlight the negative impact that paramilitary groups are having on their communities to deter people from supporting them.**
Unit 7: Lesson 2 Resource A  
Mental health in Northern Ireland

The information in this resource is from Mental Health in Northern Ireland: Fundamental Facts 2016.

Read the following statements and discuss them with your group. Do they surprise you? Why/Why not? Be prepared to share your thoughts with the class.

1. Northern Ireland is reported to have a 25% higher overall prevalence of mental health problems than England.

2. Prescription of medication for mental health problems in the most deprived areas of Northern Ireland was double the amount prescribed in the least deprived areas.

3. The Northern Ireland Young Life and Times survey reported that 29% of 16-year-old respondents had serious personal emotional or mental health problems, with a much higher percentage (43%) from ‘not well off backgrounds’.

4. Death by suicide in Northern Ireland is highest among single young male adults.

5. Suicide is more prevalent in urban and deprived areas, with the highest levels in Belfast West and North Parliamentary Constituencies and the Moyle, Belfast and Strabane Local Government Districts (LGDs).

6. Findings from a 2014 study suggest that despite the formal end of conflict in Northern Ireland in 1999, significant numbers of people continue to be affected by adverse mental health related to exposure to trauma.
Unit 7: Lesson 2 Resource B
Mental health statistics

The graphs in this resource are from Mental Health in Northern Ireland: Fundamental Facts 2016.

Graph 1:
Graph to show the cost of anti-depressants per person in the UK

The cost of anti-depressant prescribing per head of population in the UK over the 4 year period to 2013.


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Graph 2:
Graph to show the suicide rate per 100,000 population by gender

Suicide rate per 100,000 population by sex, 1996–2016.


© Crown Copyright
Graph 3:

Graph to show the number of suicides by area level of deprivation, 2014


© Crown Copyright
Task 1

In your groups identify for each of the three graphs:

- the highest and lowest figures;
- the range (difference between highest and lowest figure);
- general trends for the graphs; and
- anomalies (anything that does not match the general trend).

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Task 2

**Graph 1** shows that ................................................................. (country) has the highest cost of anti-depressants per person in the UK, costing £....................... (amount), compared to ................................................................. (country) costing £....................... (amount) per person. This is a difference of £....................... (amount) per person. One reason why Northern Ireland might have a higher level of anti-depressant prescriptions than other areas in the UK is because of the impact of ................................................................. in our communities.
Graph 2 shows that a higher number of ................................ (gender) commit suicide than ................................ (gender). In 2015 the number of men committing suicide is ........ (number), compared to the number of women – ................. (number) – per 100,000 population. The number of men committing suicide has almost ........................................ since 1996, while the number of women committing suicide has ........................................ increased since 1996. The number of males in committing suicide in Northern Ireland is the highest in the UK.
Graph 3 shows that areas with the highest levels of deprivation have the ......................... number of suicides. The line graph shows an ......................... in the number of suicides as the level of deprivation increases. In an area with Level 1 deprivation there were approximately ............ (number) suicides in 2014 compared to ............ (number) suicides in an area with Level 10 deprivation. This is a difference of ............ (number) of suicides in the year.

Word box 3

46 increase 33

13 highest
Unit 7: Lesson 2 Resource C
Ending the harm – photos

**Victim**

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**Witness**

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Unit 7: Lesson 2 Resource C
Ending the harm – photos

Mother

© Crown Copyright

Paramilitary

© Crown Copyright
Unit 7: Lesson 2 Resource D
Ending the harm – real-life stories

Watch Paul Smyth and Dr Brendan Sinnott discussing the impact of paramilitary-style beatings and shootings.

Answer the questions below.

Video Clip 1: Paul Smyth

1. According to Paul Smyth, who are the people most likely to experience a paramilitary-style attack?

2. (a) How are these attacks ‘sold’ to the community? (b) What do they actually do?

3. Paul says parents of victims can suffer in two ways. What are they?

4. Why does Paul say these attacks are still happening in Northern Ireland?

Video Clip 2: Dr Brendan Sinnott

1. According to Dr Sinnott, what is a gunshot wound in this type of attack intended to do?

2. How does he describe the beatings in comparison to the shootings?

3. What impact does it have on the families?

4. What are the four long-term effects of beatings and shootings?
Impact statements

Psychological Effects

- Trauma from the initial event and potential post-traumatic stress disorder
- Addiction as a result of trying to manage pain
- Fear on return to the community
- Depression and anxiety
- Alcohol and drug misuse
- Suicide (research has shown that sometimes people who take their own lives have experienced intimidation before their death)
Impact statements

Physical Effects

Injuries can be catastrophic and life changing.

Many victims suffer lifelong pain and disability.

Some victims are so seriously injured they end up losing a limb.
Costs to the NHS – a study in 2016 highlighted the costs of the initial Emergency Department treatment for those who are the victims of paramilitary-style attacks. It also referred to the likely far greater costs associated with the fact that those affected have to keep returning to hospital for treatment for the associated physical and psychological injury.

Adds to already under pressure NHS workload

Loss of employment opportunities due to physical injuries – for the rest of their lives

The family of a victim can suffer enduring trauma – especially children, as they are often witnesses to the attack or the events surrounding it.
Unit 7: Criminality and Paramilitaries in Communities