

## APPENDIX K

# YOUNG PEOPLE INVOLVED IN URBAN STREET GANGS

### 1. GUIDANCE

*Safeguarding Children and Young People who may be Affected by Gang Activity.* Supplementary Guidance to Working Together to Safeguard Children [DCSF 2010].

This is available from the Department for Education website at [www.education.gov.uk/publications](http://www.education.gov.uk/publications)

### 2. DEFINITION

2.1 An urban street gang is a group of three or more people who have a distinct identity (for example a name, a badge or an emblem), and –

- They commit general criminal or anti-social behaviour as part of that identity; and/or
- They use (or are reasonably suspected of using) violence or the threat of violence in the commission of offences; and/or
- They use (or are reasonably suspected of using) firearms, or the threat of firearms or weapons, in the commission of offences; and/or
- Their behaviour is such that it significantly undermines community cohesion to the point that public trust is impaired.

2.2 There are three main motivators that drive gang related violence – Revenge, Respect and Revenue.

2.3 It is common for groups of young people to gather together in public places to socialise: belonging to such a group can form a positive and normal part of young people's growth and development. Although such groups can become involved in antisocial behaviour and may commit criminal offences, they should be distinguished from urban street gangs for whom crime and violence are a core part of their identity, and from links to more serious organised criminality.

### 3. THE RISKS OF GANG ACTIVITY

3.1 The particular risks that young people face because of gang involvement will vary from area to area and over time, but they may include:

- Retaliatory violence;
- Territorial disputes with other gangs;

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- Harm suffered whilst committing a crime;
- Use of violence to assert authority in the local area; and
- Sexual violence and sexual exploitation.

### 4. YOUNG PEOPLE AT RISK OF HARM THROUGH GANG INVOLVEMENT

4.1 All agencies and practitioners working with children should be alert to signs that a young person may be at risk of harm through gang involvement. The information set out below is for guidance only: it is not the responsibility of an individual practitioner to assess the level of risk, only to decide whether a particular young person seems to be at risk or not.

4.2 Young people who are already involved in a gang should be regarded as at serious risk of harm through gang-related activities – for example drug supply, use of weapons, sexual exploitation and risk of attack from their own or rival gang members. This would include:

- Young people who have been arrested, charged or convicted for offences committed by a gang;
- Young people who have been arrested, charged or convicted for offences, and evidence links the offences to gang activity;
- Young people who have been arrested, charged or convicted for offences which are serious enough to meet thresholds for inclusion at Gang Shared Priority Forum or Gang MAPPA
- Young people who are close relatives of known gang members; and
- Young people who are placing themselves at risk through their known associations with gang members.

4.3 There is a further group of young people who are likely to be at risk because they are on the edges of involvement in gang activity. This would include:

- Young people who express admiration of gangs, or an aspiration to become a gang member; and
- Young people who are suspected of involvement in offences committed by a gang;

- 4.4 Young people who are not involved in gangs may be at risk from gang activity in their area. This would include:
- Young people who live in a known gang area;
  - Young people who attend school within a known gang area; and
  - Young people who the victims of violence or bullying.
- 4.5 There are additional general indicators of gang affiliation which may raise the perceived risk to the young person. These are present if the young person:
- Is known for, or suspected of, anti-social behaviour;
  - Is known to be aggressive or violent;
  - Is failing at, excluded from, or truanting from school;
  - Is known to be, or is suspected of, substance misuse;
  - Has been the victim of violence in the home;
  - Is known for, or suspected of, offences of violence such as robbery;
  - Is known to carry a weapon, or is suspected of doing so;
  - Presents significant behavioural change;
  - Presents mental health concerns;
  - Has diminishing ties with their usual peer group;
  - Shows increased or inappropriate sexual behaviour;
  - Has recently suffered bereavement of close relative or friend; or
  - Has a family history of criminality, violence and/or substance misuse.

## 5. RESPONDING TO CONCERNS

- 5.1 When a practitioner has concerns that a young person may be at risk of harm from gang activity, they should complete the pre-assessment checklist (*attached below*) and send the completed checklist to the Early Intervention Coordinator at the Multi-Agency Gang Unit - email: [d.rogers@west-midlands.police.uk](mailto:d.rogers@west-midlands.police.uk) Tel: 0121 626 5857.

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- 5.2 Any practitioner involved with a child may notify their concerns to the Multi-Agency Gang Unit. The pre-assessment checklist has been developed for anyone who is worried about a young person's possible links to gangs and gang violence to document their concerns in a consistent way.
- 5.3 Referral to the Multi Agency Gang Unit should not be withheld because the current risk seems low or because the young person does not yet have a significant offending history: further information held by other agencies may clarify the need for intervention.
- 5.4 On receiving the pre-assessment checklist, the Multi Agency Gang Unit will:
- Consult the police about any relevant intelligence;
  - Make checks with agencies that know the young person and obtain any formal assessments; and
  - Consider whether to refer the concerns to the Urban Street Gangs Young Persons Panel.
- 5.5 The Urban Street Gangs Young Persons Panel will decide on the level of risk posed to the young person (high, medium, low or no significant risk). If appropriate it can then refer the young person to a range of positive interventions to address:
- The risk the young person is at from others;
  - The risk the young person poses to others; and
  - The risk the young person poses to themselves.
- 5.6 If the young person is assessed at medium or high risk a CAF assessment will be carried out unless section 47 enquiries are uninitiated, and work will be coordinated through a lead professional.
- 5.7 If the young person appears to be at risk of significant harm the panel may decide that children's social care should be asked to arrange a strategy meeting to consider whether to initiate s47 enquiries.
- 5.8 The assessment of risk will be reviewed each month, based on information from the provider engaged with the young person and any arrest/offending record.

### Attachment - Pre-Assessment Checklist



Pre-assessment  
Checklist.doc