

Gangs Strategy Update

1 Identification

Information Sharing

Information sharing is covered by either S115 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 or the “Shared Interests” ISP that Enfield strategic partners commissioned to enable partnership working. Secure email further enables the exchange of sensitive information.

The Gangs Partnership Group has now evolved into a fortnightly meeting and many partners attend including:

- Youth Offending Unit (YOU)
- Probation both CRC and NPS
- Education
- Social Care
- Leaving Care
- Access to Resources Team
- Oasis
- Youth Services
- Parenting
- Police
- North Middlesex Hospital
- St Christophers Runaway team
- DWP
- Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) team
- Change and Challenge

The meeting has progressed to the point where we have moved from not only having a representative from each agency but the case manager or offender manager will attend for each young person who is on the agenda.

The CSU coordinates the meeting and all partners share information in advance of the meeting to ensure that the meeting is as effective as possible.

The two agencies that are absent from the group are housing and mental health. Mental health is the more important of the two and work is ongoing to try and achieve representation for the future.

Referrals can be made by any agency/organisation and each one is initially screened by police, YOU, Probation, social care, and education before information is requested from all partners.

All young people discussed at the GPG are scored by Change and Challenge and if they meet the criteria assistance is offered to the family.

There is a clear demarcation between GPG and MAPPA to ensure that there is no confusion as to which meeting has primacy and these lines clear.

With the advent of the both the CSE team and the better identification, agreements are in place with the team and the MASE and TSEM meetings over who has primacy.

There is concern that the average age of young people coming to notice for gang related offending or involvement is decreasing. Work is ongoing to try and find out whether this is short term or a longer term issue that we need to understand and then tackle.

The Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC) are coordinating work on "county lines" with the National Crime Agency (NCA) – where young people from Enfield are sent out to various parts of the country to deal drugs. This work is starting to suggest how better information sharing between police colleagues can assist in understanding the issues of who is involved and where the drug dealing is taking place. Linked to this are the increases in young people missing from home and CSE issues as these young people are often young (13/14 years) and as such vulnerable.

The North Middlesex Hospital (NMH) A&E project, provided by Oasis, was officially launched in November 2015 and this continues to grow. Over the last 12 months there have been 224 referrals of which 168 were Enfield residents, 93 young people were able to be contacted and offered support.

As the NMH is positioned very close to the border between Enfield and Haringey colleagues in Haringey have successfully applied for funding to provide a similar service, provided by Oasis, so that all young people from both boroughs are provided with the same service. The NMH have invested in this project by allocating accommodation and providing IT. In addition they have commissioned additional youth work due to demand.

Children's Safeguarding in both boroughs have identified that they want to provide young people who attend A&E with information on various services ranging from teenage pregnancy to gang affiliation and sexual exploitation. There is a general agreement that this is a good idea and funding is being identified to allow this to happen as a pilot scheme.

The A&E project links in with the St Giles Trust who provide a similar service at the Royal London Hospital which is commissioned by MOPAC and information is shared between the teams

Due to the increased tensions between gangs in Enfield and Haringey there has been a renewed effort between the boroughs to meet more regularly and share information. There are now monthly operational meetings in place with quarterly strategic meetings planned. Mapping of young people who are either in care or missing is currently being undertaken to better understand the issues that they present and both borough share their GPG minutes. This cross border working allows better and quicker allocation of resources to tackle identified emerging issues.

Domestic violence and abuse are areas that need to be better understood as there appears to be an increase in sexual violence that is gang related.

2 Prevention

The GPG coordinates action plans that support and divert young people from joining gangs. Enfield commissions, using MOPAC funding, St Giles Trust to provide a gang exit strategy worker who works with young people and their families to support them either leaving the gang lifestyle or preventing them from joining gangs. Partners such as social care, Change and Challenge and Oasis support this work. The current St Giles worker has worked or is working with 24 young people since taking up the post.

The Safer Neighbourhood Board (SNB) support projects that provide mentoring to young people, provide trips to the Ben Kinsella Trust exhibition in Islington and the provision of a Crisis Action Team (CAT) by LYRC.

Dept. Work and Pensions (DWP) provide a worker who engages with gang members and works with them to assist them into employment or training. This post is very beneficial to the whole process and the post holder has all the necessary skills to work with this cohort of young people who are intelligent but do not have the necessary qualifications to access work.

The Gangs Call In continues and 10 have now been delivered. The police gangs coordinator post is currently vacant and this has prevented any further dates being agreed. The post is currently being recruited to and it is anticipated that dates will be agreed for 2016.

The police have delivered Crest to some secondary schools within the borough. This is a version of the Call In and targets whole year groups to inform them of the risks and consequences of joining gangs.

There are plans to enhance this work by identifying a small group who are at higher risk and then working with them over a period of a term to divert them from gangs by delivering the St Giles SOS+ project. Parenting workshops would also be offered to the families of this group.

Providing access for young people who seek support is more problematic as the provision of youth services has been restructured. We are looking at local providers and Oasis was successful in bidding for a SNB grant that allows them to provide this type of work in the north eastern corner of the borough.

3 Intervention

Many of the comments in the prevention paragraphs above comment on intervention work.

A whole family approach is taken to this work and we try and engage with the family and particularly parents in order to support them in diverting their children away from gangs. The parenting service is very helpful in providing workshops that target parents of known gang nominals or youths at risk of becoming gang nominals.

Over the last 12 months the CSU has provided training to front line professionals in the borough through the Safeguarding Children's Board and through the Access to Resources Team who hold training events for providers in the borough. The latter is particularly useful as there is an increase in the number of LAC children who are being placed in the borough by other authorities who are known to have gang affiliations. This is particularly difficult to manage and any increase in communication between the providers and the local authority is welcomed.

4 Enforcement

Since the strategy was agreed there has been an overall increase in serious youth violence in both Enfield and the Metropolitan Police area of 5.7% for Enfield and 6.1% increase for London.

Since this strategy was agreed there had been a change in Anti-Social Behaviour legislation. In addition, since October 2015, the Community Safety Unit ASB team has taken on responsibility for managing the highest priority (Priority 1) cases for Council Housing.

Tenancy enforcement will now be robustly taken against any tenant who breaches the gang/criminal activity section of their tenancy agreement.

We use all enforcement options that are available to us and over the last 12 months 12 Criminal Behaviour Orders (CBO) against gang members have been obtained, 1 Anti-Social Behaviour Order and 1 gang injunction.

Consultation for enforcement against gang members is undertaken at the GPG so that all partners can contribute.

The MPS has recently held a firearm amnesty called Operation Magpie that was held between 23/11/15 and 6/12/15. This was specifically targeting firearms that are available or held by gang members.

Conclusion

The picture of gang related offending Enfield is constantly changing and over the last 12 months we have seen an increase in the levels of Serious Youth Violence. The relationship between various gangs continues to change due to various factors and there is a constant challenge to understand this and the risks that are produced as a result.

The age of young people who are becoming involved in gangs appears to be lowering and the number of knives that are being carried is of concern.

We are beginning to better understand the issues of Child Sexual Exploitation in the gangs remit and the “county lines” concerns that are now affecting Enfield.