

# Tri-Borough LSCB - Gangs and Sexual Exploitation Short Life Working Group Report (WCC/RBKC/LBHF)

## Executive Summary

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#### 1. Purpose

The aim of the short life working group (SLWG) was to review multi-agency practice in relation to young people affected by sexual violence (SV), gangs and sexual exploitation (SE). It was recognised that the three local areas each had a range of initiatives underway and that the safeguarding needs of adolescents, especially looked-after young people and care leavers, are complex and challenging, requiring a different approach from child protection work in younger age groups.

#### 2. Methodology

Membership was from Children's Services Commissioning, Health Commissioning, the Voluntary Sector – Standing Together (Domestic Violence) and Barnardos, Education – Safeguarding Secondary Head, Children's Services including CP chairs, Community Safety, Police, Housing, Police- CAIT/Sapphire, Youth Offending Services, Westminster Integrated Gangs Unit and Health- A&E and Safeguarding. There was little engagement from Education. The group met on six occasions between 11/07/2012 and 27/02/2013.

#### 3. Findings

##### Overall

Each authority has different arrangements with respect to youth violence and sexual exploitation influenced by the availability of local resources. There are pockets of excellent practice. Links and pathways between the various groups/agencies working in the area of gangs and sexual exploitation were often limited or non-existent except where services had been integrated. A traditional child protection model is often not applicable in this domain even though young people involved may have significant child protection issues. In the absence of a child protection model, referral pathways for all agencies needed to be clearer. There are significant difficulties collecting data on young people involved in youth violence and sexual exploitation. This means that measuring the effectiveness of services delivered is limited. The engagement of the voluntary sector and local community groups is critical to achieving local support, harmonising local knowledge and identifying young people most at risk.

##### 3.1 Gangs

There are a number of initiatives in place within each of three local authorities. Only Westminster has a comprehensive strategy, developed and supported through the specialist integrated gangs unit (IGU) and the Prevention of Harm (PoH) sub-group. Across the three boroughs the Family Recovery Project (FRP) has been developed with a broad remit in terms

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of its work, including supporting families where there is a concern for young people involved in violent behaviour.

The need for good information sharing in order to identify young people most at risk of youth violence is clear. However the role of MASH (multi agency safeguarding hub) in youth violence is less clear. There is limited evidence across the three boroughs about the use of outcome-based measures and review of practice.

From police reports it was seen Westminster has a more gang-related violence than K&C and H&F. Incidents of serious youth violence have fallen across all three boroughs in the last year through better police approaches to the problem. Other data came from the Accident & Emergency department at St Mary's Hospital which, as a major trauma centre, sees all the serious stabbings and violence-related injuries in NW London.

### 3.2 Sexual Exploitation

Preventive work in sexual exploitation includes training for both professionals and young/people school students. This is available across all three boroughs from a number of sources including the LSCB and the metropolitan police. Uptake information is limited. H&F benefitted from work developed by Barnardos from their London-wide experience relating to Routes into Sexual Exploitation.

Westminster, through its Prevention of Harm partnership group, has worked with the Safer London foundation around the provision of advocates for women with the addition of an ISVA (independent sexual violence advisor) into the multi-agency Integrated Gangs Unit.

The group considered the risk factors as set out in the CSEGG reports and noted that multiagency mechanisms for sharing information were already in place for identifying and responding to some behaviours e.g. a child disclosing deliberate self-harm. The SLWG felt that many of the other risk factors identified in the CSEGG, while undoubtedly present in cases *already identified*, were on the whole unlikely to be helpful in practice.

### 4. Recommendations

The SLWG drew attention to the many working definition of a 'gang' noting particularly that gangs/ young people adapt and change quickly, partly in order to evade being understood or engaged with by professionals. The report identified three key strands or themes that it believes will promote a reduction in youth violence and sexual exploitation in the tri-Borough area. The strands need to be considered alongside other related work streams such as children who go missing and children at risk of self-harm.

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Themes arising from working group:

**Theme 1:** There is a need for improved preventive work through the engagement of schools and local community

## **Recommendation 1**

The LSCB should improve the early identification of young people who are at risk of becoming involved in youth violence.

### **Actions:**

- New LSCB Education Safeguarding lead to work directly with Schools around improving engagement of schools in early identification and referral of young people at risk of becoming involved in youth violence. This should also involve updating Schools and colleges on developments of local responses.
- New LSCB Development worker to promote stronger engagement of the voluntary sector and local community groups with existing preventive services
- Need for direct work with youth groups .This needs to be facilitated through the commissioner for Youth Services, and involve the Probation service given that young people over the age of 18 years are involved.

**Theme 2:** Improve multi agency partnership working around youth violence and sexual exploitation.

## **Recommendation 2**

All agencies within each borough to establish a champion or SPOC-type role (Youth violence and Sexual Exploitation)

### **Actions:**

- Each agency may wish to use the existing designated safeguarding leads for this role .This person will promote good communication and practice around sexual exploitation and youth violence on behalf of their agency
- Roles and responsibilities of champion/ SPOC to be clarified and reviewed within the training and support of designated CP leads

**Theme 3:** Improve the wider framework for agencies working together

## **Recommendation 3**

Promote further learning from the Westminster pilot and introduce the London protocol for working with young people at risk of sexual exploitation and youth violence.

### **Actions:**

- Ensure each agency reviews its service delivery in the context of the new London protocol
- Introduce the new London protocol within each borough by October 2013

In addition to these substantive recommendations the working group has identified a number of other areas that need further attention. Each borough is at a different stage in considering local partner arrangements. In Westminster there is a well-established multi

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agency team, whereas in the other two boroughs this is more a virtual arrangement with recent plans for agencies to meet on a regular basis.

The MASH has been established in Westminster in Oct 2012, with plans for a tri borough MASH in late 2013. This provides an opportunity for improved information sharing.

**Recommendation 4 (Established following final meeting of group in June 2013 )**

The Tri Borough support a new-multi agency post based at St Mary's A&E Department to assist the improvement of responses to young people who have been subject to youth violence and sexual exploitation

**Actions**

- Tri borough agencies to consider the quad borough proposals put forward within report commissioned by Brent. Meeting planned for 25/10/2013

**Other recommendations**

- LSCB Training program to incorporate key messages from this report

Referral Pathways.

**Action**

- James Thomas (on behalf of the Directors of Family Services) to develop a referral pathways framework for young people at risk of serious youth violence and sexual exploitation

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