

Safer Stronger Communities Select Committee		
Title	Violence Against Women and Girls including Girls and Gangs: Schools information	
Contributor	Head of Crime Reduction and Supporting People	Item 3
Class	Part 1 (open)	10 March 2015

1. Purpose of the report

- 1.1 Following previous Select committee reports and input on this agenda, this report briefly outlines some of the work that is taking place in schools to address this issue and related issues.

2. Recommendation

- To note the paper

3. Lewisham's principles

- 3.1 The Partnership is committed to delivering an integrated provision for VAWG, working to achieve the following goals and objectives:
1. Early intervention and prevention of VAWG – To develop a better understanding of VAWG and its impact in our borough;
 2. To ensure an improved access to the support and protection of women and girls in our borough;
 3. To hold perpetrators to account.

4. Girls and gangs

NB Though there is not currently an agreed definition of gang associated women and girls the local partnership uses the ACPO definition of “a woman or girl who is a family member of or in an intimate relationship with a gang nominal.

4.1 Strategic context

Historically approaches to tackling gang violence have centred on the experiences of men and boys and neglected the specific needs of gang associated women and girls, many of whom are at heightened risk of violence and sexual exploitation¹. Public authorities have a legal duty to eliminate discrimination and promote equality under the Equality Act 2010, and the Partnership is committed to ensuring there is no discrimination in the provision of services to men and women. Recent MOPAC guidance such as the Strategic Framework for Responding to Gang Associated Women and Girls is intended to help address this oversight and local partnership work is also informed by the findings of the Children's Commissioners Report into Child Sexual Exploitation in Gangs and Groups.” One of the principal areas of

¹ Inevitably this tends to focus on violent perpetrators whilst many females who may be victims of retaliatory attacks/sexual assaults and/or the object of grooming will not be highlighted.

concern in this field is the hidden nature of the problem, and it remains a key priority to effectively profile at risk groups and ensure timely sharing of information.

5. Interventions

- 5.1 Safeguarding women and girls from the threat of violence and of places a premium on identifying at risk females, and ensuring that current intelligence on female partners and siblings is shared with relevant safeguarding agencies, represented on the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) MASE (Multi-Agency Sexual Exploitation) and Youth MARAC panels. Intelligence is constantly reviewed in order to ensure at risk individuals are known and that safeguarding decisions are taken with full disclosure of information between key agencies.
- 5.2 The Youth MARAC and MASE remain key forums for co-coordinating interventions, enforcement in the area of gang connected CSE. Intelligence gained from referrals is also used to inform the strategic profiling of sexual violence ; this meets MOPAC's best practice guidance in ensuring effective needs mapping within the Community Safety Partnership of domestic and sexual violence². Such panels also act as early warning alerts for at risk females – e.g. many girls involved in the 'county lines'. Given the reduced repeat victimisation rates attested to by external audit³ such forums offer a solid foundation for reducing the harm to vulnerable females, and the partnership will continue to work with the Home Office EGYV team to drive down levels repeat victimization.
- 5.3 The EGYV team are also working with the Youth MARAC to further develop good practice in strategic and operational planning in this area, and the Serious Violence Team is working with the Early Intervention CSE leads to ensure a uniform approach by school safeguarding leads in responding to the needs of gang associated girls
- 5.4 The Serious Violence Team tasked with working with gangs is the primary co-ordinator of the Youth MARAC and also sits on MASE as well as the Domestic Violence steering groups. This will ensure key recommendations by MOPAC and Home Office on joint strategic planning in this area.
- 5.5 The partnership recently secured a CSE worker from the Safer London Foundation to work with girls at risk of sexual exploitation by groups and gangs. The post is designed to deliver specialist 1 to 1 interventions with vulnerable females, as well as training to frontline teaching staff and children. The training and awareness raising strand reflects the best practice outlined in the Children's Commissioners Report into CSE in groups and gangs and is an integral component of the VAWG Strategy

² MOPAC Strategic Framework for Responding to Gang Associated Women and Girls 2013

³ The Youth MARAC was formally audited by the Bright Ideas Partnership in 2011 which concluded with following observations

Overall the project has been successful in meeting its key aims as it has: made young people feel safer and more secure; reduced the likelihood of repeat victimisation (the 25.9% repeat victimisation rate reported in this project is considerably lower than the normal re-victimisation rate of young victims of 58%); addressed the risk factors which can lead to offending, and as a result is likely to have reduced the number of young victims adapting offending behaviour; and has increased young victims' confidence in different agencies, such as the police, increasing the numbers of young people accessing services and reporting crimes

6. Schools work

Safer London Foundation:

- 6.1 This is commissioned by the Home Office. The early intervention group work programme from years 8 and/or 9 is creative, interactive and flexible. Over the course of 10 weeks, the group programme aims to provide the participants with the skills and awareness to make informed decisions and to give them practical tools to enable them to stay safe, understand their behaviour and potentially change it in the long term. Sessions focus on topics including healthy relationships, risk management and consent, gangs and crime and self-esteem and aspirations.
- 6.2 In addition to the 10 week programme the service offers drop down (one-off) sessions for whole school years groups on consent and healthy relationships.

Tender Arts:

- 6.3 Commissioned by London Council's to deliver to one primary school in every borough in London. The Healthy Relationships Primary Schools Project is a two day project with one form of Year 6 students (approx 25-30 students) who will become Ambassadors for healthy relationships within their school. Their aim is to help students develop skills for building healthy and respectful relationships, through open, creative workshops that explore the healthy and unhealthy aspects of friendships, empowering students to consider their attitudes and behaviour in an age appropriate way.
- 6.4 The culmination of the two day project is a presentation, where students can share their knowledge to their peers from year 4, 5 and 6 (approx 180 students), with the support of two facilitators. The project can also include a 1 hour CPD accredited Staff INSET training session for 20 or more staff, enabling them to become more confident around these issues and the safeguarding practice surrounding these topics.

SafeDate:

- 6.5 This Project has an emphasis on Domestic Violence, covering young people's own relationships, including LGBT relationships, and also parental and familial violence. Hate Crime and VAWG issues feature, including FGM and Forced Marriage. The issues are approached sensitively to encourage young people to seek help whether as victim, perpetrator, witness or friend.

Growing Against Gangs & Violence (GAGV):

- 6.6 Growing Against Gangs and Violence (GAGV) is an early intervention and prevention partnership with London's Metropolitan Police Service (MPS). GAGV delivers police inspired gangs resistance education to young people with three goals: (a) to reduce gang membership and association, (b) to reduce serious youth violence, and (c) to improve confidence of young people in police. As of July 2014, GAGV had been delivered in 15 London boroughs to more than 70,000 young people, in over 400 schools. This equates to over 250,000 pupil hours of positive, academically prepared and evaluated preventative engagement.

- 6.7 GAGV is unlike other gang resistance education and training programmes. Sessions are universally delivered to everyone within the school year group. Delivery of GAGV does not imply a school has a “gang problem”, but rather the school is committed to tackling gang culture and building community cohesion. It does not pick and choose who goes through the programme, alienating and labelling already vulnerable “at risk” youth. Instead, it educates and informs the widest population possible to achieve the “tipping point” at which overall school climate and culture can change. For the vast majority of young people who will never be involved in gangs and serious youth violence, exposure to the curriculum simply provides the confidence necessary to collectively reject gang or rape myths and apply positive peer pressure to support others around them to not become gang involved.
- 6.8 Specially trained facilitators, many with backgrounds in education and youth work, support accredited uniformed police officers in delivery, thus ensuring lessons are engaging and messages are effectively and meaningfully delivered. Sessions are dynamic and incorporate adaptable drama, debate, and discussions, which educate and inform. Key messages throughout the curriculum are supplemented and reinforced by bespoke visual media— including live action drama and documentary-style interviews with academics, bereaved families, and leading practitioners in the field.

Rape Crisis Centre:

- 6.9 Deliver sessions in schools around London in relation to Consent, self-esteem, trust etc. This is a 6 weekly programme and is funded by the London Mayor’s Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC).

CLAY – Cyber Learning and Attitude for Youth:

- 6.10 Deliver sessions in school regarding cyber bullying; funded externally for delivery in a number of boroughs in London.

7. Financial implications

- 7.1 All of these services are commissioned by external bodies, with Lewisham benefiting from some of this activity along with other London boroughs.

8. Legal & human rights implications

- 8.1 The Council is under a number of statutory obligations to reduce crime and anti-social behaviour. The Crime and Disorder Act 1998 requires the Council to formulate and implement a strategy for the reduction of crime and disorder; the Anti Social Behaviour 2003 requires the Council as a local housing authority to have policies and procedures for dealing with anti-social behaviour and the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 places the Council under a duty to have, when carrying out its functions, due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination and promote good relations between persons of different racial groups.

- 8.2 The Local Government Act 1999 places a duty on the local authorities to secure continuous improvement in the way its functions are exercised having regard to the combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness.
- 8.3 Section 2 of the Local Government Act 2000 empowers the local authority to do anything which it considers likely to achieve the promotion or improvement of the economic, social or environmental well-being of all or any persons within the local authority's area.
- 8.4 These statutory duties amongst others feed into the Council's Safer Lewisham Strategy.

9. Equalities implications

- 9.1 Developing safe and secure communities is central to the work of the Council as a whole and in particular to the Community Services directorate. Reducing and preventing crime, reducing fear of crime and supporting vulnerable communities is critical to the well-being of all our citizens.

10. Crime and disorder implications

- 10.1 Section 17 places a duty on partners to do all they can to reasonably prevent crime and disorder in their area. The level of crime and its impact is influenced by the decisions and activities taken in the day-to-day of local bodies and organisations. The responsible authorities are required to provide a range of services in their community from policing, fire protection, planning, consumer and environmental protection, transport and highways. They each have a key statutory role in providing these services and, in carrying out their core activities, can significantly contribute to reducing crime and improving the quality of life in their area.

11. Environmental Implications

- 11.1 The Council lead for this is an advisor to the SLP and makes representations as appropriate in relation to impact. Environmental services are consulted about all agreed activity before proceeding.

For further information on this report please contact Geeta Subramaniam-Mooney Head of Crime Reduction & Supporting People, Directorate for Community Services on 020 8 314 9569