

### BOROUGH / PROJECT :

Kensington & Chelsea Council  
– Safeguarding young people  
in and around carnival



### PROBLEM :

Concerns about risk and harm to young people living in Kensington & Chelsea from violence and offending over the Notting Hill Carnival weekend.



### SOLUTION :

A partnership approach to safeguarding young people in the borough founded upon case management of vulnerable young people, police visits, engagement of neighbouring boroughs, provision of diversion and schools' engagement.

### BACKGROUND :

Notting Hill Carnival is one of the world's largest street festivals. It is visited by up to one million people over the August Bank Holiday. Carnival is an annual celebration of British West Indian culture and is an iconic event enjoyed by communities from across all of London and beyond.

Notting Hill Carnival takes place in the north of the Royal Borough across the W10 and W11 postcodes. The carnival presents a policing challenge as, while the vast majority of those attending do so to enjoy themselves, there have been incidences in which a small minority of groups of individuals have attended with weapons, to fight opposing groups and to settle scores.

## BACKGROUND :

As an example at Carnival 2016 there were 17 stabbings over the Sunday and Monday - ranging from serious life threatening injuries through to superficial wounds. The age range of the victims was from as young as 15 to older individuals in their 30s.

North Kensington is the area most vulnerable to serious youth violence in the borough and the carnival footprint includes areas which have issues relating to violence, gangs, weapons and drug dealing throughout the rest of the year. Young people in the Royal Borough who are involved in serious youth violence are at increased risk over the carnival weekend when groups of potential rivals and other individuals carrying weapons could attend.

Violence at Carnival also impacts upon local tensions after the event. In 2016 a violent stabbing committed by young people from North Kensington led to tit-for-tat stabbings over the following three months involving a group from a neighbouring borough.

The increased risk of violence at carnival and the period after it led to partners in Kensington & Chelsea putting into place a specific partnership action plan, to complement and support the proactive policing operation undertaken by the Metropolitan Police.

The rationale behind the plan was that, while the police were in many cases able to focus on risky individuals and to put in place conditions not to attend (for example through Criminal Behaviour Orders, licence conditions and bail conditions) this still left a sizable number of individuals who could not be compelled into non-attendance. The response was to look at opportunities to engage parents, carers and young people to support them into diverting away from North Kensington, not carrying a weapon, and choosing to engage in other positive activities over the August bank holiday weekend.

The partnership work is also an opportunity to share safety and prevention messages in regard to all forms of crime and offending at Notting Hill Carnival with young people. This is to help them stay safe from sexual assault, drugs and theft.

## ACTIONS :

Action	Description	Key agencies
Serious Youth Violence Case Management Meeting	All individuals discussed at SYV Case Management between June and August to have specific carnival risk prevention plan in place.	Police and Community Safety
Safeguarding young people through contact with other boroughs	Community Safety to deliver key SYV prevention and staying safe messages via MOPAC events and Heads of Community Safety Meetings.	Police and Community Safety

Out of Borough diversion	A number of youth providers and community groups provide weekend residential trips to divert risky young people from carnival and to provide them with an excellent opportunity to access adventure sports and activities which they and their families may not be able to afford. The referral process for the trips are shared across the partnership.	VCS
West London Cross Border Intelligence Sharing Meeting	The West London cross border meeting (RBKC, Westminster, Hammersmith & Fulham, Ealing, Harrow and Brent) to have a specific focus on carnival prevention and risk assessment. To take place in the meeting before carnival	Police and Community Safety <a href="#">MOPAC presentation [PP]</a>
Safety messages delivered via staff	An email to be sent to all Children's Services colleagues which provides advice on safety conversations to be had with young people and their parents in the weeks before carnival. These questions are shared with boroughs across London via MOPAC. These questions are also shared with youth service providers and VCS staff.	YOT, Early Help, Schools Police Officers, Children's Services.
Police enforcement communication	Leaflets and letters sent to the community after police pre-carnival operations should be joint with the Safer K&C Partnership with contact numbers for parents if they have a concern regarding their child.	Police and Community Safety <a href="#">Police and Partnership Flyer [pdf]</a>
Police prevention	Visits to young people of concern on the Matrix and known knife carriers to talk about attendance and safety with them and their parents/ guardians if under 18.	Police
Schools	Safety messages to be delivered in schools/ as part of role of school's police officers. This is undertaken before the school holidays start. Schools police officers are involved in identifying young people at risk and in need of diversion.	Community Safety, Police, Safeguarding in Schools lead, Heads of secondary schools.

### **Safety conversation advice to staff in 2017:**

These questions are circulated along with the link to all summer positive activities provided by RBKC. Colleagues with any queries are also directed to contact the Youth Offending Team Manager and the Serious Youth Violence Officer in the Community Safety Team.

#### **Parents/carers**

- Do they know who their child will be with when attending carnival?
- Have they seen any discussion between their child and friends on social media related to carnival?
- Are they worried about anything or anyone their child may be linked with at carnival?
- Do they consider their friends to be a good or sensible influence?
- Have they discussed safety with their child?
- Do they have contact numbers for their child and their child's friends or the parent/carer of the friends they will be with?
- Have they agreed a time for returning home?
- Do they know how their child intends to get home or have they made arrangements for meeting them if there are concerns regarding the route home?
- Are there areas or sound systems which they have asked their child to avoid (due to increased risks of harm in those areas)?
- Are they allowing their child to go to carnival?
- Is the parent intending to attend carnival? If they are, what arrangements have they made for the care of their child/young person?
- If they are very worried, have they considered arrangements to go away for that weekend?
- Are they able to identify place of safety in the carnival route where their child might go if they are concerned or afraid?

#### **Young person**

- Have they made clear plans with friends for meeting, where they might go and what times they need to be home?
- Do they feel safe with those friends?
- Is there a chance other people they don't know will join their group on the day? If so, how do they feel about this?
- Do they recognize signs of danger and how to respond/get away or diffuse a situation?
- Discussion regarding drug use and safety
- Discussion regarding sexual behaviours, safety, the law relating to this
- Do they know of safe spots or people to go to if they are caught up in something they are worried about?
- Do they know how they can get home safely?
- Ensure they have a working phone, with sufficient credit and with contact numbers for those they may need at short notice (although remind them that network coverage can be poor in some locations during carnival)
- How do they feel about approaching a police officer if they are concerned?
- Remind them that police will conduct searches and so it is worth talking to the young person about how they conduct themselves in these situations (ie do not make a situation worse by being abusive or confrontational)
- Remind them to take water and not to wear expensive items which could lead to being targeted by others

On another separate, but not unrelated, point we thought it would be helpful to share the link for the positive activities for the summer in case there are projects or opportunities for any young people you are currently working with, the link being: <http://mysummerinthecity.org.uk/>

## OUTCOMES :

The partnership work between the Community Safety Team, Family and Children Services, the Police, Probation, voluntary and community sector and neighbouring boroughs, was essential in having an impact upon safeguarding young people at carnival.

The following were identified as being key outcomes:

- Reduction in number of violent incidents at Notting Hill Carnival.
- Reduction in number of victims aged 15 to 25 at Notting Hill Carnival.
- Reduction in arrests of young people from RBKC for possession of weapons at Notting Hill Carnival.
- Reduction in arrests of young people from across London for possession of weapons at Notting Hill Carnival.

### Evaluation

The adoption of the partnership carnival safeguarding plan has helped to contribute to a reduction in violence at Notting Hill Carnival, and a reduction in the number of young people from the Royal Borough being arrested for violence or weapons possession. As opposed to 2016 Notting Hill Carnival 2017 saw six stabbings being recorded, and Notting Hill Carnival in 2018 saw 2 stabbings recorded which was a reduction of 77 per cent.

At Notting Hill Carnival 2018 of the 33 individuals (of which 16 were under 18) arrested for possession of weapons none were residents of the Royal Borough. In 2016 six individuals from the Royal Borough were arrested for committing violent offences and for possession of weapons.

The partnership safeguarding plan has sought to complement the excellent work undertaken by the Metropolitan Police to deliver a safer Carnival which can be enjoyed by those who attend. This plan has also allowed for young people from North Kensington to access diversion and positive activities over the August Bank Holiday weekend.



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