

# VIOLENCE REDUCTION

## Good Practice Case Studies

LB Newham  
Brighter Futures

*As an inner London borough with one of the youngest populations in the country and the joint highest number of murders, Newham has adopted a whole council approach to making the borough the best place for children and families. Its Brighter Futures initiative is represented at the highest level in the council and backed with an investment of £13.5 million.*



### The Challenge

In Newham, those who suffer abuse, are exploited and exposed to crime and violence, typically derive from disadvantaged circumstances. Young people who are from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) backgrounds are disproportionately impacted by violence and crime, and are over represented in school exclusions and the criminal justice system. Youth crime and violence impacts every aspect of life in Newham. Young people who miss critical support, grow up with their problems and they perpetuate. This is a borough-wide problem, and there is a lot of work to be done to make youth crime and violence, a borough-wide responsibility.

### Solution

Based on evidence, and informed by the voices of young people, Newham's solution has involved innovative and strategic changes instigated by the Mayor Rokshana Fiaz, OBE. In 2019, Newham Council, set up Brighter Futures, installed the first UK borough's Children and Young People's Commissioner, Geeta Subramaniam-Mooney, and backed her appointment with an investment of £13.5 million to deliver Newham as the best place for children and families.

Brighter Future's is represented at the highest level in Newham Council and has a licence to innovate services in order to champion and advocate young people's needs and interests, across the council – making young people part of the DNA of every provision and priority. The approach is designed around the

### Partners involved

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co-creation of services with young people, uses evidence to lead its objectives and is joined up with partners. To address youth violence and crime is ultimately to address and change the preconditions that affect disadvantaged and vulnerable young people.

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### Background

Newham in context: 133,229 young people (0-25 years); the 9<sup>th</sup> youngest borough in England and a rapidly rising school aged population (up 21 per cent between 2010-18). A richly diverse borough with BAME communities making up 73 per cent of the population: the highest in the country.

Newham Population	Newham Young People
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 52 per cent live in poverty / 25.3 per cent in low-income families and third highest rough sleeping population in England</li> <li>• Highest number of furloughed workers in London</li> <li>• One in three of BAME workforce paid less than living wage</li> <li>• Highest number of residents on house waiting lists in England</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 38.4 per cent on Free School Meals</li> <li>• 10.2 per cent live with mental ill-health issues, higher than London and England</li> <li>• 42.7 per cent are overweight or obese in Year 6</li> <li>• High needs pupils rising year on year</li> <li>• 6.5 per cent boys and 3.3 per cent girls are NEET</li> <li>• A male child lives on average six years less than London peers and a female three years less</li> </ul>

Metropolitan Police Service data shows that Newham had 72 young knife crime victims (1-24 years) between Oct-18 to Sep-19. Other Police statistics showed that between Jan to Dec 2019, Newham and a neighbouring borough had:

- The joint-highest numbers of murders
- The highest number of young people involved in county lines activity compared with London
- An increase of young people carrying knives and weapons including on school premises.

The majority of young victims and suspects in reported incidents of physical violence in Newham live in the borough and seven out of 10 are boys.

### Operational details

Brighter Futures' strategy is informed by Public Health England's (2019) approach to violence: "Prevention strategies, which address the multiple risk factors which cause and perpetuate violence and promote the protective factors which mitigate against perpetration and victimisation of violence."

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- In the long term, this means providing early help, health and youth services to directly stem problems as they are identified - whole family solutions
- In the short term, we are laying the foundations of our culture while implementing our strategy system-wide. This means, making decisions on what to stop, start and continue; innovating and developing on route, pushing open doors to gain our rightful seat at decision tables (across the Council, with key agencies and partners), in order to champion young people's interests and using every defence to raise community awareness and their accountability to help Newham's young people.

### Evidence-led

The Brighter Futures initiative is confident in the knowledge of how an environment's preconditions increases the possibility of youth crime and violence. We use local, regional and national data sources to inform our intelligence. But equally, and in order to support vulnerable young people today, we have improved our systems to listen via both formal (advocacy) and non-formal (relationships developed with youth workers) routes, in order to understand the detail of their experiences and hear their ideas for solutions. Our relational work with young people already caught up in violence and crime, builds our understanding of the often sophisticated methods used by those intent on exploiting young people. This aids the ability to operate in step with perpetrators – with the knowledge that purely reactive solutions don't work.

### Partnerships

Maximum and sustainable impact can only be achieved by a wider movement: where services, businesses, communities and residents work together to make Newham a great place to grow up, to support young people to thrive, and to tackle poverty, injustice and discrimination. At the heart of this is the work to help the community (in the broadest sense), understand what is learned, to feel empathy for disadvantaged young people, to see them as vulnerable victims, and to want to share the responsibility. The borough is working to change the negative narratives of young people that impede wider community accountability.

Brighter Futures is closely aligned with statutory and non-statutory organisations including Newham Council through social care and education services; the youth offending team; the police; health services and other services like probation, Cafcass. The Boards that bring together partners in the council, police and probation, Education, health and fire services oversee activities to safeguard children, reduce the incidents of crime and anti-social behaviour in Newham are also involved, including Newham's Youth Safety Board, the Safeguarding Children Partnership and the Community Safety Partnership Board.

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### Young people centred services

Empowering young people through: 1) Early Help and Health and 2) Youth Services.

#### 1. Early Help and Children's Health

Working with a multiagency panel, our focus is to provide the right support, by the right service at the right time. This means identifying potential issues before they emerge, as they emerge and always intervening at the lowest level possible. We aim to step in quickly and effectively to avoid escalation to specialist or statutory services by creating an environment that proactively supports safety, happiness, physical and emotional development and wellbeing.

- **Primary Prevention** – we adopt a thrive and growth mind-set. Working in collaboration with wider health partners, all Newham children and families benefit from excellent primary care support and advice that engenders positive growth and development from the earliest time in a child's life. A strong universal offer in children centres, early year's and community settings provide wrap around services in the heart of our communities. Working closely with schools, neighbourhood police, voluntary and faith groups, and business communities we are developing community support schemes to make Newham in itself, a safe haven.
- **Secondary Prevention** – targeted early help using psychology informed approaches, enrichment expansion, whole family systemic interventions for: domestic abuse, mental health, substance misuse and financial support for parents. Fulfilling a vital function of providing much needed support to families whilst they wait for their children to receive diagnosis of Special Educational Needs and Disabilities. Our funding to voluntary and community sector reinforces safety e.g.: victim support and under 15s awaiting CAMHS.
- **Tertiary Prevention** – Ensuring that young people at risk of exploitation/ those being exploited are identified early and receive a range of bespoke interventions through an integrated, multi-agency response which reduces risk and increases safety and wellbeing by utilising youth offending and social care service resources, early help family support as well as incident/place/ space/group mapping for prevention and pan London rescue and response.
- **Critical Management** – Providing A&E Youth Provision to engage at teachable moments and enforcement through criminal justice services such as police, youth offending services and probation services.

#### 2. Newham's Youth Empowerment Services

Our youth services map together using our Social Emotional Learning Curriculum:

- **Advocacy** – Providing clear referral routes to listen to young people (via social workers, carers, Return Home Interview Officers, IROs, school staff and external agencies), viewing them as experts in their own lives. Young people's

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recommendations inform us of what needs to stop; start or change and we make review experiences positive so they know their input is valued.

- Return Home Interview and Intensive Youth Services – The work is underpinned by a relational approach: trust at the centre. All young people who return from missing episodes are offered an RHI and provided with one consistent officer throughout their support, irrespective if they are in or out of borough. Taking a whole family/system approach and include parents/carers from start to finish. Context over age every time (no lower/upper age range).
- Detached Youth Workers – The interventions with young people are delivered in their social environments (estates, parks, shopping centres), to reverse the power dynamic and enable our youth workers to negotiate and build relationships on young people's terms, develop links with their peer groups and start the process of enhancing safety in the context of a young person's physical, relational and psychological wellbeing. Once relationships are formed, youth workers deliver appropriate interventions based on needs.
- Youth Zones – Physical and digital youth zones offer a range of activities based on the identified needs and interests of young people (recreational to nationally accredited awards and volunteering programmes). Youth Zones work with 22 different ethnic groups (80 per cent of membership) and our diversity is reflected in our workforce with 69 per cent identifying as BAME.
- Inclusion and Engagement: Nothing About Us, Without Us – the project actively supports young people: engage (locally/regionally/nationally), influence through empowerment, achieve accredited programmes and be recognised. The project offers programme and skills development to help young people actively influence and shape policies and services, specifically engaging young people with SEND, who are LGBTQ, Young Carers and Children Looked After.

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### Impacts powering changes and solutions

The project is mindful that each impact aligned with targets is a step towards realising set objectives. The structural/system developments are of equal importance to every positive relationship formed between a youth worker and a young person. Both matter. These shared impacts are a small collection of all the positives that represent our focus, our energy, our time spent talking to build trusted relationships, our work in reaching young people, our grafting to create safe spaces and positive opportunities.

- The first UK borough to gain Youth Workers Key Worker status, enabling our youth services teams to provide continued face-to-face support through Covid-19 lockdowns.
- On track to doubling youth zones and the launch of our Digital Youth Zone

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to increase support engagements, relationship-building, skills development and activities during the months of school closure. In 2019/20 youth zone attendance increased by 16 per cent and individual membership increased by 38 per cent. Reaching more young people gives us our first chance to deliver our support through our SEL curriculum.

- We provided 900+ activities through summer 2020 (zoom/face-to-face) to support young people's physical and mental health, to develop their skills and to keep young people active for 6 weeks. We fund, coordinate and offer diverse 0-19 holiday programmes, every school holiday period ensuring Newham's most vulnerable and at risk are supported to engage and take up opportunities.
- Through focussed and funded 'Participation', our reach is more inclusive - we are engaging with a wider age-range, more young people with SEND, Looked After Children, Young Carers and LGBTQ. Our support includes training and empowering marginalised groups to engage, lead and co-create the services that they need.
- 100 per cent of returned home interviews were offered to young people within 24 hours. Relationships = support, not geographies: we travel in or out of borough to provide continued intensive interventions.
- 108 young people volunteered in our HelpNewhamHub, during lockdown, 94 young people signed up to Duke of Edinburgh Awards and a significant number enrolled in accredited courses: our skills development programmes aids young people back into their education, into training and work opportunities.
- Always seeking ways to amplify young people's voices through well-structured advocacy, through Citizen Youth Assemblies, youth forums, boards and committees. Young people are represented on our recruitment panels. See the borough's latest Youth Assembly Report under Participation on our Youth Empowerment Services padlet.
- 90.7 per cent of the 802 families referred for intensive family support in Early Help, over the past 12 months sustained changed and remained below the statutory services threshold.
- 77 per cent of families who required community early help did not require subsequent support.
- 96 per cent of early years settings were rated good or outstanding and in 2019/20 we reached our highest percentage (67 per cent) of 2 year-olds accessing provision and our Best Start in Life services continues to provide a complex range of services to support families.
- Our HeadStart (physical and emotional health) programme is fully embedded and our recent research shows that interventions were effective and reduced pupil's emotional difficulties.

**Nehwam was the first UK borough to gain Youth Worker's Key Worker status, enabling our youth services teams to provide continued face-to-face support through Covid-19 lockdowns**

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### Continuous learning culture

Brighter Futures has been in operation for just over a year, some summary reflections include:

- Knowing that a comprehensive approach is robust but it will take time and continuous investment to decrease the current youth crime and violence statistics. This means we need to balance quality deliver with providing evidence to our stakeholders that our model is working.
- Brighter Futures' ambitions alone won't make the changes required to be successful – partnership working has to truly mean young people at the centre and organisational hierarchies aside.
- Asking ourselves are we listening and then act quickly and innovate, if necessary, to what we hear – our speed of support is imperative to vulnerable young people – barriers need hurdling.
- Being on the inside of as many community groups as possible – looking ahead the work of the project is now more ground up than top down - the value and care of our frontline people is critical.
- As champions for young people we need to deliver messages and young people's interests across the internal borders within Newham Council. Success here means that all services and priorities acknowledge they too are responsible for developing Newham's future population. Until this time, we will keep fighting young people's corner.
- Young people first - we know that to be great champions for young people requires on-going positive and real relationships with young people, in order to understand young people, in all their diversity.

*"What I love, is hearing my own phrases spoken back to me, and on my recent visit to a young person living outside the Borough, she said to me, 'if you put positives out there, they will come back.' These are my words, just as I have said it to her and I say it to all the young people I support."* Newham Youth Worker.

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This is one of a series of case studies submitted by London boroughs and collated by London Councils to share experience and learning across the capital. Publication date: March 2021 Publication date: May 2021