

# Ending Gang and Youth Violence

A Cross-Government Report  
including further evidence  
and good practice case studies



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Any enquiries regarding this publication should be sent to us at  
Violent and Youth Crime Prevention Unit,  
4th floor Fry Building  
Home Office  
London, SW1P 4DF  
or [SeriousYouthViolence@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:SeriousYouthViolence@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk)

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# Contents

Ministerial Foreword .....	3
Executive Summary .....	7
Section 1: The life stories that lead to violence – what causes gang and serious youth violence? What are the costs?.....	10
Section 2: Breaking the life-cycles of violence – interventions that can make a difference.....	20
• The foundation years.....	21
• The primary years.....	24
• Teenage years.....	27
• Early adulthood .....	41
Section 3: Making it happen locally. Support for high violence places.....	48
Section 4: Next steps – milestones and governance.....	57
Annex A – Summaries of conference and stakeholder events .....	61
Annex B – Case Studies.....	66

# Ministerial Foreword

## Ministerial Foreword

Gangs and youth violence have been a serious problem in some of our cities for several years now. This fact is widely known, but we need to accept that over the years not enough was done to deal with the underlying drivers of the violence. Every crime is caused by a criminal, but we need to do more to prevent young people joining gangs or getting involved in violent activity.



One thing that the riots in August did do was to bring home to the entire country just how serious a problem gang and youth violence has now become. In London, one in five of those arrested in connection with the riots were known gang members. We also know that gang members carry out half of all shootings in the capital and 22% of all serious violence. And even these shocking statistics may underestimate the true total. Similar figures for the riots were recorded by West Yorkshire Police, while Nottinghamshire had only a slightly lower proportion. Most other police forces identified fewer than 10% of all those arrested as gang members. But the fact that so many young people, who are not involved in gangs, were still willing to carry out such serious acts of violence and disorder in the summer merely reinforces the urgent need to deal with what underpins youth violence.

For too long, government action has not been as effective as it should be at stemming the violence. We need a long-term, evidence-based programme to get a proper grip on gang and youth violence. This report is an important first analysis of the problem of gangs and the interventions that work. It provides a platform for the intensive support we will provide to areas most affected by this serious problem. Our ongoing Social Policy Review will set out more reforms which will address the entrenched social failures that drive problems like gang and youth violence.

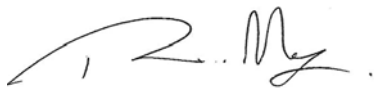
This report is the first ever truly cross-government approach to tackling gang and youth violence. It has been drawn up in close consultation with the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions and other Cabinet Ministers. This reflects the fact that we are committed to using all of the tools at our disposal.

We have commissioned analysis on the nature and scale of the problem, we have visited frontline projects, we have met agencies, experts and former gang members and we have hosted an international conference of experts on gang violence.

Our proposals are wide-ranging. They are focused on five areas: prevention, pathways out, punishment, partnership working and providing support. We need to combine action to tackle

the causes of gang and youth violence with tough enforcement to crack down on those who commit crimes. Stopping such violence is not a task for the police alone. Teachers, doctors and youth workers all have a vital role to play. Success will only come when local areas and local agencies like these work together and share information.

The publication of this report is an important step, but it is just the start of the process. Only with a sustained effort based on the comprehensive programme outlined in this report will we effectively confront gang and youth violence.



Right Honourable Theresa May MP  
Home Secretary and Minister for Women  
and Equalities

In the immediate aftermath of August's disorder the Prime Minister rightly called for a report into Britain's street gangs. The proportion of rioters known to be gang involved may be low – so too are the numbers of young people involved in gangs – but we must not let that distract us from the disproportionate and devastating impact they have on some of our most deprived communities.



Gangs and serious youth violence are the product of the high levels of social breakdown and disadvantage found in the communities in which they thrive, but they are also a key driver of that breakdown. Gangs create a culture of violence and criminality that prevents the very things that can help transform those communities; community mobilisation and economic enterprise are near impossible in neighbourhoods gripped by fear.

This report makes clear that intensive police action is needed to stop the violence and bring the perpetrators to justice, but we must match this robust enforcement response with a robust offer of support to exit gang life, and an equally intensive prevention strategy. A patient must be stabilised before a cure can be administered, but vaccination is always better than cure. This health analogy is apt, violence is a public health issue, we must start seeing and treating it as such.

We understand that you can't arrest your way out of the problem, and that is why we have been clear that only with full cross-departmental support can we make an impact. Tackling gangs and serious youth violence will take a fully co-ordinated, multi-agency response, and full and public local authority leadership. There is already a wealth of expertise and best practice that can be harnessed, but there is no quick fix. The Government is committed to tackling this over the long-term – this report is the first step towards transforming gang-impacted communities and restoring hope and opportunity to those living within them.



Right Honourable Iain Duncan Smith MP  
Secretary of State for Work and Pensions





# Executive Summary

## Executive summary

**Gangs and youth violence have been a blight on our communities for years. The disorder in August was not caused solely by gangs but the violence we saw on our streets revealed all too vividly the problems that sometimes lie below the surface and out of sight.**

Over the years successive government interventions, initiatives and funds have failed to stop the problem. A concerted, long-term effort is now needed.

Since August, a group of senior ministers – led by the Home Secretary, working closely with the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions – has undertaken a thorough review of the problem of gang and youth violence. They have visited a range of projects working to stop youth violence, heard from international experts about what works in the United States and elsewhere, consulted with senior police officers and local authority officials and talked to young people themselves. Several key messages have emerged.

Firstly, the vast majority of young people are not involved in violence or gangs and want nothing to do with it.

Secondly, the small number of young people who are involved have a disproportionately large impact on the communities around them in some parts of the UK. It is clear that gang membership increases the risk of serious violence.

And thirdly, this small minority of violent young people is not randomly distributed and does not appear out of the blue. Some areas suffer significantly greater levels of violence than others; some individual and family risk factors repeat themselves time and time again.

The police and other agencies need the support and powers to protect communities affected by gangs and to bring the violence under control. But gang and youth violence is not a problem that can be solved by enforcement alone. We need to change the life stories of young people who end up dead or wounded on our streets or are getting locked into a cycle of re-offending. Only by encouraging every agency to join up and share information, resources and accountability can these problems be solved.

The Government has already set in motion a number of far-reaching reforms to address the entrenched educational and social failures that can drive problems like gang and youth violence. Our welfare reforms will give young people better opportunities to access work and overcome barriers to employment. Our education reforms will drive up pupil performance and increase

participation in further study and employment. The new Localism Bill will give local areas the power to take action and pool their resources through Community Budgets.

Our plans to turn around the lives of the most troubled families will also be crucial. A new Troubled Families Team in the Department for Communities and Local Government, headed by Louise Casey, will drive forward the Prime Minister's commitment to turn around the lives of 120,000 troubled families with reduced criminality and violence key outcomes for this work.

Not every area will have a problem of gangs or youth violence, so our focus will be on the areas that do. We will offer them support to radically improve the way their mainstream services manage the young people most at risk from gangs or violence. At every stage of a young person's life story, the mainstream agencies with which they have most contact – health visitors, GPs, teachers, A&E departments, local youth workers and Jobcentre Plus staff – need to be involved in preventing future violence. That means simple risk assessment tools, clear arrangements for sharing information about risk between agencies, agreed referral arrangements to make sure young people get the targeted support they need, and case management arrangements which bring agencies together to share accountability for outcomes and track progress.

This Report sets out our detailed plans for making this happen.

**Providing support** to local areas to tackle their gang or youth violence problem. We will:

- establish an Ending Gang and Youth Violence Team working with a virtual network of over 100 expert advisers to provide practical advice and support to local areas with a gang or serious youth violence problem;
- provide £10 million in Home Office funding in 2012-13 to support up to 30 local areas to improve the way mainstream services identify, assess and work with the young people most at risk of serious violence, with at least half this funding going to the non-statutory sector; and

- invest at least £1.2 million of additional resource over the next three years to improve services for young people under 18 suffering sexual violence in our major urban areas – with a new focus on the girls and young women caught up in gang-related rape and abuse.

**Preventing** young people becoming involved in violence in the first place, with a new emphasis on early intervention and prevention. We will:

- deliver our existing commitments on early intervention, which research shows is the most cost-effective way of reducing violence in later life. We will double the capacity of Family Nurse Partnerships and recruit 4,200 more health visitors by 2015 and will invest over £18 million in specialist services to identify and support domestic violence victims and their children (who themselves are at particular risk of turning to violence in adulthood);
- assess existing materials on youth violence prevention being used in schools and ensure schools know how to access the most effective;
- improve the education offered to excluded pupils to reduce their risk of involvement in gang violence and other crimes; and
- support parents worried about their children's behaviour by working with a range of family service providers to develop new advice on gangs.

**Pathways out** of violence and the gang culture for young people wanting to make a break with the past. We will:

- continue to promote intensive family intervention work with the most troubled families, including gang members, with a specific commitment to roll out Multi-Systemic Therapy for young people with behavioural problems and their families to 25 sites by 2014;
- set up a second wave of Youth Justice Liaison and Diversion schemes for young offenders at the point of arrest, which identify and target mental health and substance misuse problems. These will be targeted at areas where there is a known and significant gang or youth crime problem;

- work, through the Ending Gang and Youth Violence Team, with hospital Accident and Emergency (A&E) departments and children's social care to promote better local application of guidance around young people who may be affected by gang activity presenting at A&E;
- explore the potential for placing youth workers in A&E departments to pick up and refer young people at risk of serious violence;
- support areas, through the Ending Gang and Youth Violence Team, to roll out schemes to re-house former gang members wanting to exit the gang lifestyle;
- explore ways to improve education provision for young people in the secure estate and for those released from custody; and
- implement new offending behaviour programmes for violent adult offenders in prison and under community supervision, including new modules on gang violence.
- issue clear and simple guidelines on data sharing that clarify once and for all the position on what information can be shared between agencies about high risk individuals on a risk aware, not risk averse, basis;
- promote the roll-out of Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hubs (MASH), which co-locate police and other public protection agencies, to cut bureaucracy and make it easier to share information and agree actions;
- deliver on our commitment that all hospital A&E departments share anonymised data on knife and gang assaults with the police and other agencies and pilot the feasibility of including A&E data on local crime maps;
- encourage the use of local multi-agency reviews after every gang-related homicide to ensure every area learns the lessons of the most tragic cases.

**Punishment and enforcement** to suppress the violence of those refusing to exit violent lifestyles. We will:

- extend police and local authority powers to take out gang injunctions to cover teenagers aged 14 to 17;
- implement mandatory custodial sentences for people using a knife to threaten or endanger others – including for offenders aged 16 and 17;
- introduce mandatory life sentences for adult offenders convicted of a second very serious violent or sexual crime;
- extend the work that the UK Border Agency undertakes with the police using immigration powers to deport dangerous gang members who are not UK citizens, drawing on the success of Operation Bite in London; and
- consult on whether the police need additional curfew powers and on the need for a new offence of possession of illegal firearms with intent to supply, and on whether the penalty is at the right level for illegal firearm importation.

**Partnership working** to join up the way local areas respond to gang and other youth violence. We will:

This Report marks the beginning of a new commitment to work across government to tackle the scourge of gang culture and youth violence. An Inter-Ministerial Group, chaired by the Home Secretary, will meet on a quarterly basis to review progress, including by the Ending Gang and Youth Violence team. We will also establish a forum of key external organisations to meet regularly with Ministers and hold the Government to account on delivery. And we will ensure the views of young people themselves are heard too.

Nationally, we are clear that our approach will stand or fall on whether it reduces the number of young people killed or seriously wounded – this will be our ultimate goal. But crime figures only tell part of the story so we will work with local partners to agree other commonsense measures in high violence areas for individuals, families and communities. We will use these to help areas evaluate the impact of the measures outlined in this report. Our focus must be on actions, not words.

# Section 1

## The life stories that lead to violence – What causes gang and serious youth violence? What are the costs?

## The life-stories that lead to murder

A young man, let's call him Boy X, was born on one of the most deprived estates in London in the early 1990s. His mother was just 17 when he was born and had been involved with the gangs on the estate for some years. She had been introduced to drugs by them and had rapidly become addicted to crack cocaine. Although she did her best to control her use while she was pregnant, this was a struggle and she carried on using during his early years. Boy X's father wasn't around much but when he did stay was frequently violent – beating his mother, often in front of Boy X.

Boy X first came to the attention of his local council when, at the age of three, he was found wandering the streets alone by a neighbour. Although he was returned to his mother, the neglect continued and when he entered his local primary school at the age of four he was reported to be often agitated and volatile – finding it difficult to concentrate and lagging behind the other kids in his class. His mother became pregnant again and gave birth to a girl, Girl Y.

As he progressed through primary school, Boy X's behaviour became increasingly difficult and he

started to miss school on a regular basis. By Year four he could often be overheard by his teacher talking about the gangs on his local estate and on one occasion he reported seeing a stabbing outside his house.

At the age of eight Boy X was separated from his mother and went to live with another family member, but there remained conflict in the family and regular violent altercations with an alcoholic uncle.

At 11, Boy X moved up to the local secondary school and the older boys from the main local gang started to take an increasing interest in him. Girl Y was now in the early years of primary school and Boy X was very protective of her, threatening her class mates if she reported even the smallest disagreement.

At the age of 13 he was a victim of robbery on two separate occasions, and a few months later he himself committed a robbery and violent assault as part of a group.

Aged 14, Boy X was involved in six further crimes including robbery, violent assault, victim intimidation and public order offences. He was also a victim of grievous bodily harm but refused to co-operate with the police. By the age of 16 he had attended the local hospital 16 times for various assault-related injuries, including stabbing wounds.

Boy X's offending behaviour continued to escalate and the following year he was involved in 14 offences. He was increasingly in trouble at

school too, and eventually excluded altogether. Now under the care of a Pupil Referral Unit, he attended intermittently and when he did, found himself bored by the classes on offer and left with no useful qualifications. The severity of his offending increased, including offensive weapon and class A drug possession.

Girl Y, his younger sister, was now 13, and had started associating with older boys, members of a local gang who were rivals to Boy X. Girl Y was arrested that year for the possession of class A drugs. The house was raided following evidence that she was holding a gun for her boyfriend.

By the age of 18, out of work, not in college or training and increasingly embroiled in the local drugs economy, Boy X's life became dominated by the violent peer group around him and the postcode territories they operated within. Mobile phone footage circulating locally showed Boy X and a group of fellow gang members sexually abusing a 15-year-old girl from their estate.

At the same time, Girl Y had dropped many of her female friends and the few she remained in contact with were heavily involved with older gang members. One day, Girl Y turned up at the local A&E. She had been repeatedly raped over a four-hour period. She was severely traumatised and didn't leave the house for six months.

Perceived disrespect from rival gangs was met with violence. When a close friend of Boy X's was shot, he retaliated with a gun rented from a known gun supplier on a neighbouring estate, and killed a well-known member of a rival gang at 2.00am on a Saturday morning outside a local nightclub. He was already known for a series of serious assaults inside the nightclub itself. Rapidly identified and charged with murder, he was convicted in the Crown Court and is now serving a life sentence.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Boy X isn't a real person but the things that happened to him and his family are based on real events presented to the review team over the past two months and discussions with frontline experts on gang violence. It illustrates how, unchecked, harmful events can damage individuals and families.

*How many times in Boy X's life had he come into contact with public sector agencies in their many forms and how many times had they failed Boy X and his family?*

### Working together across-government to end gang and youth violence

This Report sets out a cross-government plan to reduce gang and youth violence by targeting people like Boy X and reducing the damage they do to themselves, their families and the communities in which they grow up.

Over the past two months a group of senior ministers, led by the Home Secretary, and working closely with the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, has committed itself to a thorough review of the problem of gang and serious youth violence. They have met with a range of local projects working to stop youth violence and have heard from international experts about what has worked in the United States and the rest of Europe.

Consultation events have also been held with local authority representatives, with national and local voluntary and community organisations working with young people involved in gang violence and with young people themselves. (Full details of these events are listed in Annex A). Home Office and Ministry of Justice statisticians have analysed the characteristics of the offenders involved in the disorder in August<sup>2</sup> – including their gang affiliation and the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) has gathered evidence from a range of police forces about the nature and scale of their gang problem and their response.

From all of this material several key messages have emerged.

Firstly, that the vast majority of young people are not involved in serious violence or gangs, want nothing to do with them and object to the generalisations that are made about young people and crime.



Secondly, that the small number of young people who are involved in serious violence have a disproportionately large impact on the communities around them in some parts of the UK and that gang membership increases the likelihood of serious violence. Almost 50% of shootings and 22% of serious violence in London is thought to be committed by known gang members.<sup>3</sup> Gangs create a culture of violence and criminality which can stretch beyond the gang itself, effectively normalising such behaviour.

Thirdly, that this small minority of violent young people are not randomly distributed and do not usually appear out of the blue. Some areas experience significantly more violence than others. Some individual and family risk factors, repeat themselves time after time.

Fourthly, there is some evidence that things have improved. Police in Manchester, Liverpool and Birmingham say that local initiatives are starting to make a difference. The challenge is to embed and sustain these improvements, and to ensure that all forms of gang and youth violence are dealt with effectively.

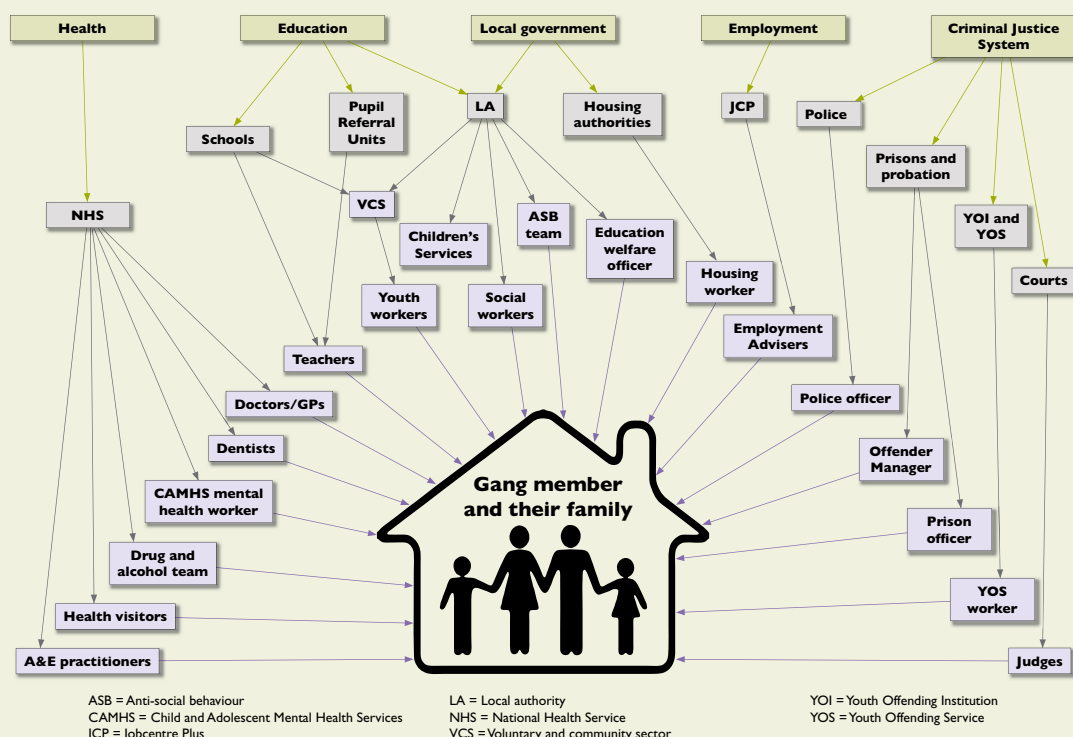
Fifthly, that prevention, enforcement and intervention activities with both young people and their families will only have a real impact if they are coordinated effectively at the local level.

At every stage in Boy X’s life, and that of his sister, he and his family were in contact with a wide range of public services. Maps of these points of contact show the breadth of agencies that can be involved and hence the enormous costs these problem families can impose (Figure 1).

An analysis by West Midlands police found that over a 40-year period, three generations of a single gang-involved family between them accounted for 78 arrests, 55 convictions, 13 prison sentences – of a total of almost 27 years – at a total cost to the criminal justice system alone in excess of £2.7 million. This does not include the extra costs incurred by other local services, such as education, health, social services and the local authority.

At any one time, numerous public services may be in contact with families like Boy X’s.

Figure 1 – Range of agencies involved with a typical gang member and their family



Only by encouraging every agency to join up and share information, resources and accountability for outcomes for families like these can these problems be solved. Where this does happen, the savings can be enormous. Instead of the traditional single agency silo approach costing local services hundreds of thousands of pounds per family a year, a coordinated approach not only creates a better service but could have dramatic effects in reducing costs.

These families make up around one per cent of the population, yet cost the economy over £8 billion a year, and violence and abuse is being transmitted from one generation to the next. Our plans to shake up the way we turn around the lives of the most troubled families will be crucial to delivering a sustained reduction in youth violence and the many other problems which stem from the neglect, drug and alcohol abuse, violence and ill health that characterise them.

It is clear that we must focus on the family if we are to make a difference to the individual. A new Troubled Families Team in the Department for Communities and Local Government, headed by Louise Casey, will drive forward the Prime Minister's commitment to turn around the lives of the 120,000 most troubled families, with reduced criminality and violence amongst key outcomes for this work. In areas where gang and youth violence is a major issue, the Troubled Families Team will work closely with the new Ending Gang and Youth Violence Team to support local areas to improve the identification of the families most likely to be involved in serious violence and develop intensive interventions to prevent further violence and reduce costs to local agencies.

### What would make a difference?

At every stage in Boy X's and Girl Y's lives there were people and interventions that could have made a difference and stopped his life-story ending in tragedy – if information had been shared or integration improved.

This Government has already set in motion a number of far-reaching reforms to address the

entrenched educational and social failures that can drive these problems. As well as the new Troubled Families programme, these include: the election of Police and Crime Commissioners by November 2012, to increase the accountability of local police; the new Welfare Bill, giving young people better opportunities to access work and overcome barriers to their employment; education reforms that will drive up pupil performance and increase participation in further study and employment; the new Localism Bill which will give local areas the power to take action and pool their resources through Community budgets; and the Social Policy Review, which is identifying actions across government to improve the life chances of everyone across the UK.

But we must embed the right local approach to make sure that these policies make a real difference on the ground. Local authorities, working in partnership, are best placed to provide strong leadership to the challenges they face, putting in place a strong collaborative structure to identify those at risk, agree coordinated actions and manage individual interventions.

This Report therefore calls for a renewed focus on a coordinated local response that addresses the whole problem, and not just its component parts. Strong implementation is key to this – we cannot let more children like Boy X, or Girl Y, fall through the cracks.

Solving the problem of gang and youth violence requires systematic effort across a range of services. To support local agencies in implementing this ambitious programme, the Government is establishing an Ending Gang and Youth Violence Team. Made up of network of frontline experts, the team will work alongside local agencies to help them assess gang and youth violence, and take action based on evidence based effective practice. To reflect the need for local action to be taken by a range of agencies, the team will be made up of people with a range of backgrounds including education, policing, youth work, community engagement, safeguarding, youth justice and health. This is not about short-term quick fixes. The team will focus on helping

local agencies which have the greatest challenges to make changes to the way their mainstream services operate which are long-term and sustainable. The selection of around 30 priority areas to be supported will be informed by research currently being conducted by ACPO to map gangs and gang violence in selected forces across the country which will, for the first time, provide a national picture based on a single definition and approach.

This Report sets out the concerted effort that will be needed to deliver sustained improvement in areas most affected by youth violence. Many of the interventions we suggest are not new. But we need better coordination on the ground so that the funding, resources and efforts put in locally result in actual change. This calls for a systematic review, reprioritisation and restructuring of public services at the local level – based on early intervention as well as enforcement. That means changing the way mainstream public services like schools, hospitals and health visitors operate to identify children at risk. It means local areas agreeing coordinated, sustainable interventions tailored to an individual and/or their family that reduces the risk of harm. It means making the most of those ‘teachable moments’ in the immediate aftermath of a serious incident,

perhaps in the A&E department or police cell to persuade the young person to walk away from the violence. And it means treating violence not just as a criminal matter for the police, but as a public health issue that every agency should be concerned about.

As Bill Bratton, the ex-police chief of New York and Los Angeles said to an international forum of gang experts held at the Home Office in October, there are important grounds of optimism that this can be done. Based on his visits to projects in Manchester, Birmingham and London he urged us to celebrate what they are already achieving and the enthusiasm and expertise he found wherever he went.

Further details of all these programmes and similar initiatives in Liverpool, Strathclyde and Cincinnati can be found at Annex B.

So we are not starting from scratch. The number of homicides of young people aged 13 to 24 fell in 2008/09 and 2009/10 compared to their peak in 2007/08 and the number admitted to hospital for assault wounds while still too high at over 16,000 in 2009/10 is also lower than it was three years ago.<sup>4</sup> (see Figure 2)

**Figure 2 – Trends in homicide and NHS hospital admissions for assault for victims aged 13 to 24**



Produced from data previously published by the Home Office (2011). Hospital Episode Statistics Copyright © 2010 were re-used with the permission of The Health and Social Care Information Centre. All rights reserved.<sup>5</sup>

But these successes must be sustained. This Report calls for a concerted effort to reduce serious youth and gang violence in high violence areas – based on prevention, targeted interventions and enforcement.

The Ending Gang and Youth Violence Programme will focus on the major urban areas in England – as the figures suggest that is where the problem is concentrated. But it will learn from, and share learning with, others working on similar issues in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.

### What factors lead young people to commit serious violence?

The vast majority of young people are law-abiding citizens who make a valuable contribution to society and their local community. In fact, young people are disproportionately more likely to be the victim of violence and to worry about the impact of it on their day-to-day lives. British Crime Survey estimates suggest that young men aged 16 to 24, for example, are more than four times more likely to become the victim of violent crime than the general population and there were over 500,000 violent incidents against 10 to 15 year olds in 2010/11.<sup>6</sup> Under-reporting may mean that the true levels are even higher.

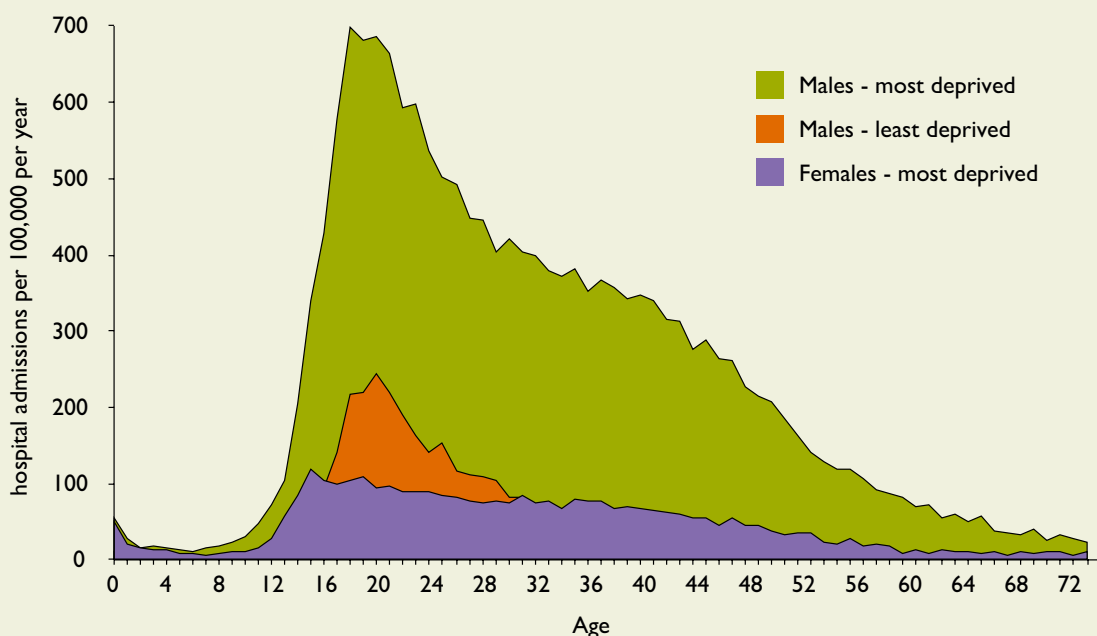
A young person's risk of being a victim of violence is heavily determined by their age, sex and class (Figure 3). For example, analysis has shown that the number of individuals admitted to hospital following an assault rises as teenagers get older – before falling after the early twenties. Boys are much more likely than girls to be victims of violence (except for domestic and sexual violence, where girls outnumber boys).

The factors lying behind these graphs can be seen in the individual stories of boys like Boy X and in the environment they grow up in. The same themes recur time and again:

- early childhood neglect and abuse.
- ill health in the family, including mental ill health;
- parental violence and drug addiction;
- school exclusion and early conduct disorders;
- violent victimisation and repeated hospital visits;
- early involvement in local gangs; and
- early and repeat offending, inadequately punished or prevented.

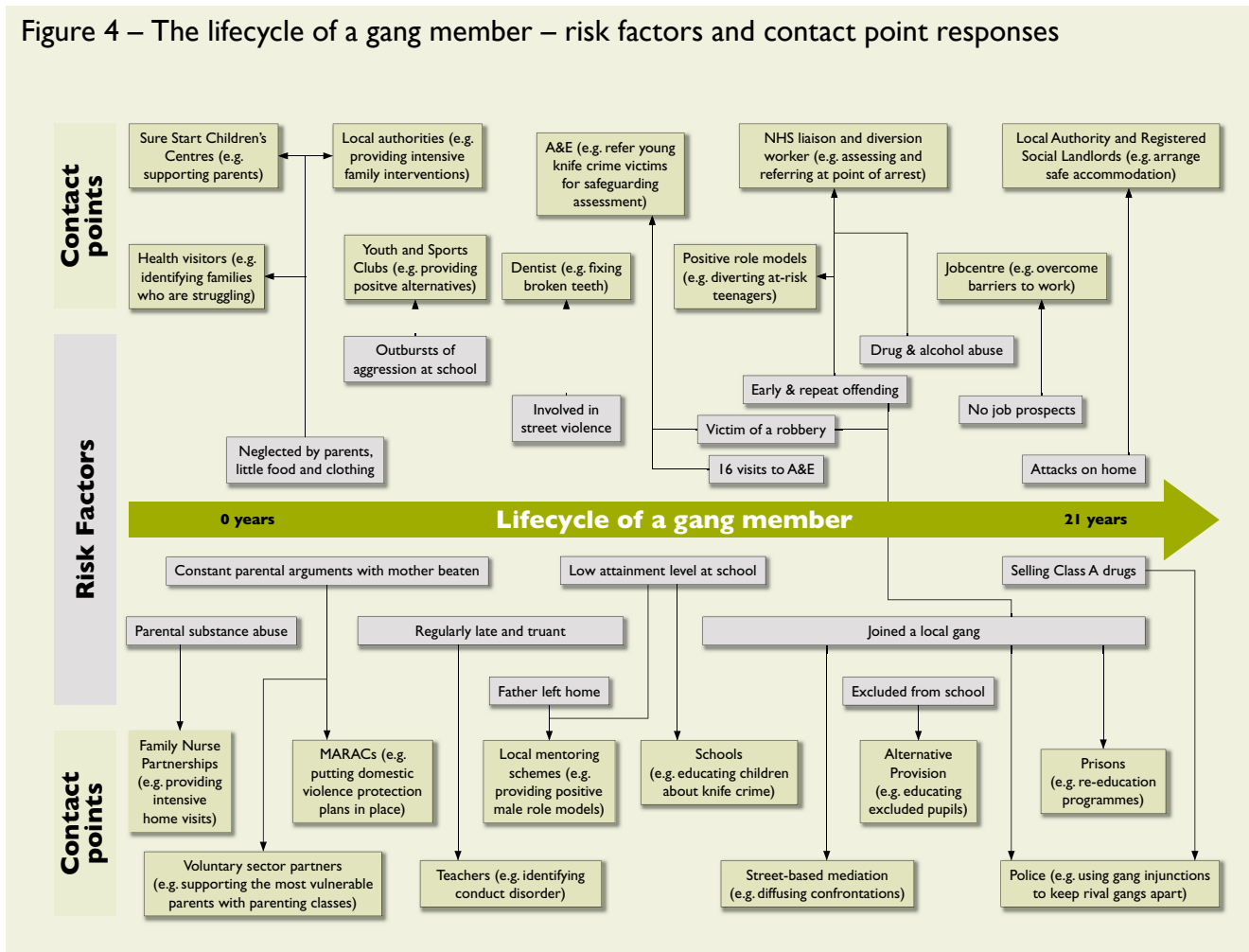
Family factors like parental neglect or violence are important. But so too are broader community factors like local attitudes to the illegal economy or high crime rates.

Figure 3 – Admissions to English NHS hospitals for assault involving 13 to 24 year olds.



Source: Professor Mark Bellis et al, 2011<sup>7</sup>.

Figure 4 – The lifecycle of a gang member – risk factors and contact point responses



## Gangs and youth violence

Gang membership also drives serious violence. Whilst data on gangs is not systematically captured in the UK, evidence suggests that gang membership is relatively rare. Youth surveys have found that around two to seven per cent of young people (aged between 10 and 19 years) report being a member of a gang.

### How should we define a gang?

Definitions of 'gangs' vary widely and there has been some criticism that government has failed to establish a single definition that can guide its approach. To help draw a clear distinction between our strategies on organised crime groups and the more disorganised and local street gangs we propose to adopt the definition set out in the Centre for Social Justice's 2009 Report, *Dying to Belong*<sup>8</sup> as our definition of a street gang:

"A relatively durable, predominantly street-based group of young people who:-

- 1 see themselves (and are seen by others) as a discernable group;
- 2 engage in criminal activity and violence;
- 3 lay claim over territory (this is not necessary geographical territory but can include an illegal economy territory);
- 4 have some form of identifying structural feature; and
- 5 are in conflict with other, similar gangs."

Using this definition, ACPO are currently mapping the number of street gangs and street gang members in eight of the largest force areas in England and will report by the end of the year on this exercise.

This small group have a disproportionate impact on the communities around them. Compared with non-gang members, gang members are more likely to offend, commit a wider range of offences, carry weapons and sell drugs. A recent Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) analysis found that gang members were responsible for 48% of all shootings and 22% of serious violence more generally in London. An analysis of teenage homicides in London in 2007 and 2008 found that a quarter were gang related. Since April 2008 the MPS has recorded over 60 harmful gangs that have been involved either as suspects or victims of crime in London.<sup>9</sup> West Midlands police have documented 42 urban street gangs across their force area involving more than 400 individuals. Nottinghamshire police report they have 15 gangs involving up to 400 individuals and ACPO are conducting a broader mapping exercise to scope the problem in other areas of the country.

### Street gangs and organised crime

We know that there are a number of links between serious organised crime and street gangs. The supply of weapons, for example, is overwhelmingly dominated by organised criminality. Drugs supply, as Professor John Pitts points out in his study of street gangs in Waltham Forest, is a business, requiring a large workforce and supply chain<sup>10</sup>. For the gang members, the financial rewards of involvement in this supply chain can be significant.

The Government's Organised Crime Strategy,<sup>11</sup> published in July 2011, emphasised the need for improved evidence on the career pathways of organised criminals. The Home Office will explore how best to create a more robust evidence-base on the criminal careers of organised offenders. One part of this will be to examine the link between adolescent gang membership and later involvement in organised crime.

### Gangs and the riots

Gangs played a small, but significant role in the riots earlier this year.

Across the 10 forces where the disorder was most prevalent a total of 417 arrestees during the period of the disorder were reported to be affiliated to a gang – 13% of the total. For forces outside London, the majority recorded fewer than 10% of all arrestees being identified as gang members. Two non-London forces reported figures in excess of 10% (West Yorkshire (19%) and Nottinghamshire (17%). In London, the MPS reported that 19% of arrestees in the riots – 337 suspects – were identified as gang members and were drawn from 169 different gangs.<sup>12</sup> A third of all incidents involving gang members in London involved just 16 street gangs.

There is evidence that gang members were involved in some of the handful of more serious, life-threatening incidents that took place during the disturbances, for example an incident in Birmingham in which police officers were fired on by armed gangs.

### The impact of gang violence on girls and young women

In focusing on the male perpetrators and male victims of gang violence it can be easy to lose sight of the role that young women and girls may have in gang-related activity, and the hidden impact of serious youth violence on them. Research by the organisation Race on the Agenda (2010; 2011) has exposed the significant harm that women and girls can experience as a result of their relationships with gang-associated male peers and family members.

*Rape, tied up, tortured, other people looking for her cause they are looking for her boyfriend, kidnapped, girls that are in the gang can target her when she doesn't even know that she was in a gang cos of what her boyfriend has been doing, you don't realise but when it happens you realise, believe me.*  
**Girl, 16 years old, Birmingham**

*Things what X done to me, pinned me to the couch and had sex with me and his friends have filmed it on their phones, and they've all had copies of it, and you learn to feel numb, when they're hitting ya and doing things to ya you learn to feel numb... I'm... crying me heart out inside but I can't show it, because I had to learn. Like since I've been in here I haven't stopped crying cos I can, just cos I can.*

**Young woman, 19 years old, Manchester**

*But then I've had some pretty bad injuries from both my exes and their mates: fractured eye socket, I've had me jaw broke, broken collar bone, broken hands, broken legs. R broke both of my legs six months into being with me, because we was at a party and his friends given me a hug, and as he's done that he's touched me bum, like on purpose, and R dragged me out of the party by me hair and snapped both me legs outside with a baseball bat. Had a metal pole round me head, dung bells, you know the weight bars, I've been knocked out I don't know how many times, broken nose, they thought I had a bleed on the brain I was bleeding so much out of me left ear, I'm partially deaf in that ear cos of him.*

**Woman, 20 years old, Manchester (reflecting on relationships aged 15 – 19)<sup>13</sup>**

Gangs Action Programme (TGAP) (Home Office, 2008) found that the majority of gang members across the four TGAP areas as a whole (London, Manchester, West Midlands and Merseyside) were Black Caribbean (75%) this varied across different parts of the country, with gang members identified in Liverpool being predominantly White (96%). However, ethnicity is an important factor in contextualising gang involvement. For example, some ethnic minorities are overrepresented in areas of multiple deprivation, the same areas where gangs are disproportionately concentrated. Racial discrimination (real or perceived) can also form part of the reasons young people give for gang involvement.

In taking forward our programme for ending gang and youth violence we will make sure our response identifies the needs of girls and young women involved in youth violence – as perpetrators as well as victims. Where policy is targeted specifically at females, we will ensure that we reflect the different needs of girls, compared with women.

## Ethnicity

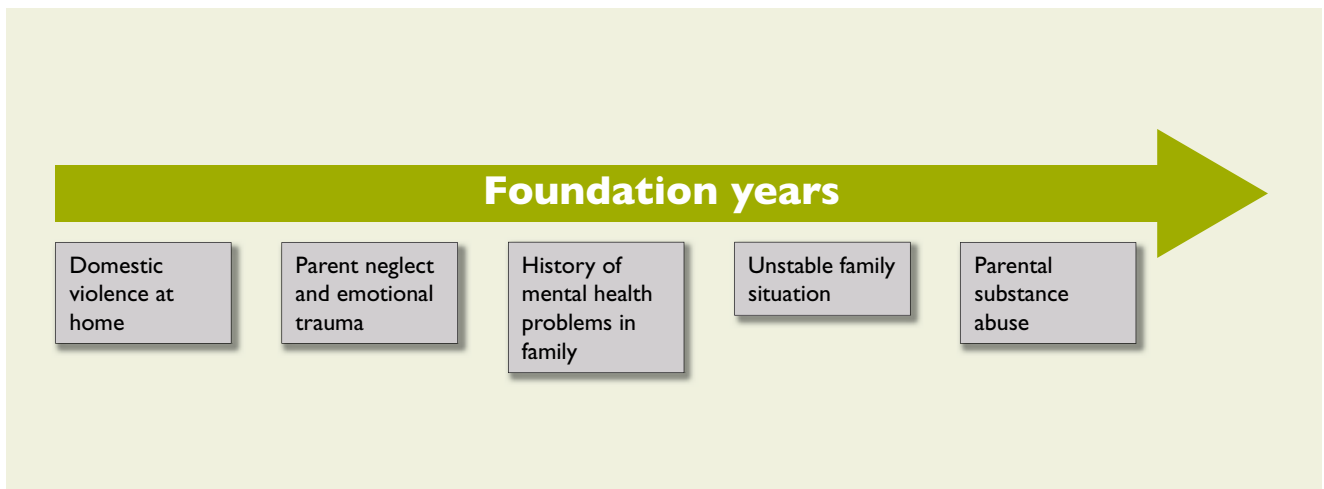
Gangs tend to be formed through affiliations based on territory (and related social networks) rather than ethnicity. The single-ethnicity gangs that do exist (including those that are exclusively white British) are more likely to reflect their local demographics, rather than a deliberate congregation of individuals of shared ethnicity. For example, whilst monitoring data from the Tackling

# Section 2

## Breaking the life- cycles of violence – interventions that can make a difference



## The foundation years



The early roots of Boy X's teenage violence lay back in his very earliest childhood experiences. Very young children are uniquely sensitive to both positive and negative influences on their development. With a young, drug-addicted mother and a mostly absent but violent father, Boy X suffered severe neglect in his first 18 months – a critical period in shaping his social and emotional development, as well as intellectual growth.

As Graham Allen's independent review of early intervention points out 'when the environment is impoverished, neglectful or abusive, this can result in a child who doesn't develop empathy, learn how to regulate their emotions or develop social skills, and this can lead to an increased risk of mental health problems, relationship difficulties, anti-social behaviour and aggression.' Children exposed to chronic violence or threats of violence in very early life may also suffer repeated surges of stress hormones with long-term consequences for brain development – resulting in hyperactivity, impulsive and aggressive behaviour. Graham Allen quotes a study of three-year-old boys assessed by nurses as being 'at risk' who had two-and-a-half times as many criminal convictions as a not at-risk comparison group by the time they turn 21, and 55% of these convictions were for violent offences, compared to 18% for the not at risk group.<sup>14</sup>

The Government's broad agenda to support and improve provision for children and families in the foundation years will make a real difference

to families like Boy X's. We are continuing to support a network of Sure Start Children's Centres, enabling them to focus on using evidence-based approaches to support families in greatest need. And from 2013, the entitlement to 15 hours a week free nursery education, currently available for all three and four year olds will be extended to the most disadvantaged two year olds. A reformed Early Years Foundation Stage will place a greater focus on the basic social, emotional, communication and language skills children need to do well at school. Parents will also receive a written summary of their child's progress when they are aged between two and three, which will in time be brought together with the health-visitor led health and development review.

We are trialling the take up of high quality universal parenting classes through the provision of vouchers for mothers and fathers of children from birth to five years in three areas.

Early interventions to promote warm, loving supportive parenting are particularly essential if we are to prevent a life of violence further down the line.

Family Nurse Partnerships (FNPs) are an example of a targeted intensive home visiting programme designed to identify and support first-time teenage mothers like Boy X's. Starting in early pregnancy until the child is two, the

programme is delivered by a specially trained nurse to help parents to care well for their child and themselves, promoting parents' attachment and economic self-sufficiency. A review of thirty years of research in the US has shown a 59% reduction in arrests and a 90% reduction in supervision orders by age 15 for the children of mothers helped by this programme in the US. Areas without FNPs should also implement ways to identify problems early and provide intensive support.<sup>15</sup>

One London family nurse provides a vivid account of what difference FNP made to one of her clients.

### Case study: Family Nurse Partnerships

Daniella (not her real name) was involved in gangs from the age of 11. The gang became her surrogate family and she became a prolific offender. She was taken into care and at 16 became pregnant. At this point she was referred to the Family Nurse Partnership (FNP) by the social worker who said that her baby was likely to be taken into care. Daniella did not engage well with her family nurse to begin with but began to see that the nurse did not give up on her and she started to engage and enjoy the programme.

The FNP support involved intensive home visits with Daniella until her baby was two years old. The family nurse built a trusting relationship with Daniella and guided her to adopt a healthier lifestyle for her and her son. She also helped her to plan for the future. By the time her baby was seven months old, she no longer had contact with gang members and slowly built up a new friendship group with other young mothers. She is now 17 and although she can still be impulsive and get angry quickly, progress is steady and she is a warm and caring parent and her son is happy and thriving.

Gang issues don't disappear overnight and Daniella fears the release of rivals from prison. She has been referred to a local multi-agency group of voluntary and statutory sector agencies who have produced a risk management plan to provide professional support to reduce the risk of harm to Daniella.

On the night of the riots she stayed at home until it was clear and expressed a wish to avoid trouble and protect her child.

The Government has already committed to doubling the capacity of the Family Nurse Partnership programme from helping over 6,000 young mothers a year to 13,000 by 2015. However, it is clear that areas not using this scheme also need to use relevant services to identify problems early and provide intensive support, for example, through maternity services, providing more intensive support during pregnancy and ensuring continuity of support into the health visiting and other services which will often be available through Sure Start Children's Centres.

Health visitors can also play a crucial role in identifying and supporting those families like Boy X's that are struggling in the early years of childhood – including identifying the signs of family abuse and violence that can damage children early in life and lead to violent outcomes for the child. We will support the recruitment of an extra 4,200 health visitors by 2015 and will train every health visitor to identify violence against women and children and be able to refer them for appropriate support or criminal justice intervention. The expanded health visiting services will ensure, as a priority, that all families are offered a health and development review for children aged two to two-and-a-half – so children needing additional support can be identified and offered appropriate help.

We know that at least 750,000 children a year witness domestic violence and this is a risk factor in these children themselves turning to violence later in life.<sup>16</sup>

Those victims identified as at highest risk can be referred to a Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) where an action plan to protect them and their children is agreed. Independent Domestic Violence Advisers (IDVAs) who provide specialist advice and support to the victim will also represent them at the MARAC.<sup>17</sup> MARACs are now in place in around 250 different areas across England and Wales and in the last year have worked with almost 48,000 of the highest risk domestic violence victims to protect them and their 64,000 children from repeat victimisation. The Government's recent Action Plan to End Violence Against Women and Girls includes over £18 million of stable Home Office funding over four years for specialist services like MARACs and IDVAs to support the highest risk victims of domestic abuse and strengthen the sustainability of these services.

### What difference might we have made?

If the good practice set out above had been in place in the earliest years of Boy X's life his life story could have been very different.

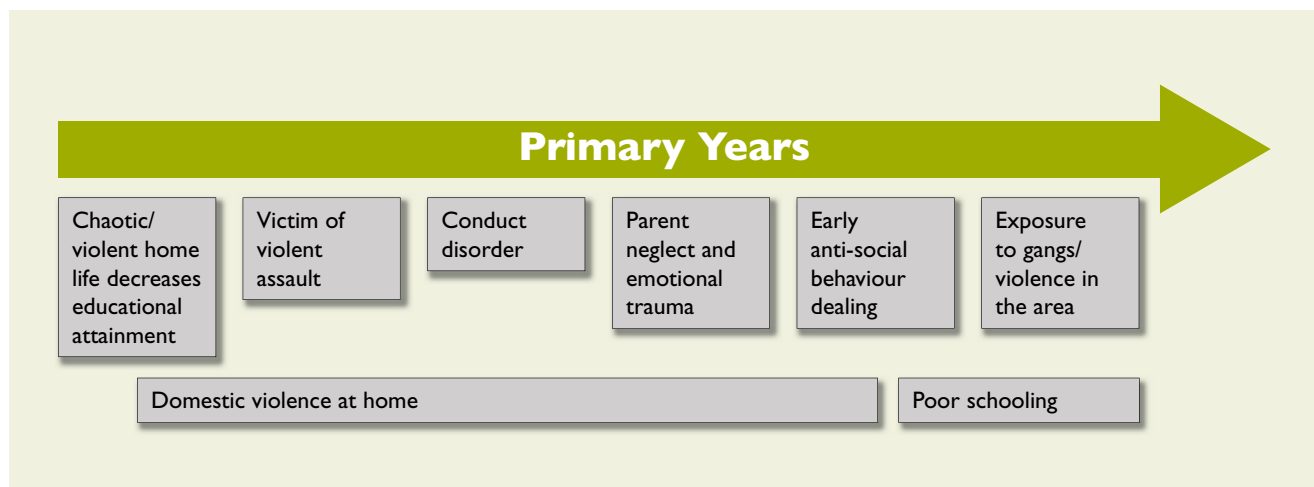
When his mother became pregnant she could have been offered the FNP programme by her doctor and midwife through until his second birthday – building a stronger bond between him and his mother and helping him to develop well and keep healthy. From the age of two, Boy X would have been entitled to 15 hours free nursery education a week and his developmental progress would have been reviewed with the help of a local health visitor. The family nurses and health visitor should also have picked up the warning signs of domestic violence and referred his mother's case to a MARAC meeting. There, police and social services would have been able to share their concerns and agree some immediate actions to prevent further abuse – including advising on legal injunctions to keep Boy X's violent father away from the home.

### Our early intervention commitment

To support effective early interventions in lives like Boy X's we are already committed to:

- Doubling the capacity of the FNP programme providing intensive preventive intervention to vulnerable first-time teenage mothers – aiming to reach 13,000 mothers a year by 2015.
- Recruiting 4,200 more health visitors by 2015, and training them to better identify violence against women and children.
- Extending the entitlement to 15 hours a week free nursery education to all disadvantaged two year olds from 2013.
- Continuing our work to protect the highest risk victims of domestic violence and their children with £18 million investment in national helplines and local MARAC and IDVA services and training over four years.
- Turning around the lives of the 120,000 most troubled families by 2015 around a third of which have children under five and making a reduction in violence one of the key outcome for this work.

## The primary years



By the time he entered primary school, the warning signs for Boy X were already clear. Not only was his learning development already lagging behind other children his age – but his social development and behaviour was also giving cause for concern. He was aggressive to other children and became angry and agitated very quickly – having to be temporarily excluded from the classroom on numerous occasions and from the school itself on one occasion. He was also frequently late into school and sometimes did not show up at all. As he reached the age of nine the outside influences on his life became increasingly clear too, as he talked with increasing knowledge about the older boys and gangs on his local estate including stabbings he had witnessed on his own street.

Successful interventions for children like Boy X require close co-ordination and communication between schools, parents and other local services such as specialist experts on mental health, including conduct disorder. It is also crucial that primary schools identify girls who might be at risk. Girls may present different behavioural challenges to boys, such as being withdrawn, uncommunicative and demonstrating very low self-esteem, but it is just as important that these issues are detected and appropriate interventions put in place. The voluntary sector provides an increasingly wide range of specialist support services to children and families and has a key role to play too.

Primary schools provide a vital but under-used opportunity for intervening to educate all children about the risks they will encounter outside the school gates and to work more intensively with those already showing signs of distress or disorder.

Good quality teachers and learning assistants are key as the first line of support to children with behavioural and emotional difficulties, so we are reforming initial teacher training to get the right teachers in, and give them the skills they need to support young people to achieve the best possible outcomes.

Teachers will also need specialist support to deal with more challenging behavioural problems. Early behavioural problems and conduct disorders at school can be an early warning sign of a risk of violence in later childhood and the number of pupils identified with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties has increased significantly in recent years – by 23% between 2005 and 2010 – to 158,000 children – over six per cent of the total school population.<sup>18</sup>

Teachers need to get at the root causes of challenging behaviour, not just the symptoms, for example, where a pupil displays poor behaviour that doesn't improve despite effective behaviour management by the school. New guidance to schools on behaviour and discipline, recommends that school behaviour policies set out when a

multi-agency assessment should be carried out to identify any underlying causal factors.

The Targeted Mental Health in Schools (TaMHS) approach gives schools access to special therapeutic interventions for behavioural problems – often provided by voluntary sector organisations. Schools involved with the programme reported better behaviour and fewer exclusions among the pupils who have been targeted and the flexibilities offered by the new Early Intervention Grant now gives local areas opportunities to embed this approach more widely.<sup>19</sup> We are committed to expanding children and young people's access to psychological therapies through providing £18 million a year over the next four years. This will be an evidence-based programme in transforming local services for children and the first wave will include a focus on conduct disorder.

The Department for Education also intends to review school attendance and the parental responsibility measures, to make sure that the right structures are in place to address attendance issues at an early stage.

Parents are key partners too and the best schools work with them. The YoungMinds in Schools programme, funded by the Department for Education, is working with four local clusters of schools to pilot a scheme to bring parents, schools and children together to improve their behavioural problems.<sup>20</sup> Harsh, negative or inconsistent discipline, lack of emotional warmth and parental conflict all increase the risk that children will develop emotional and behavioural problems that can lead to anti-social behaviour, substance misuse and crime.<sup>21</sup> There is a four to five-fold increased risk of conduct disorder in childhood if a child experiences poor parenting skills.<sup>22</sup>

Parenting is never easy. Every parent struggles at times to do the right thing. And if your own parenting role models have themselves been harsh, neglectful or abusive it is even harder to know what that is.

Creating stronger parents and stronger bonds between parents and their children is a key

Government commitment. We are working with a wide range of voluntary sector partners to improve the advice and practical support that is provided to the most vulnerable parents.<sup>23</sup>

To help support parents to spot the signs of gang involvement in their children, we will also work with a range of family service providers to develop new advice on gangs. The advice will include information on the many reasons why young people may get involved in gangs, what to do if a parent suspects their child is getting involved with a gang as well as guiding parents on how to talk to their children about gangs.

It's important that children have positive role models in their life – and the earlier the better. We want to increase male role models in schools and are currently considering further proposals to increase the number of male entrants to initial teacher training. The voluntary sector also plays an important part in helping young people, like Boy X and his sister to experience the benefits of positive role models through mentoring. Chance UK for example, is an early intervention mentoring programme working with 5-11 year olds who are likely to go on to criminal offending and anti-social behaviour later in life.

### Chance UK Mentors

Chance UK is an early intervention mentoring programme working with 5 to 11 year olds with behavioural difficulties. On referral, the children are assessed using the Goodman Strength & Difficulties Questionnaire and Chance UK then works with those most likely to go on to criminal, offending and anti-social behaviour later in life, and to be targeted by gangs. Chance UK matches fully trained adult volunteer mentors with the children on a one-year, solution-focused and goal-orientated programme. Mentors develop an individual programme of meetings and activities in line with their child's interests and needs.

Mentoring occurs on a weekly basis and a session lasts between two and four hours. Session activities could include sport, museum, theatre or cinema visits, reading, and playing games. During the course of the year the mentor encourages and models positive behaviour to the mentee, tackles negative self images and supports the child in developing life skills. The process is closely monitored with monthly meetings between mentors and their Programme Managers and mentors are required to fill out a Session Planning Form (SPF) after every mentoring session. After three months, mentors and their mentees jointly devise goals for each other. For the mentee this will include a behavioural as well as practical goal. Mentoring lasts 12 months and concludes with a graduation ceremony attended by family and friends.

An evaluation by Goldsmiths University in 2008 found that 98% of the children mentored finish the programme with improved behaviour and 51% finish with no behavioural difficulties at all.

Chance UK have also developed a Girls Programme and a three year pilot started in July 2011. It works with girls aged between 5 and 11 years old, who are residents or pupils in the London Borough of Hackney or Islington and who live in households or have family members involved in gangs. The programme matches fully trained adult volunteer mentors with these girls and provides compulsory support for parents. These pilots are being independently evaluated by the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS).

For more information on Chance UK go to: [www.chanceuk.com](http://www.chanceuk.com)

career and for an effective intervention to have been agreed between his teacher, parent and an outside organisation specialising in supporting boys like him – which local authorities can choose to fund as a priority through the Early Intervention Grant and other funding sources. His mum would have been engaged by his school and would have continued to receive on-going help with her parenting skills and Boy X would have started to have a positive male role model in his life, maybe through a scheme like Chance UK.

And his school, recognising the particular risks around growing up in an area of high knife crime and gang violence and the need to raise awareness early would have been able to integrate effective materials on keeping yourself safe into their teaching materials for Years Five and Six so that their pupils were well prepared for the move up to secondary school.

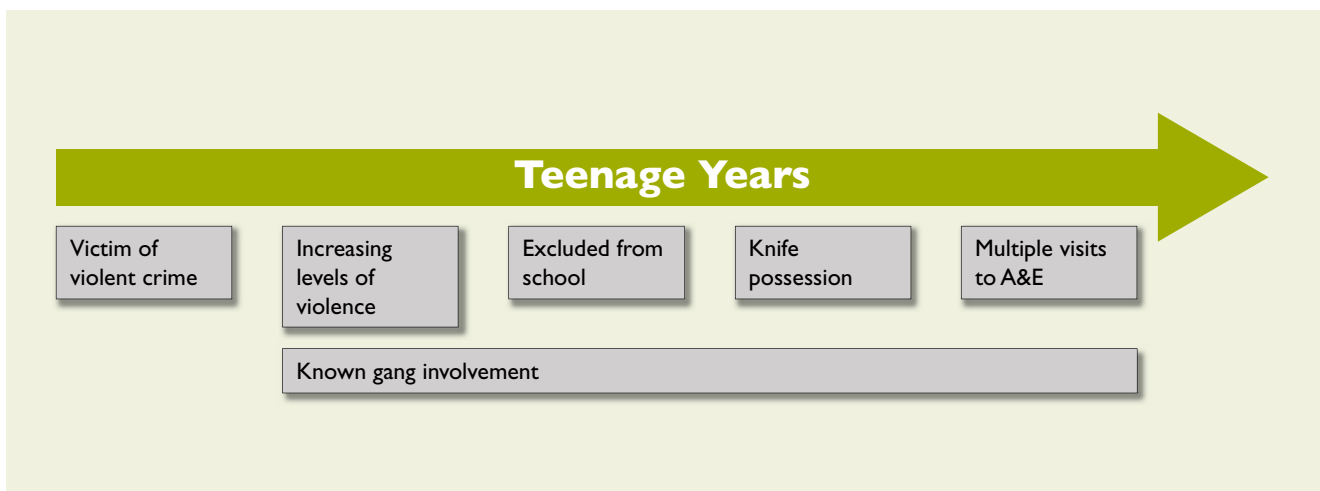
To support primary age interventions for children like Boy X we will:

- Work with a wide range of voluntary sector partners to support the most vulnerable parents and improve their parenting skills.
- Make sure school behaviour policies set out when a multi-agency assessment should be carried out to assess any underlying causal factors.
- Develop new advice on gangs to help parents spot the signs of gang involvement in their children.
- Invest in education materials for primary schools to help children keep themselves safe (including from gang and knife crime).

### What difference might this have made for Boy X?

Had the support set out above been in place in a coherent way when Boy X was growing up, he might have expected his conduct disorder to have been identified early on in his primary school

## Teenage years



As Boy X moved into secondary school he became vulnerable to the influence of a much bigger and older peer group of boys. He was already well known to the older boys on the estate – many of them entrenched in the gang lifestyle – and they took an increasing interest in him in and out of school, using him to run errands and rewarding him with money and a chance to hang out with the older group.

He spent less and less time at home and more and more time on the streets with this very negative peer group. He started to attract attention from boys in rival areas as well and was robbed and attacked on several occasions in his early teens. This led him to start carrying a knife, for what he regarded as protection, and to be much more wary of leaving his home territory, greatly restricting what he could do in the evening or at weekends.

Now past the age of criminal responsibility, Boy X also started to appear on the radar of the local police, first for anti-social behaviour and criminal damage, but by his early teens as a part of a larger group involved in robberies and violence against other boys. After early police warnings made little difference, he ended up in a local Youth Court charged with knife possession, received a reparation order and was placed under the supervision of the local Youth Offending Team (YOT).

Not all of the violence he was involved in ended up on the police radar but it did come to the attention of other agencies – including numerous visits to the local hospital A&E department for assault-related injuries, including four visits for stab wounds in the course of two months when he was 15.

At school, which he attended only intermittently, Boy X was finding it increasingly difficult to control his temper and after assaulting a teacher during Year 10 he was permanently excluded. After a delay of several months, an alternative place in a Pupil Referral Unit was found but he did not find it an alternative to the street gang culture that was increasingly occupying him and he left with no meaningful qualifications.

Others in Boy X's immediate circle also suffered the consequences of his gang involvement. Lacking positive male role models or 'normal' healthy relationships to learn from, his attitude towards girls was shaped by the rest of his gang and the hyper-masculinised and sexualised media they'd consumed for many years. He played a full part in the group's frequent sexual abuse of female gang associates who were often regarded as little more than 'links' or sexual conquests. His younger sister also started to pay the price for her association with him when a rival gang sought retaliation and at one point his mother's house came under attack.

## Breaking the cycle of teenage violence

Moments of crisis in a young person's life such as arrest, school exclusion or a trip to the local A&E department offer vital opportunities to persuade the young person out of their violent lifecycle. All agencies need effective systems for identifying high risk individuals, sharing information on them and agreeing joint plans for support and enforcement.

The local Community Budget approach is being rolled out to a further 60 areas in 2012-13 to give local areas the freedoms they need to redesign and integrate local services around families like Boy X's, including through intensive family interventions.

The Government's broader commitment to improving provision for the 5,000 children like Boy X who are permanently excluded from school each year will also be key. A study by Professor John Pitts, for example, found that almost two-thirds of the active gang members in the study had been permanently excluded from school and there is evidence that exclusion from school can accelerate offending and anti-social behaviour.<sup>24</sup> This can often start with repeat truancy. To address this serious issue, we have announced that we will reduce the persistent absence threshold from 20% to 15% to ensure that schools react quicker to truancy issues, and have also announced that we will be publishing schools pupil absence data to raise the profile of this problem. We are also reviewing the range of legal measures available, including toughening the current fines system to discourage parents from refusing to engage with schools in addressing their children's poor attendance or condoning their truancy.

At present, just 1.4 per cent of pupils in alternative provision achieve five good GCSEs including Maths and English. That can't be good enough.

By March 2012, one in ten secondary schools will be part of a trial to ensure a decent education for excluded children. The new approach

gives responsibility and budgets for purchasing alternative provision to head teachers to ensure schools continue to monitor the attainment of the children they permanently exclude. In total the trial will cover 3,000 pupils at risk of exclusion and schools already involved in the trial report significant improvements.<sup>25</sup> The Government is also determined to raise standards in alternative provision. The current Education Bill will establish alternative provision Academies and Free Schools and give greater autonomy to Pupil Referral Units.

## What might make a difference?

### Families

*"Working with a family intervention worker has helped me 100% and helped me change my life around...and I am very thankful. I don't know what I'd be doing if my key-worker never got involved in my life", **Young man whose family has recently been part of an Intensive Family Intervention***

Attempting to reform someone like Boy X without also working with his broader family too may be setting him up to fail. There is an increasing recognition that intensive, sustained interventions that work simultaneously with the whole family are what is needed to turn around the most problematic families. This must take place at the local level, but nationally we are also supporting this activity through the Troubled Families Team in the Department for Communities and Local Government and are helping to fund a range of family-specific interventions on the ground, such as Intensive Family Interventions.

**Intensive Family Interventions** (formerly known as Family Intervention Projects or FIPs) work with the most challenging families tackling issues such as anti-social behaviour, youth crime, inter-generational disadvantage and worklessness in families by using a multi-agency approach with an 'assertive and persistent' style. The Government estimate that the cost of troubled families to the public is around £8 billion a year whilst recent research shows that for every £1 spent on Intensive Family Intervention generates a financial return of around £2.<sup>26</sup>



In the 12 months to March 2011, almost 5,500 families around England benefited from an intensive family intervention – a 55% increase on the previous year. The evidence around family interventions has led to local authorities prioritising investment in these interventions, even in these difficult times. Families involved so far have shown a 53% reduction in truancy, 58% reduction in anti social behaviour, 40% in drug and alcohol problems, 57% reduction in domestic violence issues and 41% reduction in crime<sup>27</sup>. Several of these intervention projects are focusing specifically on gang-involved families – including the Family Partnership team in Waltham Forest which has been working assertively with 30 high risk gang members and their families.

### Case study: Enough is Enough – gang intervention programme in London Borough of Waltham Forest

The London Borough of Waltham Forest has established an anti-gangs initiative called 'Enough is Enough'. The key foundation of the programme is its multi-disciplinary Family Partnership Team made up of highly skilled family practitioners supported by health, education, employment, police and housing professionals. Together, they work assertively with gang members, their parents, siblings and the local community and voluntary groups to provide a range of support – including signposting to educational and employment opportunities, as well as training and mentoring – to encourage gang members away from their gang lifestyle. Parents receive support to help them influence their children to leave their gang or not to get involved in the first place, while younger siblings are also supported and diverted away from gang culture. The family is clear that underpinning the support is the knowledge that continued criminal or serious anti-social behaviour could lead to civil, criminal or tenancy enforcement action.

The programme reports that the enforcement and support approach has already led to reductions in serious youth violence (24%), gun crime (31%), knife crime (16%) and

robbery (11%) between January and June 2011 compared to the same period last year. The Council has committed £1m to fund the programme. The unit cost of dealing with each family is just £21,000 – far lower than the cost of numerous agencies working independently with gang members. The reduction in serious youth violence and robbery offences is estimated to have led to savings of £2.3 million so far.

In support of the drive to turn around the lives of the most troubled families, Waltham Forest Council has applied to become a Community Budget area, which will see it from April 2012 extend its Family Partnership Team to target around 100 families over the course of the initiative.

**Multi-Systemic Therapy (MST)** is another type of family intervention, which is an evidence-based treatment involving one therapist working intensively over three to five months with families of children who have offended or have shown disruptive or anti-social behaviour. Positive outcomes from the first nine sites have shown that 85% of young people who have completed the programme have stopped offending and are attending school regularly.

### Multi-Systemic Therapy in action

A 13-year-old boy, John, was referred to the Brandon Centre MST team in London because of daily cannabis use and dealing in cannabis on behalf of adult gang members, including dealing from the family home. He had also been excluded from school and there were concerns about him taking drugs into school and creating a gang culture there. He has also been missing from home overnight three or four times a week and for up to a month at a time, involved in robberies with adult offenders. Following threats from adult gang members, and considering John's behaviour, local statutory bodies were concerned for the safety of John and his family. There were also concerns about his older brothers' involvement in drugs and for the safety of younger siblings.

An MST therapist was therefore commissioned to work intensively with the family, visiting two or three times a week, for five months to build the parents' confidence and skills in re-establishing authority with their sons and in their own home. Therapist and parents together were able to work on all their concerns, rather than John being seen individually by a number of agencies for different issues. The therapist supported parents to take a very proactive approach when John was missing or brought strangers to the house. This involved close collaboration with the police, local shopkeepers and housing wardens and neighbours. Parents also introduced drug testing for John and his two brothers alongside strong consequences for 'dirty' tests, support from extended family for this approach and encouragement of contact with a more positive peer group for John.

At the end of the intervention, John and his brothers had tested clean for drugs for over two months, John was sticking to the curfew set by his family and mixing with a more positive peer group. Parents reported that they now felt in control of their own home and that they would be able to tackle future problems themselves, John's father was also able to return to employment and John was also back in educational provision full time.

We have already committed to supporting the roll out of MST, with 25 sites working intensively with around 1,200 families by the end of 2013, and will publish findings from research into outcomes of MST in 2013/14.

### In school

Though a wide range of local prevention programmes around serious youth violence have sprung up, Brooke Kinsella found in her recent review that many of these projects find it difficult to get into schools to deliver these interventions and we have little hard evidence of which of these programmes make a real difference.<sup>28</sup> Some may even be doing more harm than good, so we will

assess existing materials on serious youth violence being used in schools and ensure schools know how to access the most effective.

Schools can also provide an important opportunity to teach teenagers about the harm and consequences of gender-based violence.

### Growing Against Gangs and Violence programme

The 'Growing Against Gangs and Violence' programme, which is a preventative education partnership with the Metropolitan Police Service, has developed a specific programme called 'Girls, gangs and consequences' which is delivered to 13-15 year old boys and girls in schools across South London and is now being expanded across London. Boys are made aware of the consequences of being involved in abusive relationships with girls, the consequences of being labelled as a registered sex offender and the realities of prison life. Girls are helped to identify the risks and make safe choices to help them stay safe. The glamorisation of gang involved boys is challenged, as are negative views of the victims of these crimes. The benefits of positive healthy relationships are also examined at length to promote a positive alternative. The programme is academically evaluated by Middlesex University and is supported by the MPS and Victim Support Services.<sup>29</sup>

In areas which choose to have Safer School Partnerships (SSPs) there are named police officers placed, full or part-time, in schools to break down barriers between police and schools, reduce truancy rates and provide local neighbourhood police teams and response units with valuable intelligence about imminent gang violence or other violent confrontations out of school. These schemes can play a key role in identifying potential 'at risk' young people, and referring them for further intervention to address their behaviour.

### Safer Schools Partnership (SSP) – Islington, London

Mark (not his real name) is a very high achiever at school and lives in an area of Islington where a gang is very active. He is a very confident young boy and had recently moved schools. Upon arriving at the new school, he felt very isolated and out of his comfort zone. During this time a gang tried to recruit him. He was adamant that he did not want to join the gang but threats were made to him. Mark's behaviour began to change and his mother started to become concerned about what he was involved in. One day she noticed that he had taken a knife from her kitchen and had it in his school bag.

Mark's mum contacted the Islington Youth Engagement team through a policeman based at Mark's school as part of the Safer Schools Partnership. The team visited Mark and his family at home and Mark relayed all of the above information. They introduced Mark to a Gangs Prevention worker at the Council who began to work with him on a regular basis. Working with the Gangs Prevention worker, the school and the school's police officer, the team were able to put a package of support around Mark. He was enrolled in a local knife awareness programme and introduced to a scheme at Arsenal Football Club where he was allocated a coach and a mentor. The school were aware of the risk factors involving other pupils and assisted there. There have been no further incidents and the team are continuing to map and monitor his progress.<sup>30</sup>

### Outside school

Outside school, boys like Boy X – and the girls he is involved with and abuses – need positive things to do and positive role models to look up to.

Nationally, in spite of the tough economic situation, local authorities in England and Wales are still spending almost £300 million in 2011-12 on targeted services for young people including youth work and positive activities.

But too often, these positive activities fail to reach the teenagers like Boy X who are most likely to get involved in serious violence. A more targeted approach, delivered in the locations and at the times and places that the highest risk young people are most likely to get into trouble is needed. The Kickz programme, for example, sponsored by the Premier League and Football Foundation, is taking thousands of teenage boys off the streets in some of our highest crime neighbourhoods to play football and try other sports on Friday and Saturday nights. The Home Office funded Positive Futures programme is working in 91 areas across England and Wales providing targeted positive activities for over 50,000 particularly at risk young people a year.

A positive role model in the life of a young person like Boy X can play a critical role in turning them away from a life of violence but is too often missing. An increasing number of local projects are filling the gap. The XL Mentoring Programme, run by the organisation XLP is one of 200 projects around the country being part-funded by the Home Office through the Communities Against Guns, Gangs and Knives Fund to offer mentoring and other support to young people most at risk from gang and other youth violence.

### XL-Mentoring Project – XLP

“Things have never been easy for me growing up in South East London. I live with my mum as her only son, and doing the best we can on our estate. The area is a bad one, and is well known for a lot of crime and drug dealing; I regularly see drug needles thrown in nearby bushes around my block. Unfortunately, I experienced being bullied in my first secondary school, and was beaten up quite badly causing me to leave the school. This is where my anger first started to build up. I then moved to a more local school, and encountered the same problem but decided to take a stand. Due to this I began to get into a lot of fights, and ended up on many teachers bad books. I was excluded a few times as they struggled with me but was fortunate to be kept at the school.

Since having a mentor there has been changes in my life. First of all, I probably would have been permanently excluded from school if I didn't have my mentor around, he has helped me to calm down a lot; I still get angry at times but not as much as before. So far I have achieved three out of four goals I set recently with my mentor: they were to keep my anger down, study harder in school and get a higher mark in my SATS – which I did, I got a C in one of my weaker subjects; the fourth is to do good in my mock GCSE's when it comes. The relationship between my mum and me has got better also, I was very rude to her before and have even lashed out at her, but my aim now is to protect her and never do that again.

Looking forward in my life, I can see myself working as a baker, as I love baking. I can also see myself being rich one day, maybe I can take my music skills even further and be successful doing something I love.”

For further information:  
[www.xlp.org.uk](http://www.xlp.org.uk)

### Health

Although Boy X came through his local hospital A&E department 16 times, as a teenager and was an equally frequent visitor to his local police custody suite at no point was he referred for the sort of detailed assessment that could have identified the factors underlying his violent victimisation and offending which by his mid-teens included an emerging marijuana problem and severe conduct disorder.

The health service often represents the public service with the most frequent opportunities for intervention of any outside the education system. His GP, the school nurse, the A&E triage nurse, staff at the local sexual health clinic – all had chances to refer Boy X, and the girls that he had been involved with, for more specialist help. So what could have been done differently?

King's College and St Thomas's Hospitals are now piloting a scheme where a local youth charity has stationed a youth worker in their A&E departments to pick up and intervene with young people coming in for treatment for knife or gunshot wounds.

### King's College Hospital – Youth Violence Project

The King's College Hospital *Youth Violence Project* works with young people coming to the A&E Department who have been the victims of assault of any kind, not just knife or gun wounds. Mindful of the victim/perpetrator cycle, they hope that by placing experienced local youth workers within A&E they can intervene when young people are at their most vulnerable and disrupt the cycle of violence.

The *Youth Violence Project* is the result of an innovative partnership between King's College Hospital A&E and Redthread, a youthwork charity with strong links to the local community. The youth workers are integral members of the A&E's multi-disciplinary safeguarding adolescents' team. All assault victims aged from 13 to 20 – whether admitted or discharged – are referred to the youth workers who focus on:

- Offering positive alternative support networks to younger victims to prevent them from joining a gang for future protection.
- Helping established gang members to take the opportunity of hospitalisation to re-assess their gang involvement and life choices.
- Preventing retaliation and subsequent readmission with an escalation of injury.

Between December 2010 and May 2011 the *Youth Violence Project* accepted 283 referrals – 90 of whom had been stabbed; 11 shot and 151 beaten. Analysis of engagements with the young people revealed that visits made while the young person was on the ward were most likely to result in acceptance of help. Young people do engage through text and phone calls after discharge but the most powerful engagement occurs when young people are forced to confront their vulnerability in person – the “teachable moment”. A formal evaluation of the project is planned for next year.

To help to make sure that these opportunities are used locally, we will work, through the Ending Gang and Youth Violence team, with hospital Accident and Emergency Departments and children's social care to promote better local application of guidance around young people who may be affected by gang activity presenting at A&E. We will also explore the potential for placing youth workers in A&E departments to pick up and refer young people at high risk of serious violence.

Local areas may also want to consider other contact points that could be used to bring the message of help to young people. For domestic violence issues, for example, the Scottish Violence Reduction Unit has been working with dentists in Glasgow to train them in how to signpost victims to relevant local domestic violence specialists. Since its launch in November 2010, over 300 dentists and oral health care providers have received training, and there is interest in rolling this out in further areas across Scotland.

### **Youth Justice Liaison and Diversion Schemes**

funded by the Department of Health assess young people at the point of arrest to identify mental health, learning disability and difficulties, or other vulnerabilities affecting their well-being. Health workers then liaise closely with other local services such as the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) to ensure suitable support for the young person to address issues that have contributed to their coming into contact with the Youth Justice System, and to improve their life chances.

#### **Case study: Youth Justice Liaison Diversion Scheme – Sarah**

Sarah was a 14 year-old girl who was referred to the Youth Justice Liaison and Diversion Scheme by police after she was charged with a serious offence. She had no record of previous offending.

Sarah had experience of aggression and domestic violence within the family and outside of home. She had poor school attainment and attendance, and her future life choices were deteriorating. The relationship between Sarah and her mother had broken down and she was given no structure or boundaries. Sarah had been diagnosed with ADHD and conduct disorder, and had previously taken an overdose after she had assaulted her mother. Sarah had become involved in gang behaviour and was being coerced into having sex with several different young men in the community. She had recently gone missing from home.

The Youth Justice Liaison and Diversion workers screened Sarah on a home visit and carried out some liaison work with the police and Sarah's family. Sarah was referred to a psychiatrist for a full mental health assessment, and a complex needs meeting was held to develop a package of care for her. Following intervention from the Youth Justice Liaison and Diversion worker, Sarah was successfully referred into mainstream and specialist services. She was supported into the local Family Intervention Programme and ongoing liaison with the Child and Adolescent Mental Health services and Social Care.

Building on the learning from the 37 current youth justice and liaison schemes, we will set up a second wave of sites for young offenders at the point of arrest, which will identify and target vulnerabilities such as mental health and substance misuse problems. These will be targeted at areas where there is a known and significant gang and/or youth crime problem and we will explore the benefits of making links to these schemes for those young people with clear connections to gang culture and at risk of offending who come into A&E Departments as victims.

We know that half of those with lifetime mental health problems first experience symptoms by the age of 14. We are committed to expanding children and young people's access to psychological therapies, providing £8 million a year over the next four years. Through this funding, we will transform the quality of mental health services, and change opening times and locations to make sure young people can get the treatment they need. The voluntary and community sector can also play an important part in bringing mental health support to the most socially distanced young people. MAC UK, for example, are a leading charity specialising in detached youth work. They take mental health support to the streets, and meeting-places of vulnerable young people, so that support is available for them where and when they need it.

### Case Study: MAC UK

Music and Change (MAC) is a programme within MAC-UK which works with severely deprived young people aged 14-30 years who are involved in highly antisocial behaviour or gang related activity. Its approach is entirely youth led and its aim is to take mental health out of clinics and into communities to young people who may need help the most, but get it the least.

MAC works very intensively with up to 30 young people for up to two years. These young people take part in a range of activities and also engage on a one to one basis with the MAC team. They choose what to attend and when but generally meet with MAC staff at least once a week and in some cases daily. The groups provide an opportunity for young people to learn and develop life skills in practice and also a safe space to develop working relationships for street therapy.

MAC's innovative programme of 'street therapy' is central to the whole project. It involves taking psychological support and therapy 'wherever' to do 'whatever' with 'whomever'. Young people self-refer, telling the team where they would like to meet, for how long and how often. Street therapy is available to any of the MAC-UK project's participants and young people can be seen as frequently or infrequently as their needs dictate. Street therapy is carried out by MAC-UK's clinical psychologists, providing informal access to mental health professionals but determined on the young person's terms.

According to the programme, at the end of the two years, seven out of ten individuals tracked by the project had found part-time employment. Police have reported that re-offending rates have decreased by 70%, three out of the ten have qualified as youth workers and all 10 reflected on their mental health in their outtake interviews.<sup>31</sup>

## Violence reduction as a public health priority

Success in reducing violence will only come when all relevant agencies are engaged and the issue is seen as much as a public health priority as a policing priority. The arguments for such a shift are compelling. The estimated costs of violent assault to the health service are enormous

The Department of Health will shortly publish *“Creating Healthier, Fairer and Safer Communities: A public health framework for preventing violence and abuse”*. This document provides the evidence base for the most effective and cost-effective interventions to reduce violence, with a particular focus on preventing conduct disorder and promoting health and wellbeing in the early years. It shows the benefits of adopting a broad perspective to preventing violence based on an ecological model. Interventions to improve parenting and to intervene early where children are showing early signs of conduct disorder are shown to be particularly effective.

## Services for girls and young women

The opportunities for intervention raised by the hospital admissions, or possible sexual health clinic visits that Boy X’s girlfriends and victims may have taken, also provide us with vital opportunities for intervention.

As the example of Sarah reminds us, it’s not just boys who suffer the side effects of gang violence. Women and girls associated with gang members – whether girlfriends, siblings or mothers – can all be highly vulnerable to domestic and sexual violence themselves

The Government has already committed to providing three years sustained support to local rape crisis centres and to recruit and train specialist Independent Sexual Advisers (ISVAs) to provide personalised support to women suffering rape and sexual assault.

However, there is a general recognition that services for girls under 18 remain poorly developed. We will work with organisations

such as Rape Crisis, The Survivor’s Trust and local Sexual Assault Referral Centres to improve services for girls suffering sexual abuse by gang members and other violent offenders. Over the next three years we will make an additional £400,000 per year available to improve services to support children under 18 suffering rape and sexual abuse – including from gangs. Proposals, to be developed with the new Home Office Sexual Violence Forum, will be published shortly.

We will also support, over the next two years, the Children’s Commissioners Inquiry into Child Sexual Exploitation in Gangs and Groups. In the first year the Inquiry will capture data on the extent of group-associated sexual violence which will enable us to better understand the problem.<sup>32</sup>

A national action plan for tackling child sexual exploitation will also be published shortly by the Department for Education. It will highlight existing good work which is underway, areas where more needs to be done and set out specific actions which government, local agencies and voluntary and community sector partners need to take to address this horrific form of abuse.

The Government’s Teenage Relationship Abuse campaign, re-launched in September, provides young people with educational messages about healthy relationships. Many schools have used these materials to help prevent teenagers from becoming victims and perpetrators of abusive relationships by encouraging them to re-think their views of violence, abuse or controlling behaviour in relationships and direct them to places for help and advice. The campaign is still live, including a dedicated website to source help and advice: [www.direct.gov.uk/thisisabuse](http://www.direct.gov.uk/thisisabuse).

We will set up a Girls and Gangs working group which will include representatives from the voluntary and community sector, government and the criminal justice sector, to:

- Look at how we can improve data to more effectively understand the impact on girls and young women.

- Look at ways to increase reporting of gang violence by girls and young women.
- Consider how agencies can identify girls at risk of gang violence and abuse at an earlier stage.
- Develop good practice on programmes to challenge the attitudes and stereotypes of masculinity and femininity to prevent violence against girls.
- Look at how the provision of support services to girls can be improved.

### Youth Offending Teams/Youth Offending Services

In common with many serious offenders, Boy X began his offending career early and was soon under the supervision of the local Youth Offending Team (YOT).

YOTs co-ordinate local youth justice services and have a key role to play in dealing with gangs and violent youth culture, both through their supervision of violent and gang involved offenders as they complete the community punishment part of their sentence, and through the broader preventative work they undertake. This work includes:

- Targeted youth crime prevention work with the most difficult to engage young people, including addressing gang and group offending issues.
- Knife crime prevention programmes in 103 YOTs throughout England and Wales for every young offender caught carrying a knife.
- Robust supervision of community sentences and enhanced support for vulnerable young people in custody (e.g. the Heron Unit in Feltham Youth Offending Institute (YOI) and the Keppel Unit in Wetherby YOI).
- Resettlement support for young people leaving custody.

YOTs are well placed to gather and share intelligence and monitor the gang affiliations of young people. The Youth Justice Board (YJB) have provided a case management tool to help YOTs to capture and analyse intelligence on gangs in order to develop a profile of the local challenges

and have identified local gang experts for most YOTs and YOIs.

### Liverpool Youth Offending Service – John

John (not his real name) was 14 and originally from a London Borough. John had a positive and supportive relationship with his immediate family, however he was involved in gang activity in London, and was subject to a Supervision Order for a group retaliation attack against an opposing gang, where a young person was stabbed 10 times. Police intelligence suggested he had also been involved in a previous stabbing of a 16-year-old who happened to 'look over' at John's group. John had his own 'streetname' and could be found referred to on many social networking and internet sites.

Two months into his Supervision Order, John moved to Liverpool to live with his grandparents for his own protection after being threatened with a firearm, and the Liverpool Youth Offending Service (YOS) began to work with him. John was supervised and managed by close multi-agency working and supervision. The YOS used its multi-agency risk management process of structured joint meetings to arrange, manage and review his supervision plan. These meetings were attended quarterly by the police, YOS, children's services, education and other agencies were invited as necessary.

John worked extremely hard over the two years to make positive changes in his life, and on completion of his Order, all of his risks were assessed as low. John sat his GCSEs after completing his Order and is now studying full time in College. He is now a young father and successfully gained full custody of his young child.

John says that the YOT process enabled him to make the changes he needed to. Moving away from the area was the first key change but the combination of support and multi-agency working in tandem with close working with his family was also important. He notes that the mothers who had lost their own children to



knife crime who spoke to him as part of the Knife Crime Programme had a large impact on his attitudes, as did witnessing the fatal stabbing of his close friend during his supervision. There is no evidence, intelligence or suggestion of his return to gang activity and he is instead focused on his young child and future with a new sense of responsibility. He insists he wishes to protect his child and give the best possible support and future direction, learning from his own mistakes.

The Youth Justice Board (YJB) also supports YOTs to share emerging and effective practice through its gang forum networks which currently run in six regions. These will be expanded to all areas of England and Wales in the next year.

### Custody

For young people convicted of serious offences, custody provides another opportunity to ensure that they are given help to address the issues that drive their criminality, and to provide real alternatives to help them to find a route out of serious violence. The Department for Education, Department of Health, NHS and Ministry of Justice will continue work to further improve the education provision of young people in the secure estate and for those released from custody, including addressing any underlying special educational needs, disability or mental health issues.

### Feltham Young Offenders Institute

Rob (not his real name) was sent to Feltham Young Offenders Institution (YOI) on remand for violent offences. Only 15 years of age, this was his first time in custody. His local Youth Offending Team (YOT) identified that he had been heavily influenced by his considerably older co-defendants and had been caught up in gang culture from an early age.

Rob was one of the first young people to be assessed as suitable for the Heron Resettlement Unit where he was able to participate in many of the interventions designed to help rehabilitate him and reduce his risk of re-offending.

Whilst in custody, he completed the Victim Awareness course where he heard the mother of a victim of gang crime speak very powerfully about the loss of her son. He also participated in the three week 'I-Can' Behaviour Management Programme, delivered by ex-offenders of serious crime and former gang members.

Through links made by his resettlement broker, based in Feltham but tasked with finding him work after release, Rob was introduced to the community team at a local football club, and was able to participate in work experience there. He was also released on temporary licence to gain valuable work experience at the club. Throughout this process he was mentored and given support. His resettlement broker also succeeded in re-housing him and his mother to reduce the risk of Rob getting caught up in previous activity on release. On release, Rob was then taken on to work with the club that he had been linked with during his custody, and he now delivers the FA Level 1 coaching award to Heron's young people. He continues to do well in the community and has not re-offended.

Many YOIs recognise the specific impact that gangs and violence can have on their regimes and have identification and behaviour management strategies in place.

Some YOIs run specific anti-gang interventions. For example, Ashfield is using the Change programme, Feltham has undertaken Foundation 4 Life and is currently working with the YJB and six London YOTs to develop a framework of interventions to address gang type behaviour. Werrington has implemented a gang exit panel, and Hindley has worked with voluntary sector organisations to deliver gang interventions.

### **Tough prevention – legal powers to prevent anti-social behaviour and gang violence**

Alongside the offer of intensive support and routes out of a violent lifestyle, police and councils will need tough enforcement strategies to suppress gang and youth violence and legal powers to tackle weapons carrying and anti-social behaviour and to keep rival gangs apart.

The Government will support the police and other local agencies to target and enforce the law relentlessly against those who control and direct gangs or continue to harm the public. This includes making sure they have the legal tools they need to tackle weapons carrying and to keep gang members apart.

Annex B sets out strategies already adopted by police and local councils in cities like Liverpool, Manchester, Birmingham and several London boroughs. We will work closely with ACPO and their dedicated lead on gangs to embed these types of approach to the policing of gang violence across all 44 police force areas.

ACPO will undertake a mapping exercise using the Government's new definition of street gangs to help us understand the scale and nature of our street gang problem. It will also provide policing experts for the new Ending Gang and Youth Violence Team and will work with international forces to ensure shared learning.

Gang injunctions, introduced for adults aged 18 and over in January 2011, enable the police to impose a range of prohibitions and requirements on suspected gang members to stop them getting involved in further violence. At least 10 injunctions are currently in place in a range of cities including London and Bristol and several more are in the pipeline.

The London borough of Southwark was one of the first to take advantage of the new legislation.

### **Gang injunctions in Southwark**

Southwark Council obtained the first gang injunction in February 2011. The injunction was against an 18-year-old who was seen as a lead player in a violent street gang operating in the borough. The police, YOS and anti-social behaviour unit had raised concerns about the group, who were involved in a range of criminal activity. Their street notoriety had a direct impact on the local area, especially affecting other young people.

The individual had received a referral order for being in possession of a knife and CS spray, and had a history of intimidating and threatening other people. He had been arrested on several occasions for robbery and possession of an offensive weapon. He and his gang had a feud with another group, who had previously been friends and part of the same gang, over control of a local drugs market. The individual was a talented musician, but wrote and posted music videos through social media networks threatening other gangs with violence. His music was extremely influential, being well-known throughout the area and influencing many young people.

Despite this negative image, those services that worked with this individual and his family found him both personable and engaging when on his own. His mother was supportive and feared for her son's safety.

The decision to apply for the injunction was taken not just in light of the severity of the risk he presented, both to himself and the wider community but also because agencies agreed that with the correct level of intervention and support he could move away from his current lifestyle. The council obtained an interim injunction and full order setting out a number of conditions, including a prohibition on publishing music which could incite violence. The order also contained restrictions not to go into a specific area and not to associate with named persons. In addition, a positive requirement was included to work with a mentor. As at the end of September 2011 the order has not been breached and the individual has not come to the notice of the agencies since the injunction was obtained.

Feedback from local partners suggests there is demand for gang injunctions for 14 to 17 year olds as a way of engaging them in positive activities to prevent them becoming further involved in gang violence. The Government will commence this legislation and make these powers available to local partners by the end of 2011.

It was clear from the International Gangs Forum held at the Home Office on 13 October which included a powerful presentation from Charlie Beck, the Police Chief for Los Angeles – that gang-specific legislation, including legal definitions of ‘gangs’ and ‘gang crimes’ and sentence enhancements for gang related crime – are a key part of the enforcement strategies adopted by many cities in the United States. We will assess the international evidence on the advantages and disadvantages of such an approach and continue to monitor the impact of our own gang injunction legislation.

We also want to consider whether the police need further powers to deal with public disorder and are consulting on whether the police need additional curfew powers, including a general power of curfew to deal with outbreaks of serious disorder. The consultation paper can be found on the Home Office website.<sup>33</sup>

## Anti-social behaviour

Lower level anti-social behaviour may signal the risk of serious violent activity later down the line. We want to give local areas more effective powers to stop this harmful behaviour, and have set out proposals to repeal Anti-Social Behaviour Orders (ASBO) and other court orders for anti-social individuals, and replace them with two new orders that bring together restrictions on future behaviour and support to address underlying problems – a Criminal Behaviour Order that can be attached to a criminal conviction, and a Crime Prevention Injunction that can quickly stop anti-social behaviour before it escalates. We also want to ensure that there are powerful incentives for perpetrators to stop behaving anti-socially – for example, the Department for Communities and Local Government is consulting on proposals to speed up the process for evicting anti-social tenants from social housing.

## What difference might we have made?

Looking back over Boy X’s teenage years there were multiple opportunities to have made a difference. If one of the new Youth Justice Liaison and Diversion workers had been available to screen him at the point of his first contact with the police, his underlying substance abuse and mental health needs could have been identified and treated. If the education he received after his exclusion from school had succeeded in re-engaging him, he might have been encouraged to stay on at 16 rather than sinking ever more rapidly into the illegal economy. If police had been given the legal injunction powers they need to keep young gang members away from rival gangs and require them to take up positive alternatives to the gang lifestyle, then he might have taken a route out of the negative spiral his life had descended into.

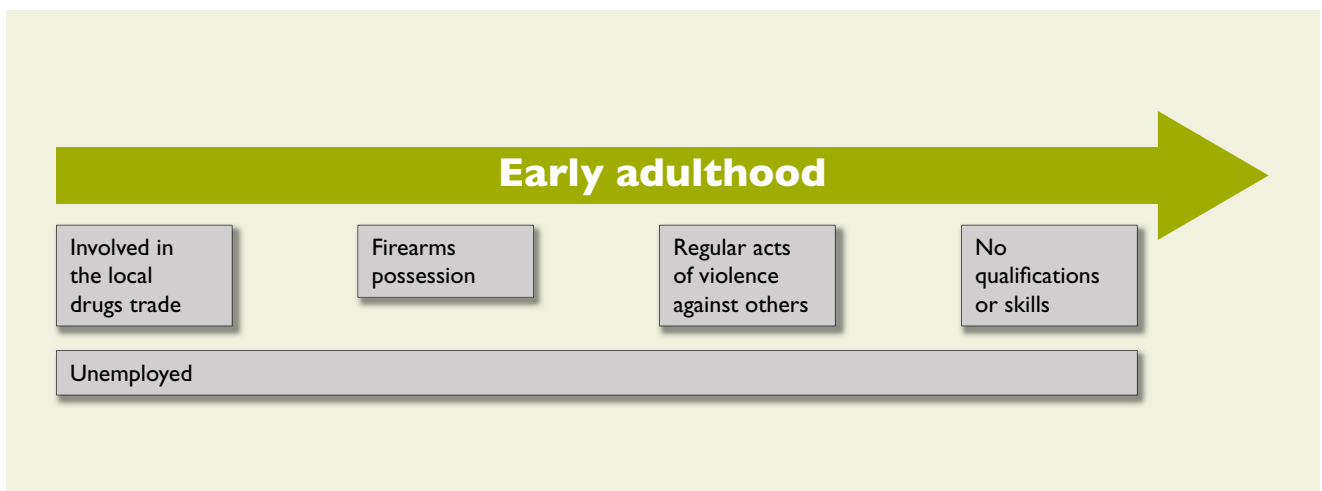
To support routes out of violence for teenagers like Boy X we will therefore:

- Work, through the Ending Gang and Youth Violence Team, with hospital Accident and Emergency Departments and children’s social

care to promote better local application of guidance around young people who may be affected by gang activity presenting at A&E.<sup>34</sup>

- Explore the potential for placing youth workers in A&E departments in the 30 targeted areas to pick up and refer young people at high risk of serious violence.
- Continue to roll out intensive Multi-Systemic Therapy for young people with major behavioural problems to reach 25 sites, helping around 1,200 families by 2013/2014.
- Continue to invest £8 million a year in child and adolescent mental health services through an expansion of the Improving Access to Psychological Therapy (IAPT) programme to address emotional disorders and behavioural problems such as conduct disorder.
- Publish a national action plan for tackling child sexual exploitation.
- Assess existing materials on serious youth violence being used in schools and ensure schools know how to access the most effective.
- In implementing the Munro recommendations to improve safeguarding, support Local Safeguarding Children Boards to address the safeguarding needs of older children and young people, including those at risk of gang involvement.
- Make an additional £1.2 million available over three years to improve services for girls suffering sexual abuse by gang members and other violent offenders.
- Set up a second wave of Youth Justice Liaison and Diversion sites for young offenders at the point of arrest, which identify and target vulnerabilities such as mental health and substance misuse problems. These will be targeted at areas where there is a known and significant gang or youth crime problem.
- Roll-out YOT run gang reduction forums to all areas of England and Wales by December 2012 to share good practice between youth justice workers and other local agencies.
- Make gang injunctions for 14 to 17 year olds available to local partners across the country.
- Explore ways to improve the health and education provision for young people in the secure estate and for those released from custody including addressing any underlying special educational needs, disability or mental health issues.
- We will consider how lessons can be learnt from the Feltham Heron Unit model, and whether these can be applied to other custodial establishments in light of the evaluation which is due to report in April 2012.
- Trial a new approach to permanent exclusions which gives schools the responsibility to secure suitable alternative provision for excluded pupils, as well as accountability for those pupils' outcomes. The exclusion trial started this September and the new approach will be progressively implemented in schools through the autumn term.

## Early adulthood



Once Boy X left school and reached 18, he was no longer the responsibility of school or children's services. Without a job or chance of training, he was further detached from mainstream society, and his chances to exit his violent lifestyle were greatly reduced. Fully entrenched in the local drugs trade, he was able to gain easy access to firearms and used his money, status and violent behaviour to exert control over and abuse girls in the area. Enjoying the power that this status brought, and without any belief that he could have a better alternative, Boy X became fully embroiled in local gang rivalries and violence. By the time that he shot a rival gang member outside a night-club, Boy X had no expectations of living longer than his late twenties, and no greater interest than ensuring that his reputation had been upheld.

### Routes out

#### Employment and learning

Meaningful work or training is essential in order to break the cycle of violence as a young person moves into adulthood, and so the government's broader agenda for getting young people back into work is crucial to the life chances of boys like Boy X.

A cross-government participation strategy, published later this year, will set out comprehensive plans for maximising the number of 16 to 24 year olds in learning or work. It will

build on current reforms to the education, skills and welfare systems and set out plans to increase young people's participation in education, training and experience of work and how best to support them at key transition points. And, from this autumn, 16 and 17 year olds seeking employment will benefit from work-focused support from Jobcentre Plus personal advisers who will spend time assessing the young person's needs and skills; identifying opportunities; and setting clearer and more tailored expectations about their job search. We are also expanding the number of apprenticeships for young vulnerable people by 40,000 while the new 16-19 bursary will provide a guaranteed £1,200 to support the most vulnerable young people. In the longer term we are also raising the compulsory participation age so that all young people are engaged in education and training up to the age of 17 in 2013 and 18 in 2015.

Growing up in a workless household can also reduce a child's aspirations and affect their attitudes to work. Jobcentre Plus advisers and partners are already active in some of our most disadvantaged communities, helping excluded families to engage with training and employment opportunities. The Department for Work and Pensions is using £200 million of funding it receives from the European Social Fund to help families with multiple problems overcome barriers to work and move closer to the labour market. The introduction of Universal Credit aims to ensure that people are better off in work,

even in low-paying jobs. And Jobcentre Plus are increasingly co-locating with voluntary and charitable organisations such as Shelter and the Prince's Trust to improve young people's access to broader support and to contribute to community life through volunteering.

The private sector has a key role to play in providing the opportunities that young men and women growing up in deprived neighbourhoods need to follow a positive path in life. This includes exposure of young people to different roles and careers, work experience and apprenticeship opportunities, support for young people wanting to set up their own enterprises and investment in voluntary and community organisations with a proven track record of turning round the lives of disadvantaged young people. Tackling gang and youth violence will require a co-ordinated effort by all sectors – public, private and voluntary.

To progress this work, the Government has already supported the launch of Inspiring the Future, which aims to recruit 100,000 volunteers who will go into schools to talk about life at work and raise young people's aspirations. We also intend to focus the second phase of the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) Innovation Fund on vulnerable young people – including gang members.

## Housing

For young people deeply entrenched in a gang lifestyle, radical measures may be needed to move them and their families away from the gang environment altogether. In some cases, where there is an immediate threat to life this may need to happen very quickly.

A number of London boroughs, the Metropolitan Police and a range of housing associations have developed the Safe and Secure scheme, assisted by the Department for Communities and Local Government.

The scheme provides accommodation and support for high risk cases, like gang members or victims of gang violence, where individuals and families are committed to getting out of the gang

lifestyle and may need to move from their current accommodation to another borough or outside London altogether for their own safety.

In south London, the Southwark Emergency Rehousing Victims of Violence Enterprise (SERVE) project involves the council, police and seven Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) in finding safe accommodation at short notice for people at high risk from gang violence. Since it was launched in March 2009, SERVE has handled 49 applications and re-housed 20 individuals and their families. All of those re-housed have remained safe.

### Case study: multi-agency re-housing – SERVE: The story of Michael

Police contacted the Southwark anti-social behaviour team in June 2010, after a 15 year-old boy named Michael (not his real name) was stabbed. Police established this incident was gang related. Youths from the gang went to Michael's home in Southwark, which he shared with his mother and sibling, and made threats. Michael was unwilling to cooperate with police enquiries but said he wanted to change his lifestyle. He explained that he had managed to keep a low profile and out of trouble, but that he would retaliate if threatened.

Michael was the boyfriend of, and about to become father to a baby with, Sarah (not her real name) – a young woman who was the sister of another very high risk gang member. Before the baby was born threats were made to both the mother and unborn child to get at Michael and consequently the unborn child was placed on the Child Protection Register by social services.

Michael was referred to the SERVE scheme in late September 2010. A risk assessment was carried out and verified by Southwark Police. As part of this process a home visit took place to assess the situation and explain the terms of SERVE.

Once re-housed out of Southwark, returning would be difficult and, whilst Michael was at risk, inadvisable. The family signed up to the scheme and they were allocated two advocates, one from Victim Support to assist Michael's mother with the move and with housing issues and another one to assist Michael with issues such as education and mentoring. A request then went out to the SERVE RSL partners. Within ten days an empty property had been identified in north London. After the RSL completed some basic repair works, the family moved in for a limited and pre-agreed period of 12 weeks. Subsequently the family were permanently rehoused and Michael has gone on to study at college. SERVE has continued to work with and support him, including making arrangements for him to visit safely his new baby.

A few weeks after the move, Michael and Sarah's baby was born. This presented a great challenge as the baby and the mother lived in a high risk area but naturally Michael wanted to spend time with his child. Through the advocates, SERVE offered to carry out supervised visits for a four week period outside the borough (as both Michael and Sarah were underage). This allowed Michael and the family to make long term arrangements to visit the baby in a safe manner outside of Southwark. SERVE also worked with social services as the baby was on the Child Protection Register.

The average cost of a SERVE case is on average half of the cost of temporary accommodation, providing a rehousing solution for those affected by gang violence and value for money for the council and its partners. Over the past two and a half years the Southwark SERVE programme has rehoused 20 individuals and their families.

For more information:  
[www.Southwark.gov.uk](http://www.Southwark.gov.uk)

Our new Ending Gang and Youth Violence team will work with other areas to support them to

learn the lessons from SERVE in rolling out similar re-housing schemes to other gang affected areas outside London.

Local housing authorities may also have a role to play in helping to clamp down on those involved in gangs and serious violence. The Department for Communities and Local Government is consulting on proposals for an expedited eviction process where serious housing-related crime or anti-social behaviour has already been proven by another court, and to extend landlords' powers to seek possession against those convicted of the sort of offences witnessed in the recent rioting, regardless of where that criminal activity took place. Proposals in the Localism Bill will strengthen landlords' ability to ensure that tenants behave in a way that respects their neighbours and end tenancies where they do not.

#### **Adult offender management – the role of prisons and probation**

Once past the age of 18, Boy X moved into the adult criminal justice system and was dealt with as such by the adult probation and prison services.

The Ministry of Justice issued guidance in May 2010 to assist the probation service to manage the behaviour of gang members, Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements, bringing the probation service together with police, local councils and other agencies play a vital role in managing the highest risk gang offenders while they are under criminal justice supervision.

*Making Prisons Work*, released in May 2011, sets out our plans to help prisoners obtain the necessary skills and training to obtain a job following release. Accredited offending behaviour programmes in prison and for offenders on community sentences also address the underlying factors that can underpin involvement in violence and gang activity – though these can be difficult to deliver for prisoners on short sentences.

The National Offender Management Service (NOMS) is revising its suite of accredited interventions and programmes in order to ensure that programmes are better suited to

the needs of offenders, including those involved in gang violence and knife crime, and that there is greater consistency of approach across custody and community. The programmes include greater emphasis on social risk factors as well as psychological ones, and new and better assessment tools are being introduced to identify the exact nature of the risks and needs of individual offenders.

The Ministry of Justice report *Understanding the Psychology of Gang Violence: Implications for Designing Effective Violence Interventions* found that '[offenders] who completed accredited offending behaviour programmes reported personally benefiting from them'.

To improve the management and rehabilitation of gang members in custody further, we will:

- Develop an intelligence network which will enable better identification, management and intervention with gang members in prison.
- Refresh the memoranda of understanding between prisons and the police over exchange of intelligence so that vital information is shared effectively between them.
- Implement new offending behaviour programmes for violent offenders, including new modules on gang violence.

### Mediation as a way out

Even at the last moment there may be opportunities to intervene to stop a violent tragedy. Tio Hardiman, director of the Ceasefire programme in Illinois, told the Home Office International Gangs Forum about the 'violence interrupters' project he leads. The violence interrupters, ex-gang members themselves, work in the toughest neighborhoods in Chicago to identify and intervene in gang-related conflicts before they intensify. For instance, if a shooting has occurred, the interrupters will seek out the victim's friends and relatives to try to prevent a retaliatory shooting, providing non-violent alternatives. This can sometimes include direct mediation between two gang members at the point that violence is about to take place. Some versions of this project are now also starting in the UK and our new Ending Gang and Youth

Violence Team will support other areas to develop this approach – learning from the experience of Chicago. The West Midlands have been piloting a mediation service since 2004, which has shown some significant success.

### Case study: The Centre for Conflict Transformation

The West Midlands Mediation and Transformation was established in 2004 and emerged from dialogue between police and community regarding the escalation of gun related violence. In setting up the services they looked at the process resulting in the Good Friday Agreement and a gang led peace initiative in Newark, New Jersey entitled Save our Souls. The service, now known as The Centre for Conflict Transformation (TCFCT), is an integral part of an overall strategy designed to address gang violence across the City of Birmingham.

The service seeks to facilitate a cessation of gang related violence and provides a pathway out for those who wish to exit the gun, knife, and gang culture. Members of the community are engaged and trained and accredited as mediators/mentors.

The service has three broad strands, namely:

- Proactive intervention: to facilitate negotiation between factions.
- Post-event intervention: To mediate and prevent retaliation and escalation.
- Support to encourage those who wish to exit the gun, knife and gang culture to do so.

Key gang leaders with influence and power over other gang affiliates are identified and those who may be amenable to a mediation approach are prioritised. These individuals are contacted and encouraged to take part in facilitated peace talks.

Interventions are also made, where appropriate, after shooting incidents to mediate and prevent retaliation.



There has been significant progress in the mediation between rival gangs in Birmingham and work continues towards mutual talks between opposing factions. The service also works with gang affiliates currently in prison to involve them in the talks process.

For more information:  
[www.wmmts.org.uk/engine.asp](http://www.wmmts.org.uk/engine.asp)

### Tough enforcement

Gang members are more likely to carry weapons than non-gang members, and robust tactics to stop weapons carrying and supply are essential. In 2009/10, the last year for which statistics are available, almost half of the 120 homicides recorded in England and Wales involving victims aged 13 to 24 involved a knife or other sharp instrument.<sup>35</sup>

The last 20 years have seen a significant toughening of the laws on weapons possession and supply including a ban on all hand-guns, five year mandatory prison sentences for illegal gun possession, tougher laws on knife sales and bans on weapons like samurai swords. New police and Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) guidelines have reduced the use of cautioning for knife possession and for those offenders who do get custody for carrying a knife or other offensive weapon (excluding firearms), the average sentence length for immediate custodial sentences has increased by 47% since 2008.<sup>36</sup> Our position is clear – any adult who commits a crime using a gun or a knife can expect to be sent to prison and serious offenders can expect a long sentence.

But we can go further. The Legal Aid, Punishment and Sentencing of Offenders Bill currently going through Parliament includes a new offence of carrying a knife or offensive weapon in a public place or school and going on to threaten or endanger another; with a minimum mandatory sentence of six months custody for those over 18 and a four-month Detention and Training Order for those aged 16 or 17.

ACPO and the Home Affairs Select Committee (HASC) have also called for a tougher approach to gun supply and importation. We know that a relatively small number of illegal firearms are involved in a much larger number of firearms incidents, with illegal gun suppliers renting weapons out to different criminals and gang members.

Following the recommendation of the ACPO Criminal Use of Firearms Committee and HASC we will consult on the need for and appropriateness of a new offence of possession of an illegal firearm with intent to supply, and on whether the penalty is at the right level for the existing firearm importation offence. We will also be examining the deactivation standards for firearms to ensure they are sufficiently robust to prevent them from being reactivated into live firing weapons.

For violent gang members from outside the UK, immigration powers to detain and deport can provide an important additional control and enforcement tactic complementary to the criminal justice system.

### Operation Bite

Operation Bite is a pioneering joint initiative between the MPS and the UK Border Agency (UKBA), targeted at the highest harm gang members. Its aim is to bring the maximum possible joint police and immigration enforcement to bear as quickly as possible against this dangerous group.

Through Operation Bite, a number of individuals identified as 'highest harm' gang offenders involved in crimes such as murder, kidnap, shootings, stabbings, robbery and drugs supply have been fast-tracked into UKBA by the Metropolitan Police. UKBA staff have in turn identified foreign national subjects from these for intervention using immigration powers.

In one example, a 25-year-old gang leader from London had been sentenced in 2004 to six years for robbery involving the use of a converted firearm. In November 2007 he was charged with possession of a firearm, but he was later acquitted at court. In December 2007 he was charged with attempted murder but acquitted again. He was eventually detained for 12 months under immigration powers and then deported for a minimum of 10 years.

The 'Operation Bite' methodology has succeeded in removing nine harmful and at-risk gang offenders from the UK for a minimum of 10 years each. We will now look to expand this sort of successful approach in other areas of the UK.

### Reinforcing the criminal justice consequences of youth violence

In the days and weeks following the riots in August, we saw what the criminal justice system was capable of in terms of speed and responsiveness. We do not, of course, expect 24-hour working to become the norm for all courts, but there are lessons we can learn from the way the criminal justice system responded over that period and we are already looking to capitalise on those elements that might be routinely incorporated into day-to-day working. These include looking again at whether court operating times are meeting local demand and making full use of video links where possible to reduce waiting times at court.

Too often, we hear that local communities feel that they do not have a voice in the case presented to the court. We will promote the use of Community Impact Statements in court – short documents prepared by the police illustrating the concerns and priorities of a specific community – to help inform the court's sentencing decisions.

The doctrine of joint enterprise enables police and prosecutors successfully to bring to justice all those involved in gang-related violent incidents, and long prison sentences have commonly followed. We will publicise the use of joint

enterprise to bring home to young people the potentially severe consequences to them of associating with gang members, even if only on the periphery.

### What difference might this have made for Boy X?

Even at this late stage in Boy X's path towards prison, there were still missed opportunities to make a difference. If police and other local agencies had put in place joint arrangements for managing their highest risk gang 'nominals' like Boy X the combination of tough enforcement and surveillance and a joined up positive offer of training, employment support and drugs treatment might have given him a route out. If he and his family had been moved out of their gang-riddled estate to a completely new area it might have been enough to break the hold that his lifestyle had on him. If during his first spell in custody he'd been offered decent educational provision and training in conflict management that too might have made a difference. And even at the last moment, if a street based mediation team – like the immediate response of gang interrupters in Chicago – had been on hand to talk him out of picking up a gun in retaliation – his whole life course could have been different.

To help young adults entrenched in gang and youth violence to find viable routes out and to support the police in controlling the violence of those who refuse these routes out, we will:

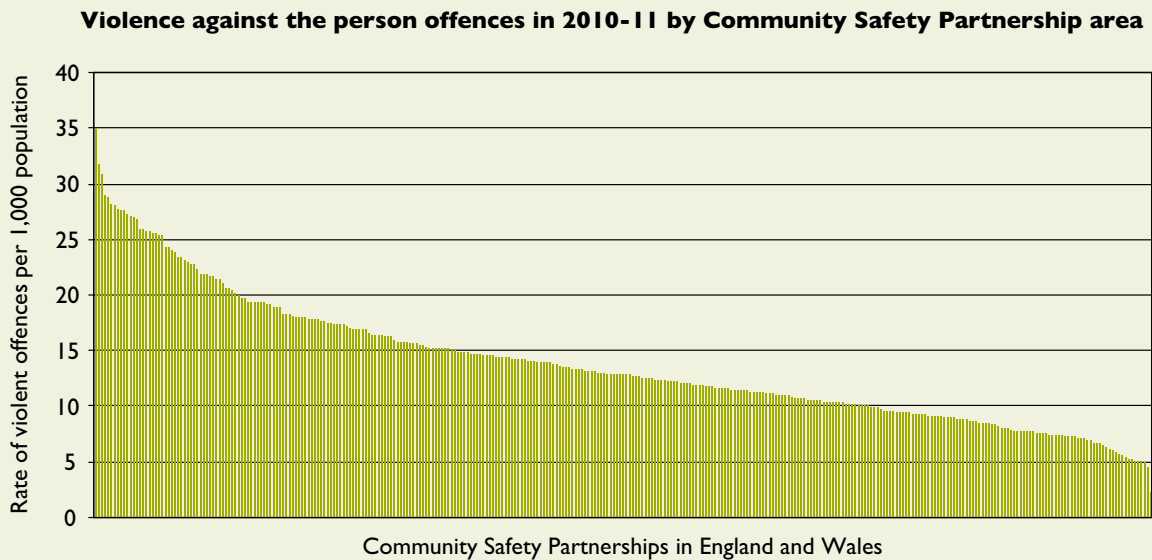
- Implement new offending behaviour programmes for violent offenders in prison and under community supervision, including new modules on gang violence.
- Ensure prison leavers claiming Jobseekers Allowance, including gang members, are referred immediately on release into the Work Programme.
- Through the Ending Gang and Youth Violence Team, we will support areas in rolling out their own schemes to re-house former gang members, those at risk of harm, and their families by sharing lessons learned from the SERVE programme in London.

- Support the implementation of ‘gang interrupters’ schemes by sharing best practice from the United States with local areas interested in using ex-gang members to mediate between gang members and head off violent confrontations.
- Consult on the need for a new offence of possession of an illegal firearm with intent to supply, and on whether the penalty is at the right level for the existing firearm importation offence.
- Extend the work that UKBA undertake with the police using immigration powers to deport dangerous gang members who are not UK citizens.
- Promote the use of Community Impact Statements – to enable the courts to take account of the impact of serious youth violence on local communities when deciding sentencing for violent and gang related offences.
- Reinforce the criminal justice consequences of gang violence to young people by publicising cases where the law on joint enterprise has been used.

# Section 3

## Making it happen locally

Figure 6 – Community Safety Partnerships in England and Wales



Figures from Crime in England and Wales 2010/2011 (Home Office, 2011); graph excludes City of London

### Local solutions for local problems:

- Strong Local Leadership.
- Mapping the problem.
- Multi-Agency Collaboration.
- Assessment and Referral.
- Targeted and effective interventions – Enforcement, Routes Out, Prevention.
- Criminal Justice and Breaking the Cycle.
- Mobilising Communities.

Though the individual factors in Boy X's life help to explain some of what happened to him they don't explain it all. Every violent life-story reflects the interaction of an individual not just with his immediate family but also with the wider local environment.

He grew up on one of the most deprived estates in the country with high levels of worklessness and crime levels, a major drug dealing scene and an entrenched gang culture which intimidated local residents and sometimes left young people feeling they had little option but to join a gang.

Successful strategies to reduce serious youth violence must therefore focus on *place* as much as *people*.

Just as violence is influenced by age, gender and deprivation – it varies very significantly by location

as well. Rates of violent crime vary six-fold between the highest and lowest local authority areas (See Figure 6). And within local authorities, the extremes can be even greater.

Given this variation, a universal approach which expects every area to put in place the same package of intensive anti-violence measures is neither realistic nor desirable.

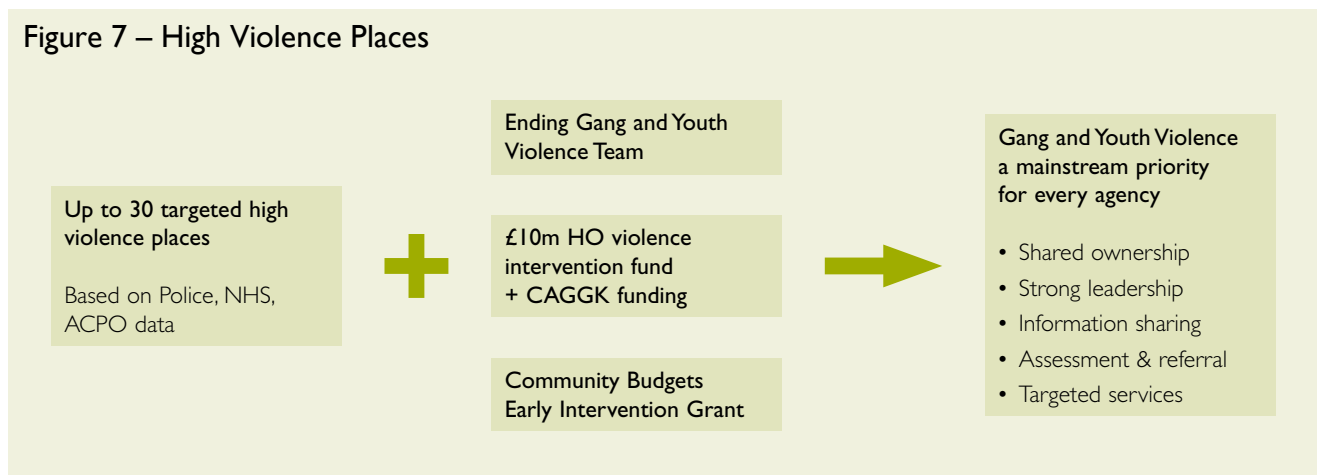
But where serious youth violence is a significant issue for a local community and is imposing significant costs on local services we will support local areas to put in place the strategies and operational improvements needed to deliver sustained reductions.

The approach of the previous government was police led and short-term. Resources were focused on short-term enforcement not longer-term intervention and while this may have delivered some immediate relief for local communities, the improvements were not sustained.

Delivering sustained reductions in youth violence requires long-term changes to the way mainstream services working with young people in high violence areas operate – not one-off projects that disappear once the funding ends.

At every stage of the young person's life story, the public sector agencies with which they have

Figure 7 – High Violence Places



most contact – from health visitors, to GPs, to teachers, to A&E departments and Jobcentre Plus staff – need to be alert to the risk factors that may predict future violence and know what to do about them. That means simple risk assessment tools – like the ones already widely in use for domestic violence: clear arrangements for sharing information about risk with other agencies; agreed referral arrangements to ensure young people get the targeted support they need; and, case management arrangements which bring agencies together to share accountability for outcomes and track progress.

And all of this needs to run alongside the enforcement strategies that are already in place locally to suppress and punish the violent behaviour that may already be happening.

The Home Office has already made additional resource available to three police force areas – London, the West Midlands and Greater Manchester – until March 2013 to implement local plans for reducing the number of teenagers killed or seriously wounded by gun or knife related violence.

Over the coming 18 months we will build on this work to promote a step change in the way that mainstream services respond to youth violence – so that violence reduction is no longer just a crime reduction priority for the police, but a shared and embedded priority for all services. (See Figure 7)

To kick start this process we will prioritise £10 million of Home Office investment in early 2012/13 on providing targeted support to areas most affected by serious youth violence. The funding will specifically focus on improving the arrangement which mainstream local agencies, working with voluntary sector partners, have in place to identify, refer and support the core business of local agencies, focusing resources on the areas and people most at risk of gang and other youth violence.

Detailed criteria will be published by the end of the year setting out how this funding will help local agencies embed a co-ordinated multi-agency response based on the key principles set out below. Our approach will be to provide support and advice on what works whilst recognising that local problems are best solved through locally created solutions.

Examples of the type of work that might be funded include:

- Roll out of Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hubs (MASH) to enable co-location of agencies to deal with public protection referrals.
- Improvements to safeguarding referral arrangements from A&E departments and other settings (e.g. for teenagers admitted with stab wounds).
- Improvements to risk assessment arrangements to better identify high risk gang members by schools, youth services and other mainstream services.

- Local co-ordinators to pull together multi-agency case management panels for high risk gang nominals.
- Improvements to data sharing arrangements between agencies (e.g. secure websites) and analytical work to map the costs of youth violence to local services.

This targeted support will be available to up to 30 areas across England where the neighbourhoods most affected by gang and youth violence are located. The areas will be selected using a combination of serious violence measures and local intelligence about gang problems. The selection is being informed by an ACPO exercise to map gangs and gang violence in forces across the country.

The areas participating in the programme will be identified by the end of the year.

### Ending Gang and Youth Violence Team

There is no simple panacea to youth or gang violence. Solving the problem requires systematic effort across a range of services, and means getting the small things right – ensuring processes are clear, that staff are trained properly and all avenues pursued. It doesn't necessarily mean more meetings, more strategies, more action plans. It means agencies, teams, individuals doing things a little differently. That is why we are establishing an Ending Gang and Youth Violence Team, with a network of frontline experts to provide practical advice and support to other areas. The Team will include experts from a wide range of backgrounds: from community activists, skilled at mobilising local communities to fight gang violence, to experts in child and adolescent mental health, to business process advisors, senior youth justice and safeguarding specialists and police officers. Drawing on this network of expertise the Team will offer intensive support to gang affected areas to understand their problem, design an operating model to address the issue and help the area check progress against their plans. The team will help local areas identify where they can strengthen their response

and how they can work better together to mainstream successful interventions.

The team will help an area to:

- map all of the different local agencies which may be in contact with violent gang offenders and their family;
- map the symptoms of their local gang or serious youth violence problem using police, health and local council data;
- review their procedures for identifying high-risk gang members and potential victims;
- gather independent feedback from local communities on what could be done better;
- scrutinise the prevention and enforcement strategies being used locally and suggest areas for improvement; and
- agree a practical action plan to improve the way gangs are tackled locally.

And the good ideas and practical lessons learned from this process will be captured and disseminated nationally through a new best-practice hub available to all online.

To ensure that lessons are learned from every tragic young death, the Ending Gang and Youth Violence Team will also promote the use of multi-agency serious case reviews which should already be carried out after every gang homicide of a young person under 18. We will also encourage local partners to review their actions and interventions in cases of gang-related deaths for young adults so that lessons can be learned quickly and put into practise to avoid future tragedies.

Discussions and consultation events with a wide range of senior practitioners – including gangs experts from the United States and other European nations – have identified the following success factors to reducing gang and youth violence locally.

## Strong leadership

Where local areas have a problem they need to recognise it and take action. That means direct political leadership from the elected mayor or leader of the council, and the council Chief Executive. Too often, it has required the death of a young person and the associated public outcry for leadership to emerge.

### Case Study – Southwark Violent Crime Strategy 2010-15

The Leader of Southwark Council, Chief Executive and Borough Commander have set out a clear commitment to reducing violent crime as their priority for the community safety partnership.

A violent crime strategy was commissioned in June 2010 and published by the Safer Southwark Partnership in December 2010. It combines analytical evidence on the areas that experience higher levels of violence as well as the people most impacted by serious gun, gang and weapon injuries. It also includes detailed case studies and analysis which has provided partner agencies with solid evidence on what type of targeted interventions will be most effective.

The strategy is reviewed jointly by the leader of the council, chief executive and the police borough commander, demonstrating the ongoing leadership commitment to addressing violence including gang and weapon violence. The Safer Southwark Partnership ensures strategic focus and identifies the resources to deliver the recommendations.

According to Southwark Council, this multi-agency commitment which has come from strong leadership has seen a significant reduction in gang related violence with a reduction of 34% in 2010/11 and continued reduction of 17% in the first half of the 2011/12 financial year.<sup>37</sup>

## Understanding the problem

Drawing on as wide a range of data as possible including health, local authority, voluntary sector and community data alongside police intelligence, local areas will need to map:

**Who** is involved in serious violence and gangs?

**Where** is this violence happening?

**When** is it happening?

**Why** is it happening?

And they will need to make sure that the risks to girls and young women are also mapped. To assist with this the Government will deliver the Coalition Agreement commitment that all hospital A&E departments should share anonymised information on assaults with the police and other agencies. We will also expand this approach to include the sharing of ambulance service data and will pilot feasibility of including A&E data on local crime maps.



<p><b>Responding in partnership</b></p>	<p>It is essential that local agencies come together to agree shared priorities and commit resources, based on local information about gangs and youth violence. Community Safety Partnerships are ideally placed to provide clear strategic direction, with operational delivery achieved, for example, through multi-agency public protection arrangements (MAPPA) and integrated offender management approaches. Where existing arrangements do not adequately address gang and youth violence more dedicated structures may be needed. Enfield and Haringey for example have established a Gang Action Group which meets monthly to agree how to manage their top 30 high risk gang members (see case study on page 55). In particular, agencies should make sure that support is seamless between services across age groups, so that those most at risk are not abandoned when they turn 18.</p> <p>The new local Health and Wellbeing boards will also have a valuable role to play in bringing together councils, commissioners, clinical leaders and local communities, to agree how they can best work together to join up services and improve the health and wellbeing of local people – including issues like youth violence – based on identified local needs.</p> <p>The National Learning Network will support early implementer health and wellbeing boards to share best practice on how they can be effective. A range of relevant indicators are also being considered for the Public Health Outcomes Framework which will be published by the end of the year, and will include rates of domestic violence and violent crime.</p>
<p><b>Assessment and referral</b></p>	<p>We know that harm is often hidden. With many vulnerable people it is not until the full picture of that person is known that the potential harm is identified. Information sharing is obviously key to this process, and yet we know that this still does not happen effectively. We will issue clear and simple guidelines on data sharing that clarifies once and for all the position on what information can be shared between agencies on a risk aware, not risk averse basis. And we'll promote the roll-out of Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hubs which co-locate police and other public protection agencies to cut bureaucracy and make it easy to share information on referrals and assessments and agree follow up actions. The new Ending Gang and Youth Violence Team will also develop a simple risk assessment tool that every agency will be able to use to identify the young people at highest risk of violent victimisation or offending.</p>

### Targeted and effective interventions

Having identified high risk individuals and locations, local areas will need to target interventions in the right areas, at the right times and on the right people in order to stem the flow of new violent offenders or gang members, ensure tough enforcement to crack down on 'at risk' individuals and provide routes out from criminality for those who want to change. A clear message must go out – for example through the 'call in' process used in recent years in Glasgow – and in a different form in Birmingham that:

- The violence must stop.
- Support will be provided to those who wish to exit the violent lifestyle.
- Serious consequences will be felt by those who do not heed this message.

**See Annex B for case studies on the call in process in Strathclyde and Birmingham.**

### Mobilising the community

Sustainable violence reduction programmes must maintain and build community trust and support. Local communities will have a key part to play in developing an understanding of the problem, making sure interventions are reaching the right people and holding agencies to account for what they are doing. The Government is determined to empower communities to take action on local priorities like gang violence. The new Community 'Right to Challenge', for example, will allow voluntary and community groups to bid to run local services where they believe they can do so differently or better. While the Community 'Right to Buy' will provide an opportunity for communities to nominate local assets of community value such as community centres and, where listed, bid for them should they come up for sale.

Young people themselves are equally keen to challenge gang violence and issues like knife carrying. Through the Prince's Trust the Home Office has provided £250,000 a year funding over the last two years for the Ben Kinsella Fund to support 100 anti-knife crime and anti-serious youth violence projects run by young people to be targeted at young people their area.<sup>38</sup>

### Case study: Gang Action Group

The Enfield and Haringey Gang Action Groups (GAG) were set up in 2009 following several incidents involving groups of youths from different gangs in both boroughs which resulted in gang related murders and injuries from firearms and knives.

Every month representatives from police, probation, Youth Offending Services, Housing Providers, Children's Services, Education Welfare, Schools, and Community Representatives, meet together to discuss about 30 of the highest risk gang members in Enfield and Haringey. Each borough has its own meeting but representatives from each borough attend both meetings to ensure consistency and that suitable cases are managed by agencies in either borough. Cases can be referred to the GAG by any agency and are selected by considering whether there is a multi-agency need and if the individual is at risk as either a perpetrator or victim of gang violence.

The groups have developed over two years to be able to discuss about 30 'live' cases a month – ranging in age from 14 to 25. When people are either no longer offending, coming to notice of an agency or imprisoned, they are moved to a 'shadow' list and monitored each month but not actively worked on. There are about 20 'shadow' cases in each borough. The GAG works by first receiving a nomination and considering the multi-agency need and risks. If accepted, each agency is asked to provide any intelligence on that individual and their family to enable the formulation of a profile that contains all the intelligence each agency holds on the gang member. A typical profile will include family composition, school/college attended, whether in receipt of benefits or in arrears, housing provider, UKBA status, convictions and police intelligence reports. On the basis of this intelligence, their risk level is assessed as either 1, 2 or 3 (with 1 being high risk) and a lead agency and plan for managing them initiated. This will include whether diversionary or preventative activity is appropriate or, for

higher risk cases, if enforcement measures are needed. The group will consider suggestions to prevent offending or to keep them safe (eg rehousing, different school, family intervention) and positive alternatives to their gang lifestyle (eg training, employment, anger management, mentoring). The key rationale is to identify a 'hook' that can be used to get their attention and extract them from their lifestyle.

Those who choose not to engage are informed that police will then actively enforce any legislation or agency to apply pressure on them and their family to behave.

Progress against these actions is then checked at the next meeting to ensure they are being delivered. The first few meetings were very time consuming and so a pre-meeting is held to review all actions and suggest new interventions for the full meeting to agree or add to. Over the last two years the combined GAG process has discussed about 100 different gang members across Enfield and Haringey and agreed actions for all of them.

Member A was a particularly violent individual who was well recognised amongst Enfield's youth as a high-ranking gang member. An action plan, which included intensive police attention being targeted around him was devised by the GAG. This was coupled with home visits to his parents by a dedicated gangs unit which learnt that he wished to attend college. His college application was supported through the GAG agencies, with the proviso that offending would lead to a permanent exclusion from college. Since joining college he has not engaged in any further offending and currently has a 99% attendance rate.

Member B was widely recognised to be a gang leader having been involved in serious offending since 2003. He was close to two murder victims in 2008 and involved in the sale of firearms in early 2010, an offence which earned a custodial sentence. On his release, the GAG collated an intelligence profile that demonstrated he was a high-risk individual and

was able to use this to ban him from entering Enfield. Since being out of the borough, member B has not come to police notice, despite being closely monitored.

or families who need it most get extra support, and according to local priorities, it can be used to fund intensive family interventions or Sure Start children's centres or targeted mental health work in schools or projects to support vulnerable parents.

## Reprioritising resources

When resources are tight, it's more important than ever that they are targeted at the most vulnerable people and the highest risk places. Billions of pounds are already being spent on services for children, young people and families but arbitrary ring-fences and poor targeting have often led to waste and poor outcomes in the past.

By removing ring-fences and restoring local autonomy we are giving local areas the freedom and flexibility to prioritise local resources on local priorities.

Community Budgets are enabling local public service providers to come together and agree how crucial services can be better delivered, how the money to fund them should be managed and how they will organise themselves to deliver better outcomes for people and a more efficient use of resources. Across the country, 111 councils are already getting involved in this sort of Community Budget approach – accounting for 70% of problem families across the country.<sup>39</sup>

Where an area considers it a local priority, a Community Budget could be specifically focused on the issue of tackling gangs or youth violence. One of the first 16 Community Budget areas, Lewisham, for example, has been using its Community Budget process to test new approaches to tackling teenage gangs.

The Government's new £2.2 billion a year Early Intervention Grant removes the previous arbitrary ring-fences from over 20 different central funding streams for work with children, families and young people of all ages and gives local areas the freedom to focus these resources on the early interventions which will have the greatest impact – including with children of primary school age. To ensure that the children

# Section 4 Next Steps

## Section 4: Next steps

This Report marks the beginning of a new commitment to work across government to tackle the scourge of gang culture and serious youth violence. An Inter-Ministerial Group chaired by the Home Secretary will continue to meet on a quarterly basis to review progress on the actions set out in this Report and will be supported by a cross-government senior officials group chaired by the Permanent Secretary of the Home Office. We will also establish a forum of key external organisations and individuals who share our commitment to end serious youth violence which will meet regularly with ministers to hold the Government to account on delivery. And we will work with young people themselves to ensure their views are heard too. Our focus must be on actions not words.

### A focus on action

We have set ourselves clear goals.

#### By December

- Ending Gang and Youth Violence Team in place, with the support of a virtual network of over 100 expert advisers.
- Up to 30 areas with the biggest serious youth violence and gang problems identified and offered support from the Team to revamp their strategic and operational response to serious youth violence.
- Gang injunctions available for use against 14 to 17 year-olds.

- Consultation underway on the need for a new offence of possession of an illegal firearm with intent to supply and on the appropriate penalty level for the existing illegal importation of a firearms offence.
- Public Health Outcomes Framework published.
- Child Sexual Exploitation Plan published.

#### By April 2012

- £10 million of funding distributed to areas identified as having significant gang and youth violence, to improve the response of mainstream services – with half of this funding going to the non-statutory sector.
- Impact measures agreed with areas in receipt of funding and support.
- ACPO map of gangs in England and Wales developed and regularly reviewed.
- Second wave of Youth Justice Liaison and Diversion sites targeted at areas where there is a known and significant gang or youth violence problem.
- Pilot the feasibility of including of A&E data on local crime maps.

#### By April 2013

- Clear, simple guidelines on data sharing that clarify once and for all the position on what information can be shared between agencies.
- Simple evidence-based tool that every agency can use to identify the young people most at risk of serious violence.

- Youth Offending Team Gang Forums in place across England and Wales.
- New offending behaviour programmes for violent offenders rolled out, including modules specifically targeted at gang members.
- Specialist services in place for girls and young women suffering gang-related sexual exploitation and abuse.
- New advice available to parents, helping them to spot the signs of gang involvement, and teaching materials on serious youth violence assessed with schools knowing how to access the most effective.
- Law on joint enterprise publicised, making young people aware of the potentially severe consequences of associating with gang members.

#### **By April 2014**

- Housing resettlement schemes for gang members and their families operating more effectively in all gang affected areas.
- Intensive Multi-Systemic Therapy will be reaching around 1,200 troubled families in 25 areas.

#### **By the end of this Parliament**

- We will have turned around the lives of 120,000 of the most troubled families, reducing their involvement in violent crime and disorder.
- We will have seen a reduction in the number of young people killed or seriously wounded by youth or gang-related violence.
- All local areas with a serious youth violence or gang problem will be able to point to reductions across a range of indicators, showing an improvement in well-being for individuals, families and communities.

#### **Measuring success**

Nationally, we are clear that that our approach to youth violence will stand or fall on whether it reduces the number of young people killed or seriously wounded— so this will be our ultimate goal. Using data already collected on police recorded homicides and hospital admissions we will monitor nationally and in high violence

areas being supported by the Ending Gang and Youth Violence Team the number of young people being murdered or admitted to hospital for serious assaults and will continue to publish this on a regular basis. National data collection arrangements are already in place to collate data on the number of teenagers murdered or suffering serious assault in London, the West Midlands and Greater Manchester and these will continue.

But crime figures only tell part of the story, and sustainable success means transforming the communities in which gangs and serious youth violence thrive tackling the root causes of the violence. Successful interventions against serious youth violence should impact not just on individual young people but on their families and local communities as well. So we will work with local partners to support them to develop common sense measures of well-being in high violence areas.

Our programme for ending gang and youth violence will not involve new targets or top down bureaucracy. Each area will have a different gang and youth violence problem and the way they choose to monitor this and the impact of their local strategies will need to reflect this.

We will support areas experiencing high youth violence to develop their own outcome measures, but these might include some of the following.

At the individual level:

- a reduction in / cessation of violent offending;
- a reduction in / cessation of being victimised (e.g. attendance at A&E);
- successful engagement with support services (e.g. mental health treatment, substance abuse treatment, training, parenting classes, for example measured according to problems presented by the individual);
- successful exit from a gang; and
- engagement in positive activity – (back in school, or in employment for example).

For girls involved with gangs they might include:

- increased self-esteem and well-being;
- early identification of risk and early referral to support services;
- reduced sexual assault and exploitation; and
- reduced sexually transmitted infections and forced miscarriage.

At the family level:

- a family intervention worker engaged where appropriate and personalised action plan developed (for multiple problem families);
- families accessing relevant support (e.g. for mental health, relationships, substance abuse);
- no domestic violence (safe home); and
- better parenting.

At the community level:

- reduction in fear of gangs;
- increased sense of safety in general; and
- increase in community engagement (do they feel part of the solution).



# Annex A

## Summaries of Conference and Stakeholder Events

### Young Persons' Roundtable

Young Ambassadors and Ben Kinsella Fund grantholders from the Princes Trust attended a roundtable event on 6 October with Lord Henley. Brooke Kinsella facilitated the discussion. The group thought that there was a need for more support for parents and families of young people. They also felt that there needed to be a change in the attitudes towards young people as negative messages feed negative reactions.

### Voluntary Sector Roundtable

On 10 October 2011, Lord Henley convened a roundtable of community stakeholders. This included members of the Home Secretary's Guns, Gangs and Knives Roundtable, as well as other representatives from voluntary and community sector groups who have offered support to tackle the problem of serious youth violence and gangs.

The meeting provided an excellent opportunity to discuss the risk factors which underlie gang and youth violence. They also went on to consider what more can be done to prevent young people's involvement in gangs.

The main issues that were raised were as follows:

- there needed to be long term sustainability of local projects and ensure that they are part of strategic planning;

- the aim of fostering long term ambition and aspiration of young people;
- parenting is critical – young people need support and positive role models;
- a way of helping young people to reintegrate into civil society, and provide routes out of serious youth violence and gangs;
- the use of language is critical – it needs to be positive and inspirational; and
- there needed to be a connection with primary schools to provide support and prevention at a younger age.

### Ending Gang Violence and Making it Work on the Ground

The Department for Work and Pensions held a conference with the police, local authority representatives and voluntary sector organisations from the main gang affected cities in England on 4 October.

The key outcomes identified at the event were:

- early intervention, both in terms of early years and getting in early ahead of a problem, was crucial. For example, health visitors during early childhood and other forms of intervention that can help prevent children becoming irreparably destabilised by domestic disruption and conflict;

- rises in community well-being and satisfaction. A rise in people feeling 'safe' within the local community;
- better linking up of local faith groups to break down community divisions;
- shift to case management approach – linking prevention/intervention activities together; and
- more government support for the creation of social enterprise for gang members.

### International Forum of Experts on Gangs

The Home Secretary held an international forum of experts on gangs on 12-13 October at the Home Office. This was attended by:

Loïc Alixant	Head of Intelligence Unit, French Police Nationale
Luc Auffret	Head of Office, Anti-Gang Policy, French Police Nationale
Eric Battesti	Senior Liaison Police Officer and Home Affairs Attaché, Embassy of France
Charlie Beck	Chief of the Los Angeles Police Department
Mark Bellis	Professor, Centre for Public Health, Liverpool John Moores University
Bill Bratton	Former Police Chief of Los Angeles Police Department and New York Police Department
Gary Cann	Assistant Chief Constable, West Midlands Police
John Carnochan	National Violence Reduction Unit, Scotland
Edward Carroll	Executive Assistant District Attorney, New York
Owen Ellington	Deputy Commissioner of Police Operations Crime and Intelligence, Jamaica
Robin Engel	Associate Professor of Criminal Justice and Director of the Institute of Crime Science at the University of Cincinnati
Carles Feixa	Lecturer and Author, University of Lleida, Spain
Helen Ghosh	Permanent Secretary, Home Office
Joachim Gutt	Director of Police, State of Schleswig-holstein, Germany
Tio Hardiman	Director for CeaseFire, Illinois
Rudolf Herbst	Criminal Investigation Unit, Austrian Federal Police
Bernard Hogan-Howe	Commissioner, Metropolitan Police Service
Vladislav Husak	Deputy Police President for External Service of the Police Presidium of the Czech Republic
Stephen Kavanagh	Deputy Assistant Commissioner, Metropolitan Police Service
Fredrik Leinfelt	Deputy Project Manager for the Stockholm Gang Intervention and Prevention Project

Karyn McCluskey	Violence Reduction Unit, Scotland
Mick McNally	Detective Chief Superintendent, Metropolitan Police Service
Nims Obunge	The Peace Alliance/Freedom's Ark
Hugh Orde	President of Association of Chief Police Officers for England and Wales
Charlie Pickles	Department for Work and Pensions
John Pitts	Vauxhall Professor of Social Legal Studies, University of Bedfordshire
Gavin Poole	Executive Director, Centre for Social Justice
Geert Johan Rademaker	Project Leader Early Intervention in the Ministry of Justice and Security, Holland
Stephen Rimmer	Director General, Crime and Policing Group, Home Office
Steve Rodhouse	Commander, Metropolitan Police Service
Amir Rostami	Head of the Section against Gang Crime, Stockholm County Police
Justin Russell	Head Of Violent and Youth Crime Prevention Unit, Home Office
Jae Samant	Home Office Director of Crime
Paul Scarrott	Assistant Chief Constable, Nottinghamshire Police
Dinesh Sethi	Programme Manager for Violence and Injury Prevention, World Health Organisation
Tom Streicher	Former Police Chief of the Cincinnati Police Dept
Terry Sweeney	Assistant Chief Constable, Greater Manchester Police
Dave Thompson	Deputy Chief Constable, West Midlands Police and ACPO lead for gangs
Andy Ward	Assistant Chief Constable, Merseyside Police
Rob Wainwright	Director of Europol

The objective of the forum was to identify international best practice on tackling gangs and gang violence, and to: examine what could be applied in England and Wales to strengthen and improve current approaches; agree key principles for effectively tackling gangs; and to establish an on-going dialogue and international network of practitioners to continue the sharing of best practice on street gangs.

The delegates discussed the themes of understanding the problem, prevention, enforcement and engaging the community. There were clear differences between the experiences of different countries but there were commonalities in principles and approaches. The US delegates believed that the UK and European countries had an opportunity to learn from the

experiences from the US – good and bad – to stop gangs becoming more entrenched in the UK and prevent the spread of gangs made up of second and third generations of the same family, as is the case in US cities.

### Communities Against Guns, Gangs and Knives Fund Seminar

On 18 October 2011, the Home Office held a seminar for a number of the Communities Against Gun, Gangs and Knives fund projects. The main issue of concern expressed by attendees was that voluntary organisations have the expertise in dealing with young people yet are often not treated as equal partners by the statutory agencies. They strongly believed that there is a need for greater information sharing between and

within sectors in order to ensure youth, and their families, do not suffer from a fragmented service. There is also a need for strong national and local leadership to ensure that a multi agency approach actually delivers a coherent strategy.

### Centre for Social Justice Seminar

On 1 September 2011, the Centre for Social Justice held a seminar with representatives from the voluntary and community sector specialising in working on gangs. The main points raised were:

- it was reported that in Derby, immediately after the first sign of the riots in London, the local police developed a Community Impact Assessment and brought all the local youth, faith groups etc together to plan their responses which is thought to have contributed to them not experiencing significant disorder;
- the role of local authorities is very important but there was a mixed experience in engagement and not always supportive of voluntary and community groups;
- mentoring projects needed to have people who have experience in dealing with gang culture otherwise they are likely to be ineffective; and
- as well as mapping the gang problem, there needs to be a map of what kind of work is happening and where effective practice is taking place.

# Annex B

## Case Studies

In this section:

- Strathclyde Community Initiative to Reduce Violence
- Operation Connect, London
- Operation Matrix, Merseyside
- Operation Xcalibre, Manchester
- Birmingham Reducing Gang Violence
- Cincinnati Initiative to Reduce Violence
- Boston Ceasefire

### Case study: Local Principles, Glasgow's Community Initiative to Reduce Violence (CIRV)

In January 2005 Strathclyde Police established the Violence Reduction Unit (VRU) to target all forms of violent behaviour. Adopting the public health approach as described in the WHO's *World Report on Violence and Health (2002)*, the unit developed simple aims:

- to reduce violent crime and behaviour by working with agencies in the fields of health, education, social work, etc.;
- to achieve long-term societal and attitudinal change; and
- focusing on enforcement to contain and manage individuals who carry weapons or who are involved in violent behaviour.

The unit also aims to explore best practice and develop sustainable, innovative solutions to this deep rooted problem. A key part of this has been the use of media and communications in spreading the message of prevention to both the public and practitioners. Working with the media, the VRU has been able to pursue the prevention and attitudinal change agendas, helping to alter the language used in reporting violence in Scotland and thus influencing attitudes among a wide range of stakeholders.

In April 2006 the Scottish Executive (now Government) extended the VRU's remit nationwide, thus creating a national centre of expertise on violent crime.

In 2008, the VRU set up a project to tackle gang violence in Glasgow's east end. The Community Initiative to Reduce Violence (CIRV) is a multi-agency, community based project involving Strathclyde Police, Glasgow Social Work Services, Glasgow Education Services and Glasgow Housing Association, as well as a host of community and voluntary groups and third sector organisations. The aim of the project is to secure a rapid and sustained reduction in violent behaviour amongst gang members across Glasgow. The programme has at its core

a focused deterrence strategy coupled with diversion and personal development. It is based on existing programmes introduced to tackle gun related gang violence in the USA, but adapted to a Scottish context.

Through tough enforcement the police convey a clear message targeted to all gangs to stop committing violence and that if they don't, they will be targeted for enforcement action against all members of that gang. They are also told that if they wish to exit the gang lifestyle then CIRV will help provide them with constructive alternatives to help them move towards an employment based lifestyle. CIRV works with a range of services and programmes to offer a constructive alternative to those who wanted to change the direction of their lives. Importantly, these services are delivered by credible voluntary and community-based services, who are experienced in dealing with gang-related offenders.

### Use of call-ins in Glasgow

Modelled on the Boston Ceasefire programme and tailored to suit the local context, CIRV also implemented call-ins. The first one took place in 2008 when 60 to 70 gang members were called in to a session in the Glasgow sheriff's court which was presided over by the sheriff as though the court was in session. The Chief Constable spoke first and gave a hard-edged enforcement message. Organisational charts of the gangs were shown on screens to demonstrate that the police knew who they are and who they associated with. Then members of the community spoke. For example, an A&E consultant explained the difficulty of dealing with knife victims. A mother told how at the age of 13, her son was set upon by a gang and attacked with machetes. The injuries to his face were so severe he was unrecognisable. He had tried to protect his face with his hands and lost his fingers. Another speaker was a man who had committed a murder at 18 and had been in prison for 11 years. He spoke about the dehumanising, harrowing aspects of prison, spending his twenties in a cell, someone telling him when he can go to the toilet and when he can eat. He also spoke about how knowing



that, someday, he would have to tell his children what he had done. Lastly, those involved in the delivery of intervention and diversionary schemes spoke to illustrate the meaningful alternatives that are available. This element of choice is fundamental to the success of the project; many of these young men will have no control over where they live or what they do. Giving them a positive choice, for what may be the first time in their lives, is key to giving them control over how they behave. The best way to get a troubled youngster to change their behaviour is to give them a reason for doing so. If you know that behaving violently means you can't get a job or lose your girlfriend, you are less likely to do it.

The VRU have found these call-ins to be a success they show gang members the real consequences of their actions as well as giving a strong message that the police know who they are and what they are doing.

CIRV actively engaged with around 400 gang members during the initial two years of the project and preliminary findings are positive:

- 46% reduction in violent offending by those gang members involved with CIRV compared to 25% amongst a comparable group of gang members in an area where CIRV does not operate;
- on average CIRV clients have decreased violent offending by 22% more than other groups exposed to existing services and general, Strathclyde-wide policing strategy;
- 59% decrease in knife carrying among CIRV clients, compared to 19% amongst a comparable group of gang members in an area where CIRV doesn't operate;
- 85% decrease in weapons carrying among CIRV, compared to 53% amongst a comparable group of gang members in an area where CIRV does not operate; and
- Following the publication of CIRV's second year report, the VRU handed the project over to Strathclyde Police to become part of their day to day business – the ultimate aim of the project from the outset, if it proved successful.

For more information:

[www.actiononviolence.com/CIRV](http://www.actiononviolence.com/CIRV)

### Case study: London's response to gang violence – Operation Connect

London is home to a wide variety of very diverse street gangs which are significant drivers of violent crime – they also indirectly drive other criminality through their heavy involvement in street level drug dealing.

The Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) have current information on over 250 gangs with over 60 identified as potentially high harm. Gangs in London are believed to be responsible for 16% of the London's total drug supply; 22% of serious violence; 4% of all sex offences, 14% of rape, 17% of stabbings and 50% of shootings. Gangs continue to be heavily involved in firearm offending with 42% of shootings associated to a victim or suspect who is a member of a gang. This compares to 48% of shootings in the previous financial year. Initial analysis has indicated that 19% of those arrested for the recent London Disorder (Operation Kirkin) related offences are gang members. Many of these offenders are members of London's most harmful gangs.

Every day, an MPS wide tasking meeting (Operation Target) reviews reports of violent incidents across London, including gang violence, and decides where and how to target additional enforcement and suppression effort – including covert tactics and extra visible patrol in hotspot areas and stop and search operations against weapons carrying.

A range of other MPS business groups and units also deal with a wide range of types of gang related violence.

- SCD 8 (**Operation Trident**) operate exclusively on the reactive and proactive investigation of firearms crime within London. They are currently dealing with 138 lethal firearm shootings and although not currently measured it is estimated that over 90% of their work relates to street gangs and organised crime networks.
- SCD 7 (**Flying Squad**) investigate armed robbery offences with a significant proportion

of this workload relating to gang members. In the 12 months until September 2011 they have disrupted 7 of the top 10 gangs in the MPS, recovered 196 firearms and arrested 342 gang members.

- SCD 1 investigate homicides arising from knife injuries, potentially inflicted as a result of gang membership.
- SCD 2 investigate sexual offending related to gang membership.
- Individual boroughs maintain an overall responsibility for the initial response to all violence and have a wide remit for intelligence gathering, proactive work and enforcement activity as well as partnership problem solving with external agencies.
- The MPS also operates and funds a range of diversion and prevention schemes including educational programmes, mentoring, mediation, re-location programmes and positive activities for young people. Although the coordination of these schemes has improved there are still opportunities for rationalisation and greater integration.

**Operation Connect** was launched in March 2011 to support and inform boroughs in a targeted response to tackle identified high harm individuals engaged in gang related violence.

Operation Connect supports and links all activity to ensure enforcement, prevention and diversionary activity is targeted against the most appropriate, gang related, person or location. It supports and works closely with Operation Trident and other parts of the MPS.

The Connect Unit includes 30 Police Officers and staff with experience in intelligence development, prevention, diversion and enforcement tactics. It aims to link police, partners and voluntary sector activity both overt and covert to focus on identified high harm subjects linked to gang violence. The unit balances known police intelligence with partner and community information to ensure the combined resources are targeted against the most appropriate people. It adopts the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) principles to bring together the police,

probation, fire, ambulance, health, education and social care and ensure that agencies are sharing information and are able to respond to a young person's needs quickly and efficiently. This method has resulted in more effective and earlier identification of vulnerable children and reduced the amount of different professionals being involved, while keeping the most appropriate professional to deliver interventions to meet the needs identified in any particular case.

Operation Connect has already worked with the London Borough of Waltham Forest and since September has been supporting Haringey where it is focusing on intelligence gathering and prioritisation of gang offenders, to support partnership and enforcement activity against high harm individuals in gangs.

By April 2012, Operation Connect will be in place in all 14 London boroughs currently included in the Home Office funded Communities Against Gangs, Guns and Knives Programme (CAGGK). These are Southwark, Westminster, Lambeth, Lewisham, Newham, Waltham Forest, Enfield, Tower Hamlets, Haringey, Hackney, Croydon, Greenwich, Brent and Ealing.

Connect will ensure that each of these Boroughs have a consistent set of processes to achieve the following:

- A joint agency offer of assistance to gang members to take a route out of offending.
- Case management of gang nominals through either joint agency enforcement or diversion plans. Each Connect nominal will be subject to a specific needs assessment to identify the most appropriate interventions and the MPS is working with the Safer London Foundation to deliver this aspect of the programme. Case management will be through the ViSOR system to allow other agencies to access records.
- Enhanced and focused enforcement capacity
- A corporate menu of diversion and enforcement tactic options.

- Adoption of the Growing Against Gangs educational programme (if accepted by individual schools).
- Support from a central support team to give access to expert advice, checking of local compliance and national best practice.
- A performance framework to gauge progress in reducing gang criminality.

### Case study of an Operation Connect intervention

Working with the London Borough of Waltham Forest, Connect supported an operation to identify a number of gang nominals who engaged in supplying Class A drugs within the borough. Three of these nominals were linked to homicide enquiries and many others were associated with firearm offences, gang related violence and robberies.

The operation sought to apprehend those gang nominals involved in “supply” whilst also focusing on the drug users to address the “demand”. It also worked with partners to improve the environment and reduce the likelihood of new drug markets opening.

The operation resulted in 16 gang nominals being arrested, charged and remanded for drug supply offences. Thirty users of class A drugs were also identified. They had a total of 375 previous convictions between them, (including acquisitive and violent crime) – highlighting the link between gang violence and acquisitive crime.

A bespoke service was provided by partners for each of the 30 identified drug users – including enhanced Drug Intervention Team support, residential rehabilitation, warrant execution and preparation of gang injunctions. Connect successfully removed role models and their gang associates from within the local community. Post operation community intelligence indicated that this has dismantled one of the most harmful gangs in Waltham Forest.

### Case study: Operation Matrix, Merseyside

Merseyside Police has a comprehensive response to gun, gang and serious organised crime, which is led by the Matrix Department. Based on the ‘Boston Model’, the tactics ensure that pressure is maintained on those nominals that intelligence suggests are involved in guns and gangs, with rapid proportionate responses to shift the fear from the public to perpetrator. The Matrix Department consists of a Reactive Investigation Unit, Co-ordination and Intelligence Unit, Covert Investigation Unit, Disruption Team and Firearms Unit.

Merseyside Police consists of six Basic Command Units (BCU), four of which are affected by gang activity. Gang nominals are prioritised by Matrix if they display a propensity to use firearms. Using a ‘discriminator’ matrix, they are identified and served a notice explaining that they will be subject to a partnership enforcement approach, targeting them and their associates, for all types of crime they commit. They are given bronze, silver or gold status, based on intelligence and are re-assessed daily. They receive daily visits to their home address when at Gold status, three visits per week at Silver and one visit per week and at Bronze. A consistent message is given that they are receiving this police and partner attention because they are linked to guns and gangs. They are also encouraged to engage with partner agencies who can offer them education, training and employment as a route out of crime.

The BCUs support the Matrix with dedicated teams of officers who are focused on dealing with those individuals posing the greatest risk in respect of guns and gangs. They visit the Force gun crime and gang nominals on a daily basis and robustly respond to all intelligence in respect of these individuals. They also run their own preventative projects and work closely with partner agencies to provide a collaborative approach to guns and gangs.

Through working with local partners, the Matrix Department employ every available legal sanction against individuals who possess, use or supply

guns and those who are involved in gangs and serious organised crime. As a result the force has significantly disrupted a number of the major organised crime groups engaged in this activity. Matrix has worked closely with SOCA and the Regional Crime & Intelligence Unit to disrupt the supply and illegal importation of firearms, contraband and illegal drugs. Additionally within Liverpool Local Authority Area there is the DISARM Group, which is a strategic group chaired by the Head of Community Safety and attended by police, YOS, Prisons, Probation, Education and other local partners.

A fortnightly tactical partnership meeting also takes place within the affected BCUs called the MARGG (Multi Agency Response to Guns and Gangs) and is attended by the key partners such as YOS, Family Intervention Programme, Probation, Education, Housing Associations and Health. They collaboratively target those individuals that pose the greatest risk to the community and work with those individuals that have been identified as being on the periphery of gangs. They also conduct focused one to one work with individuals and their families to provide support and diversion away from crime.

Matrix also leads on local prevention and rehabilitation programmes such as the Terriers Project and the Matrix Challenge Shield (football tournament). Terriers is an anti gun and gang 'theatre in education' project delivered in primary and secondary schools which communicates with young people about the consequences and dangers of becoming involved in guns and gangs. The project is supported by an educational package based on key stage 2 and 3 national curriculum targets. This means that schools can embrace this project whilst still studying the national curriculum. Independent evaluation results have shown that this project has improved attitude and behaviour whilst also improving attainment at Key Stage 3 English.

Comparing April to September 2011 with the same period the previous year, serious youth violence has reduced by 8.6% (1,828 crimes in 2011 compared with 2,000 crimes in 2010).

Merseyside Police Firearm Discharges:				
Year	Homicide	Injury	Damage	Total
2006/07	6	31	76	113
2007/08	3	19	108	130
2008/09	3	30	51	84
2009/10	2	28	66	97
2010/11	8	25	37	70
2011/12	2	15	41	58 (to date)

Figures provided by Merseyside Police

For more information:  
<http://www.merseyside.police.uk/index.aspx?articleid=1505>

### Case study: Operation Xcalibre, Greater Manchester Police (GMP)

Manchester's experience of the impact of gangs has been significant over the last 20-30 years with an established history of gang violence and criminality in some areas of the Force, most notably in the Metropolitan and South Manchester area and in the Salford area. In these areas the relationships between local communities and the Police were sometimes stretched and challenged and in South Manchester during the 1980s and 1990s there were periods of 'tit for tat' shootings – including the murders of children and young people, often with no real motive.

Xcalibre was set up to protect life and target gang and gun crime across Greater Manchester with the aim of gun free streets. It involves police led enforcement activity to prevent and disrupt gang activity through tasking of uniformed and covert police resources. Day and night-time patrols are put in place to challenge known gang members on the streets. Stop/checks and intelligence submissions from body cameras and body mapping are deployed to inform the intelligence picture. When firearms are recovered or gang members are arrested and convicted of crimes GMP publicise material in the national press to communicate to the public what action has been taken and the consequences of these types of activities. For example, Xcalibre have recently had success in a communications campaign called "Ageing behind bars" which shows powerful pictures of what people will look like when they are released from prison.

Frequent contact between officers, partner representatives and gang members has enabled a very rich picture of intelligence to be developed on gang members. The wider picture from schools, children, partners and wider social networks has also assisted.

Children and young people have also been identified at an early age where they are likely to be at risk of engagement in gangs – particularly those with absent role models or under the

influence of older siblings. The involvement of Children's and Youth Services, Education Authority, Pastors and volunteers have helped to fill the gap so that children have suitable alternatives.

Schools in the South Manchester area have been a particular focus of Xcalibre and have benefited from school-based officers with excellent relationships with children and staff. As part of the Safer Schools Partnership, teaching across the age ranges includes challenging children on their understanding of gangs, crime and responsibility.

The Integrated Offender Management (IOM) process has drawn together the partners required to minimise the threat, risk and harm from those individuals involved in gangs. The Manchester Violent Gangs Operational Group (MVGOG) is a bimonthly meeting pulling together practitioners involved in the management of gangs from around the partnership to address key issues, remove blockages and share effective practice.

In terms of positive outcomes it is clear that GMP report that the approach of Xcalibre and multi-layered enforcement and community engagement has proved successful. Recorded homicide numbers over recent years have declined Forcewide, from a figure of 41 in 2008 to a low of 27 in 2011.

For more information:  
<http://www.gmp.police.uk/xcalibre>

### Case study: West Midlands, Birmingham Reducing Gang Violence

Across the West Midlands force area there are approximately 42 urban street gangs in existence numbering in excess of 400 individuals. The extreme level of violence associated with gang culture, often motivated by rivalry between gangs concerning issues such as respect, revenge and revenue has created a level of fear within communities that has been difficult to break using conventional police tactics alone. This led to the establishment of the Birmingham Reducing Gang Violence strategic group (BRGV), a city wide partnership between statutory agencies, other stakeholders and the community aimed at targeting urban street gangs and the corrosive impact that they have within communities. In addition, the work of the Multi-Agency Gang Unit (MAGU) made up of police officers, probation service staff and other partners has been particularly successful in managing offenders involved in gang related criminality. Through the work of groups such as The Centre for Conflict Transformation (TCFCT) and others, mediation has also proven to be an effective tactic in diffusing tensions between opposing groups and has often been instrumental in preventing an issue escalating leading to retaliatory attacks.

In conjunction with a more structured and robust offender management process dedicated to gang nominals, West Midlands Police and partner agencies have developed civil intervention strategies to manage a gang nominal's behaviour. Through the work of local safer estates groups and the effective use of acceptable behaviour contracts (ABC) and anti-social behaviour orders (ASBO) coupled with creative post custodial licence conditions, additional control and monitoring mechanisms are in place for most of the high risk gang nominals in the force area. In addition, in recent years the focus upon rehabilitation and support has grown and throughout the force area there are numerous funded groups and initiatives working hard to divert gang members away from that lifestyle. That work continues to date with a proportion of the funds provided through the Home Office

Communities Against Guns, Gangs and Knives initiative being used to support such community led work in key threat areas.

According to West Midlands Police, the increased focus upon gangs and offender management of key gang nominals has proven to be particularly effective when delivered with partnership support. From a peak of over 1,200 firearms related offences recorded per year during the period 2004-2007 this figure has now reduced for the last three years by over 25% to less than 900 offences per year with only a small percentage of those offences attributable to gang related activity. In the last 12 months numerous successful convictions have been obtained against dangerous offenders and seizures of firearms, ammunition and controlled drugs made as a result intelligence submitted by both officers and the community has increased markedly, often as a result of proactive warrant enforcement. A licensing strategy deployed around key risk venues coupled with hard-edged firearms tactical options has also proven to be effective in moderating the damage caused and influence of gangs within the West Midlands.

### Use of the call-in approach in the West Midlands

The Safer Birmingham Partnership conducted its first 'call in' during August 2010. The target of the operation was the B515 Gang who had caused significant and increasing anti-social behaviour in and around the Lee Bank and Highgate areas of the City. Several members of the gang also had known links to serious criminality and firearms related incidents in the preceding months. Sixteen members of the gang were 'called in' with their parents and were addressed by a panel consisting of the Safer Birmingham Partnership, West Midlands Police, Housing Providers, Safeguarding Team, Birmingham Anti-Social Behaviour Unit and local schools. Fifteen of those who attended signed acceptable behaviour contracts (ABC's) and good neighbour agreements. One member refused and was subsequently targeted under the 'catch and convict' process and is currently remanded in custody after being charged with

possession of Class A drugs with the intent to supply.

The Youth Offending Service supported the 'call in' and led on the ABC process and subsequent support which has been put in place. Since August 2010, further work has been undertaken to tackle the 'hard core' of the 15 who signed ABCs. Eleven of those who signed the ABCs have completely stopped all gang related behaviours but a group of five young people have escalated their behaviours and remain of significant interest to the agencies involved. Three of these young people's families are now subject to Notice to Seek Possession Orders via their Registered Social Landlords.

An intelligence led Operational Management group was formed in November 2010, to ensure the work agreed by the agencies continued within the timescales set.

In September 2011 West Midlands Police launched a force-wide tasking process to compliment a developing corporate strategy to respond to gang related issues managed by Force CID and chaired by a Detective Superintendent. That tasking process will involve geographic policing representatives and also colleagues from other force departments. Also key individuals from local community safety partnerships will take an active role in that process. A force thematic reference group consisting of community members, academic and other knowledgeable parties around the subject will seek to feed and influence that tasking process.

For more information:  
[www.west-midlands.police.uk/tacklinggangs/g-police\\_action.asp](http://www.west-midlands.police.uk/tacklinggangs/g-police_action.asp)

### Case study: Cincinnati Initiative to Reduce Violence (CIRV)

Despite a national decline in gun violence in the United States during the mid-1990s, some cities, including Cincinnati, Ohio, experienced a rise in homicides at the beginning of the last decade. Nearly three-quarters of homicides during a one year period involved a known violent group/gang member as either a victim or suspect. In 2007, Cincinnati's political leadership partnered with law enforcement officials, academics, medical professionals, street advocates, and community and business leaders, to form the Cincinnati Initiative to Reduce Violence. CIRV is loosely modelled after Boston's Operation Ceasefire and employs a focused deterrence strategy to directly communicate consequences for violence to at-risk gang members.

First, various law enforcement agencies are coordinated to create meaningful and predictable consequences for groups who engage in violence. This component of the strategy is referred to as "pulling levers," as law enforcement attempts to pull every lever legally possible following a violent incident. To respond to violent groups in a swift and predictable manner requires a coordinated effort among several agencies that prioritise group violence, share information, and develop comprehensive group-focused responses. Direct and accurate communication of the strategy to the gang members is of central importance to increase compliance. This is often done during "offender notification meetings" which are also referred to as call-ins, during which violent group/gang members are warned that if any member of their group commits an act of violence, the entire group will become the priority of law enforcement. Second, assistance for those who want to transition out of the violent lifestyle is offered in the form of access to streamlined social and job services.

Finally, key leaders within neighbourhoods assist in the development of community engagement activities and strive to create a "moral voice" of the community by delivering a clear message

of nonviolence and rejecting the norms and narratives of the street that promote violence.

From the onset, the CIRV team focused specifically on designing an organisational structure to aid implementation and to provide sustainability over time. Examining a 42-month pre and post-implementation period, an academic evaluation found a 41% reduction in group/gang-member involved homicides and a 22% reduction in other violent firearm incidents in Cincinnati. This reduction, which was not observed in non-gang related homicides, was significant even after controlling for potential confounding influences.

Issues surrounding institutionalisation and sustainability are an issue and both gang-related homicides and the number of shooting victims have increased in Cincinnati during the past nine-month period.

For more information:  
[www.nnscommunities.org](http://www.nnscommunities.org)  
 and  
[www.uc.edu/ics](http://www.uc.edu/ics)

### Case study: Boston Ceasefire

In Boston, the city saw a rapid reduction in gang related homicide following the implementation of 'Operation Ceasefire' in 1996, which was a comprehensive gang intervention that followed a problem-solving approach.

Firstly, the 'Boston Gun Project' was set up to devise a strategy for tackling Boston's increasing gang-related youth homicides. This group established a multi-agency working group made up of front-line criminal justice and youth services staff to identify, analyse and find solutions for their problem. The Project also undertook a range of in-depth analysis to understand the nature and drivers of gang violence in the city. This analysis revealed that the problem was with a few highly violent gang individuals involved in gun violence. The solution proposed was two-fold with a heavy crackdown on gun supply long with focussed deterrence

In order to do this effectively, the multi-agency working group met every two weeks to share information and ideas. The strong leadership within this group made good links with the local faith community, who publically supported the initiative and helped to mobilise the local community in to the response. A key component of this was the 'honest' approach made to gang members. The group delivered a clear message as the programme started that violence was unacceptable, that gang members would be given intensive support if they wanted to exit, but also that they would be relentlessly targeted by enforcement if they did not stop the violence.

Due in part to strong buy-in from the police and community agencies (notably the black clergy) Ceasefire coincided with a 62% fall in youth homicide.

For more information:  
<http://www.nationalgangcenter.gov/SPT/Programs/42>



## Endnotes

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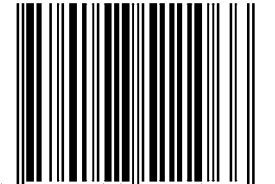
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