



YFSS Youth and Family Support Service

SERIOUS YOUTH VIOLENCE AND KNIFE CRIME

- Actions being taken with the parents and families of offenders?
- What more could be done by all of those working with children and young people to deter young people from this lifestyle?
- How can the council and councillors assist in this?

Prevention Is Better Than Cure

Youth Development Unit [YDU]

Working with the community and other organisations such as Oasis the YDU provide an open access broad, centre based youth offer to engage young people and through informal education divert them into positive activities/lifestyle choices and away from youth crime. The youth centres are based in the most deprived, higher youth crime areas of Enfield

The YDU work with young people to build individual resilience and are helping to create community resilience by recruiting and training more volunteers and young leaders ensuring that residents are involved in delivering youth work in the community and engaging young people helping give more community ownership.

Parenting Support and Change and Challenge Units [PSU and CCU]

These teams provide parenting and intense family support to families who need support, this ranges from parents whose child is starting to get into trouble in school, through families with multiple problems and onto to those who children are high risk offenders. These units both work closely with the Youth Offending Unit to deliver voluntary and statutory parentings programmes and to provide a whole family approach where required.

They are working with the children's centres on a broader, hub based, early help offer and they are working closely with the voluntary sector, e.g. through engaging the Parenting Engagement Panel [PEP] to ensure a comprehensive parenting/family offer that is more efficient, effective and

co-produced. Additionally, the CCU is working with the Probation Service to support families of children where a family member is in prison.

The PSU and CCU create individual resilience through their support of parents, family resilience through their support of the whole family and community resilience by developing close cooperation with PEP etc and the development of parenting champions etc. Engaging more residents in the provision of the parenting offer will ensure more aware parents and a broader parenting offer.

Youth Offending Unit [YOU]

The YOU is a statutory partnership between the Council, Police, National Probation Service [NPS] and the Clinical Commissioning Group [CCG]. This is the service that works with young offenders aged 10 to 17 [up to 20 birthday in certain circumstances] and they work with a range of young people [e.g. their Prevention Team works with those young people starting to get involved on the periphery of crime and anti-social behaviour or who have received a Police Caution through to the highest risk team that works with young people in Custody and the community for offences such as GBH, rape and murder etc].

The YOU deliver work with young people through individual and group work programmes and works with young people both in the community and in custody. Regarding violence and knife crime in particular, the YOU social workers and case managers deliver specialist one to one offending behaviour programmes such as weapons awareness work using resources e.g. the Streetwise Education resource pack -Bite the Bullet etc. As well as case managers and group workers the YOU have specialist workers targeting work around such areas as child sexual exploitation and Serious Youth Violence etc.

The YOU deliver several targeted group work programmes aimed at challenging and changing the behaviours of young people who carry knives/engage in violence. These programmes might be about developing victim awareness, anger management, conflict resolution or thinking skills etc. See outline of some of the group work programmes below:

KNIFE CRIME PREVENTION PROGRAMME (KCPP)

KCPP is an intervention aimed at reducing the prevalence of knife carrying and use by young people. Young people are referred to the programme if they have been convicted of

an offence where a knife, or the threat of a knife, is a feature. Young offenders who are suspected of carrying a knife or are perceived to be at risk of doing so are also suitable.

This four-week course aims to give young people the full facts of carrying a knife and breaks down myths and attitudes towards knife carrying. Starting by exploring and challenging young people's views on carrying knives, the course challenges: Whether or not you are protected by carrying a knife; changes to current sentencing guidelines regarding knife carrying; joint enterprise, carrying knives for your friend or bringing a knife to someone you know is prepared to use it; the full implications of using a knife and becoming a murderer; whether young people are more at risk of serious injury by carrying a knife and inciting someone else to stab or even being stabbed by their own blade? These questions are discussed and considered in depth with young people.

The message of this course is clear; unless you are prepared to become a murderer or be murdered do not carry a knife.

Street Doctors

The Street Doctors organisation work with the YOU and offer a session on treating stab wounds, unconsciousness and head trauma also, which combined with KCPP makes it a 5 week programme. The intent is that if somebody is stabbed early help may save them from being a fatality.

Youth Culture and Conflict Resolution [YCCR] 1 and 2

The overall aim of YCCR 1 is for young people to consider and explore the causes and impact/consequences of youth violence and offending and includes awareness of the role of gang culture in serious youth violence, peer pressure, understanding of joint enterprise and offence categories and sentencing etc.

YCCR 2 follows on from part 1 but with a greater focus on conflict resolution. It aims to help young people better resolve conflict situations related to those within their peer/social circles through exploring concepts of identity, goals and values in order to base their decisions on their 'individual' values rather than those of the group. It aims to develop their understanding, of perspective taking and assertive communication skills.

Self Defence

A 3-session pilot self-defence programme was delivered to YOU clients [funded by Fusion] earlier in the year. The aim of this taster programme was to equip young people with the skills and increased confidence to defend themselves if attacked without resorting to carrying a knife. Young people with a knife possession offence were in the majority of those invited to take part. A discussion is ongoing with Fusion regarding a second programme and additionally another organisation is in talks with the YOU regarding the roll out of another self-defence programme.

LEAP [Confronting Conflict]

A programme that teaches young people about the causes and resolution of conflict, particularly conflict escalation and communication and how to avoid conflict.

Victims Awareness

Ensures young people are aware of the Victim perspective and the consequences of their actions on other people e.g. bereaved families.

ISS

Where young people have been sentenced regarding any knife related offence and are on an ISS programme in addition to normal case work the High-Risk Senior Practitioner meets with the parent and young person at the beginning of the intervention and monthly thereafter to reiterate the risk to both themselves and the community from young people carrying knives and ensures that they are fully aware of the consequences of carrying knives whilst on an order [e.g. breach and potential gaol]. Anyone who receives a DTO or a YRO with ISS is required to attend mandatory the KCPP knife programme which is added onto the Court Order or the Notice of Supervision.

Knife Arches

The YOU have worked with the police regarding having knife arches at the YOU and this has meant some people attending appointments at the YOU have been arrested for carrying knives. Work is ongoing with the Police to do more of these exercises.

NB: The above are in addition to the statutory Children and Family Support Services and the Looked After Children's Services

YOU Client Case Examples

Male, Aged 16

- Young person with a history of entrenched offending behaviour.
- Dysfunctional family life
- Younger siblings in Care
- Older sibling in custody
- Mother suffers from emotional and mental Health Issues
- Carer for his mother
- Gang member
- Sentenced for two knife related matters
- PSR recommendation that he be made the subject of YRO with ISS as a direct alternative custody.
- Successfully completed ISS
- Engaging with a sports provider
- Undertaking some voluntary work as part of Court Order
- No further offending
- Undertook both one to one and group work around knife related offending
- Evidence of change and moving away from gang culture
- Was stabbed during order, YOU supported rehabilitation by allowing him to reside with a relative out of the area.
- A lot of work undertaken by the YOU to ensure no acts of reprisals.
- Due to age was transferred to Probation Services.

Male, Aged 16

- Young Person with two knife related offences
- Continuously stated that he was risk and was carry knives to protect himself.
- Comprehensive PSR written by YOU with assessment of risk.
- PSR recommendation for a YRO with ISS due to secondary checks with external agencies with letters of recommendations and a number of protective factors.
- Sentenced to YRO with ISS
- ISS time table accommodates a mixture of offending behaviour, ETE, family time and the ability to train for sports.
- Talented and skilled athlete, ISS timetable includes sessions for personal training
- Is now competing in his chosen sport at a high level and has a bright future.
- YOU are working very closely with the family.
- Re-developing relationship with family and now attends Church with mother.
- Now has a part time job.
- Fully Compliant, no missed session or tag violations.
- No reports or concerns of any further offending or anti-social behaviour.

Male, Aged 16

- Stabbed another young person.
- Sentenced to 24 months DTO (Youth Magistrates Court)
- Poor behaviour and compliance whilst in custody.
- YOU did not support early release onto DTO licence.
- Was fully supported in custody by the IRS worker
- Released at 12-month Mid-Point.
- Subject to 12 months Licence Supervision.
- Very Strict Licence Conditions including 6 months Band 1 ISS, 3 months Electronic monitoring , Not to contact the victim directly or indirectly, Not to Enter EN3 where the offence took place.
- Compliance has been very good since being released from custody. One warning letter for being late.

- YOU are supporting him finding suitable ETE provision. Awaiting outcome.
- ISS review undertaken. Father fully supportive of the work of the YOU and understands the risks associated with his son.
- Zero tolerance approach adopted and recommendation will be if breach was to take place immediate recall.

The Future

Serious Youth Violence. Knife crime is a “*Wicked Issue*”, it is linked closely with other “*wicked issues*” such as drug dealing and use and child sexual exploitation etc and it will thus not be resolved by one organisation and nor by being hard or soft. It is a multi-faceted problem requiring a multi-faceted approach.

It will require:

- Everyone [politicians, community members, voluntary sector, private sector, health services, education and training providers, council and Police etc.] working together
- Being “*tough on crime and tough on the causes of crime*” meaning: Awareness raising [e.g. in schools; primary and secondary, and with parents]; Community engagement; Prevention; Education; Information sharing; use of intelligence and targeting; [targeted] Stop and search; Tougher sentencing for certain crimes; More and better targeted policing; Support and rehabilitation; Restorative Justice; Knife arches; Helping some people move from the borough and excellent support for young people leaving custody/on community sentence etc.
- Liaison and cooperation the Courts – sentencing and remand decisions will be part of the solution.
- Early awareness raising with parents and children and education and advice to children in primary school and information and advice to parents regarding knives, violence and gangs etc.
- Creating individual, family and community resilience.

- Continuing to ensure an excellent well-resourced youth offending services [if we cannot work well and intensively with the young people in the system we will see more violence and more young people in custody].

Councillors can continue to assist by:

- Ensuring an enabling environment e.g. ensuring partnerships are working and people are cooperating
- Ensuring children's services continue to have the funding required.
- Continue to engage and mobilise residents regarding the problems and the solutions
- Keep ensuring a consistent message is given e.g. as to the necessity and benefit of tactics such as stop and search and having the difficult and challenging conversations re these etc.

Knives will not be used if they are not carried, risk of getting caught [knife arches and stop and search etc] and risk of a harder sentence if caught [liaison with Courts], will impact on the carrying of knives to a degree but ultimately it will be the awareness raising, keeping people out of the lifestyle and reducing drug dealing that will have most effects

The emphasis must be on: Communication, Cooperation and Coordination.