

**Stock-take of Borough Activity**

**- Serious Youth Violence, including Knife Crime**

**June 2018**

**Overview**

London Councils received responses[[1]](#endnote-1) from all 32 London Boroughs and the City of London.

All but three boroughs said that either:

* they had a corporate approach to tackling serious youth violence
* their approach to tackling serious youth violence was incorporated in their wider community safety strategy
* their corporate approach to tackling serious youth violence was in development

Twenty-two boroughs said that they had a specific **knife crime action plan**.

This note summarises the key themes and trends in these submissions in relation to current and emerging practice.

**Collaboration**

All boroughs and the City of London said that their work around serious youth violence was underpinned by collaboration, whether with the police, cross-agency, cross-borough or a combination of these. The more ambitious boroughs were not only working closely with other agencies but also aiming to make youth violence a corporate and borough priority. Not just for specialist teams but for every aspect of the council and wider partnership – including housing, culture, public space, environment and others.

**Public Health Approaches**

A number of boroughs mentioned that they have adopted a public health approach to tackling serious youth violence. This could include:

* + a focus on harm reduction, primary prevention & early years
  + collaboration from different fields including police, local authority, health, education and voluntary sectors
  + analysing underlying causes, examining what works & developing solutions

It is not clear at this stage, however, if boroughs are using public health approach to mean the same thing.

**Integrated Approaches**

We know a number of boroughs including Hackney, Haringey, Islington, Lewisham, Southwark and Westminster have adopted an Integrated Gangs or Anti-violence Unit approach. This can range from all agencies being physically co-located as a unified team including police, YOT, probation, council community safety, voluntary sector agencies, DWP; with further non co-located links which could include CRC and Children’s Social care. For others authorities this could mean one or two agencies co-located and others in regular contact and for others it is a virtual co-location in that agencies meet regularly, sometimes daily but are not physically co-located.

**Trauma Informed Approaches**

A number of boroughs also mentioned using a **trauma informed health intervention model** in tackling serious youth violence and knife crime, the key principles of which are:

* develop local understanding of the impact of adverse childhood experiences on the prevalence of violent crime
* schools are a place of safety for young and vulnerable people and offer a space to address adverse childhood experience early
* the importance of a trauma informed approach for the development of safe and healthy children who in turn may become safe and healthy adults
* develop personal resilience and emotional intelligence in young people to reduce violent crime

**Engagement**

Engagement with community or voluntary sector agencies on this agenda came through as a strong theme in the responses, with boroughs demonstrating community involvement in priority setting and the development of community safety plans as well as specific responses to serious your violence and knife crime.

**Knife Crime Action Plans**

One of the Mayor’s Knife Crime strategy commitments was for each borough CSP to have a knife crime action plan and the MPS initiated delivery on this commitment by requesting that each Borough Commander liaise with their partners to develop a plan. The subsequent plans that have been created reflect the different approaches taken on each borough, with some being almost entirely police related and others having a wider partnership scope and content. As we understand some of the plans are quite brief and do not reference work the CSP is undertaking and some have referenced comprehensive work plans that are being undertaken by the CSP.

Further details have been extracted from the responses and are included in Appendix A.

**Appendix A – Responses from Chief Executives and Heads Community Safety**

Boroughs were asked if:

* they have corporate approach to tackling serious youth violence including knife and gang crime
* they had a specific knife crime action plan
* if their work in this area is underpinned by collaboration – either with the MPS, cross-agency or cross-borough
* if they had specific engagement with community / voluntary sector agencies on this agenda

**The corporate response….**

Many responses to the question of whether the local authority had a corporate response to tackling serious youth violence, including knife crime, referenced the priorities or focus of the community safety partnership. For example:

*Although addressing serious youth violence and the underlying causes features as a priority in a number of safeguarding, youth justice and public health policies, the key partnership document is the Community Safety Plan. This sets tackling serious youth violence as a key priority for the Community Safety Partnership. This is also reinforced by our recent Strategy Assessment 2017/18.* (LB Barking and Dagenham)

All of the responses that went into details of the corporate approach highlighted the multi-faceted nature of the problem and the multi-agency nature of the response. For example:

*Our corporate approach to tackling SYV including knife and gang crime includes cross directorate collaborative work with community safety, children’s social care, targeted youth support and youth offending service (YOS). Examples of collaboration include attendance at multi-agency meetings including SVPP, YOS risk and vulnerability panels, anti-social behavior panel as well as joint home visits to individuals at risk or of concern with community safety, social care and targeted youth support.* (LB Bexley)

Responses often also linked the council’s approach to SYV to other related processes. For example:

*The joint approach which we have adopted locally is interlinked across key safeguarding processes, we have daily Integrated Risk Management meetings where we share intelligence relating to individuals of concern. There is also the Offender Management Program of which the primary purpose is to focus on those offenders that impact on our community the most through their offending.* (Brent)

A number of boroughs mentioned that they have adopted a public health approach to tackling serious youth violence including: *LB Waltham Forest has a corporate policy approach to SYV / knife crime that is rooted in public health principles and which underpins the borough’s multi-agency strategy and plan, which was adopted by our Community Safety Partnership in 2017.*

*Growing Against Violence is a public health and public safety programme, delivering evidence based preventative education sessions. It provides a continuum of engagement, with age appropriate sessions delivered universally to students in school years 6 through to 10 (age range approx. 10 – 15). GAV is working with all Camden secondary schools and has worked with Junior Citizens programme to provide workshops to year 6 Camden primary schools. They have also delivered longer workshops directly to several of the primary schools.* (LB Camden)

*The aim is to make youth violence a corporate and borough priority, not just for specialist teams but for every aspect of the council and wider partnership – including housing, culture, public space, environment and others. Based on our public health needs assessment, we have identified the main causal factors of violence in Lambeth and will be working to address these over the next decade.* (Lambeth)

Also: *LB Southwark is currently reviewing the applicability of the public health approach and currently have elements of application through is use of “call ins” and co-located Anti-Violence Team.*

It is not clear at this stage, however, if boroughs are using public health approach to mean the same thing.

Other boroughs have adopted different approaches. For example: *The Westminster Integrated Gangs Unit was established in 2011 in response to the rise in gang activity, the associated needs and the risks of the individuals involved. The IGU took a multi-agency and multi-faceted approach which was identified to prevent and reduce the number of young people actively involved in gang related criminality. The IGU is involved in providing the following front line services:*

* *flexible gangs workers*
* *an ex-offender contracted from St Giles Trust*
* *a sexual violence specialist practitioner*
* *an employment coach*
* *a data analyst*
* *for police officers*
* *a gangs and serious youth violence enforcement case worker*
* *a mentoring scheme worker*

*The IGU operational response is primarily led and co-ordinated by Westminster City Council Family Services, rather than Community Safety. This enables the team to take a preventative and safeguarding approach to interventions and to undertake work directly with the young people and the families to promote positive and sustainable change.*

**Knife Crime Action Plans**

Twenty-two boroughs said that they had a specific knife crime action plan. For example:

Lewisham’s local knife crime plan sits within its CSPs’ annual plan. Its strategic aims are: protect life; the prevention and detection of crime; bring offenders to justice. The strategic objectives are:

* *Safeguarding of children and vulnerable persons who are at risk of harm and exploitation*
* *Identify and take law enforcement opportunities to maximize reduction in offending including: prosecution, seizure, partnership diversion and enforcement opportunities;*
* *Intelligence development to identify criminality, associations and lifestyles of subjects;*
* *Identify opportunities for joint working with partner agencies to maximise impact on any aspect of offending and to harvest evidence to support prosecutions*
* *Reduce harm caused to the communities with Lewisham*

*The partnership follows the well tested model of: Prevent; Protect; Prepare; Pursue*

**Working in collaboration….**

All boroughs and the City of London said that their work around serious youth violence was underpinned by collaboration, whether with the police, cross-agency, cross-borough or a combination of these. For example:

*LB Brent is developing a unique model of delivery in the Offender Management programme. This enhanced programme includes a targeted and coordinated partnership (statutory and non-statutory partners) intervention for a range of offenders, including priority gang nominals, knife crime offenders, identified knife carriers, Domestic Abuse and CSE perpetrators. This targeted support now includes under 18 years old and young people identified at risk by the local partnership. It also provides a partnership commitment and response to ensure a bespoke client support package is created that deters the offenders from reoffending and moves them into positive outcomes.*

*With the successful bid through the London Crime Prevention fund to deliver the ‘Response and Rescue’ programme in partnership with LB Lewisham. We have designed a pan London program targeting vulnerable young people (under 25yrs) living in London who are at risk or actually being exploited by criminal networks through drug dealing (cross border) and other organised crime whilst recognising that carrying weapons and knives is linked to these individuals.*

*Partnership work between Local Authorities and the Police to devise a Knife Enabled Crime activity tracker that details all key activities that police and partners are conducting to tackle knife enabled crime. Working together has increased policing capacity and we have successfully found illegal weapon stashes (knives and guns),. removed street drug dealing in locations through the use of enforcement powers and techniques, safeguarding vulnerable young people at risk of exploitation and preventing the escalation of ASB.*

**Engagement with community and voluntary sector agencies**

Nearly all boroughs said the have specific engagement with communities and voluntary agencies on this agenda. For example:

*By invoking a community-led response, we empower communities to tackle the issues in their own way; and there is no issue of buy-in or the feeling that council owns the work – they own it from day one. The council only enables the discussions to happen and supports with learning opportunities and advice for further funding.* (Brent)

*The Working Together for a Safer Islington plan was developed with significant consultation and input from the community and voluntary sector as well as families and young people from our youth council, police cadets and YOS. We have a wide range of VCS services in place to address knife crime and serious youth violence in the borough including mentoring provided by Chance UK and Safer London; Key Working by St Giles Trust; Abianda working with young gang affected women; and Victim Support.* (Islington)

*Engagement and co-production with community groups, young people and residents is key to Lambeth’s short and longer term plans to reduce youth violence. The local Safer Neighbourhood Board, the Young Lambeth Co-operative (YLC), Lambeth Voluntary Action Group and Black Thrive sit on the “Tackling youth violence” board and are part of the development of our long-term strategy. The YLC are key partners in our response to youth violence, and represent over 160 community groups and third sector bodies in Lambeth working with young people.* (Lambeth)

**Appendix B – supplementary information provided**

Boroughs also provided helpful supporting information that shows what is behind the top-level responses to the questions posed. For example:

LB Brent provided a briefing paper that highlights the current challenges faced in the borough and outlines the practice and programs offered to affect change.

LB Islington submitted their Working Together for a Safer Islington 2017 – 2020 with outlines the partnership response to tackling youth crime in the borough. This includes the perspective from the borough’s youth council:

*Islington Youth Council recognizes the importance of crime and safety; we strongly believe that the youth of today represent a measure of success or failure for every borough. We believe that this plan will significantly help young people as they are the learners of today and the teachers of tomorrow. We need to do more to help young people to have a better future and a better life.* (Young Mayor Dianna Gomez)

LB Lewisham provided A Safe Lewisham – A Plan for 2018-19. This document outlines the main priorities for the Safer Lewisham Partnership which have been identified through the Strategic Assessment, as well as detailing joint actions that made a difference in 2017 / 2018. The document also provides details on community consultations relating to serious youth violence.

LB Tower Hamlets submitted their Ending Groups, Gangs and Serious Youth Violence Strategy 2015-2018 which presents national and local research, best practice and outlines current priorities and arrangements in the borough.

1. London Councils contacted all borough Chief Executives and Heads of Community Safety in May 2018 to conduct a quick stock-take of borough activity in tackling serious youth violence to inform consideration of what more could or should be done in regard to the local authority contribution to this agenda.

   **Appendix C**

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   |  | **Borough practice on serious youth violence, including knife and gang crime (June2018)** | | | |
   |  | **Do you have a corporate approach  to tackling serious youth violence, including knife and gang crime?** | **Do you have a specific knife crime action plan?** | **Is this work underpinned by collaboration – with the MPS, cross agency, cross borough ?** | **Do you have specific engagement with communities/ voluntary agencies on this agenda?** |
   | **Borough** |  |  |  |  |
   | City of London | No | No | No | Yes |
   | LB Barking and Dagenham | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
   | LB Barnet | Yes | No | Yes | Yes |
   | LB Bexley | Yes | No | Yes | No |
   | LB Brent | Yes - part of Community Safety Strategy | Yes | Yes | Yes |
   | LB Bromley | No | Yes | Yes | Yes |
   | LB Camden | Yes - part of Youth Violence and Gang Strategy | No - part of Youth Violence and Gang Strategy | Yes | Yes |
   | LB Croydon | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
   | LB Ealing | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
   | LB Enfield | Yes | Borough contributes to police action plan | Yes | Yes |
   | LB Hackney | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
   | LB Hammersmith and Fulham | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
   | LB Haringey | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
   | LB Harrow | Yes | Addressed in the Community Safety Strategy and Youth Justice (YJ) Plan | Yes | Yes |
   | LB Havering | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
   | LB Hillingdon | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
   | LB Hounslow | Hounslow do not have a corporate policy for tackling serious youth violence, however we do have a YOS led Youth Crime Prevention Strategy which address youth crime, including serious youth violence. | Hounslow does not have a specific knife crime action plan but the borough does provide a strategic response to knife crime | Yes | Yes |
   | LB Islington | This is set out in the borough's youth crime plan | No, but actions to address knife crime included in Working Together for a Safer Islington Plan. | Yes, exemplified in the Integrated Gangs Unit | Yes |
   | LB Lambeth | Covered in the borough's Young People at Risk Strategy | Yes | Yes | Yes |
   | LB Lewisham | Yes - set out in CPS annual plan. | Yes | Yes | Yes |
   | LB Merton | This is in development including a serious your violence and criminal exploitation protocol. | No specific plan but utilising the MOPAC knife crime strategy | Yes | Yes |
   | LB Newham | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
   | LB Redbridge | No bespoke policy or strategy is currently in place | Yes | Yes | Yes |
   | LB Richmond upon Thames | Actions to tackle serious youth violence and knife crime contained in the Community Safety Plan | There is a knife crime action plan being developed that builds on the policing-led knife crime action plan which will include prevention, support, diversion and enforcement. | Yes | Yes |
   | LB Southwark | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
   | LB Sutton | Yes | Yes | Yes |  |
   | LB Tower Hamlets | Yes - Ending Gang, Group and Serious Youth Violence Strategy | Yes | Yes | Yes |
   | LB Waltham Forest | Yes - rooted in public health principles & underpins the multi-agency strategy and action plan | Yes | Yes | Yes |
   | LB Wandsworth | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
   | RB Greenwich | Not currently but we are due to produce a new “Youth Violence, Vulnerability & Exploitation” partnership strategy later this year | Yes | Yes | Yes |
   | RB Kensington and Chelsea | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
   | RB Kingston upon Thames | Kingston’s approach to knife crime is embedded within the work of Achieving for Children Community Interest Company (AfC) | No | Yes | Yes |
   | Westminster City Council | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |

   [↑](#endnote-ref-1)