Confronting London’s Violent Street World: The Gang and Beyond

A Report for London Councils

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INTRODUCTION

Over the last decade a new ‘folk devil’ has come to prominence in British society. This, the urban street gang is believed by many to be the instigator of the most serious violence in the UK today. The threats allegedly posed by this group range from public fears of young people ‘hanging around’ to stories of ‘gang rape’, violent territorialism, gun and knife related violence, the use of ‘weapon dogs’ and the importation and distribution of illegal drugs. Cumulatively the impression promoted by the media, politicians and many enforcement agencies, is that structured organised gangs are more prominent today and the offences in which they engage have become more serious.

Drawing upon recent and relevant research this report explores the ‘gang’ situation as it pertains to London. While the report identifies gangs and gang violence as a real threat, the report is nevertheless critical of the way the term ‘gang’ is often used and is particularly critical about attempts to conflate into terms like ‘the gang’ and ‘gang culture’ social problems that need to be addressed in their own right. Whilst confronting gangs remains an important issue, the report argues for an approach which locates intervention effort within a wider appreciation of the violent street periphery where gangs are found. Gangs are certainly part of this world but other groups and criminally involved individuals inhabit this world as well. These, the report argues, need to be understood in their own right and as they intersect together. If the aim of intervention effort is to prevent such violence then effort must address this totality in a measured and proportionate way and not focus on one part of it at the expense of the whole.

STRUCTURE

The report begins by briefly profiling the evidential base on which this review is conducted; it then examines some recurrent problems in the way the term ‘gang’ has been popularly used and abused by examining gang myths and stereotypes. A framework for defining gangs and differentiating these from other groups that have some involvement in crime and violence is then developed. This involves distinguishing gangs from delinquent peer groups and both of these groups from more organised crime groups. The following section examines the extent to which serious violence involving the use of weapons in London can be attributed to gangs. As this section shows, gangs are violent by nature and weapons can be used in certain contexts which the report identifies. As this section makes clear, other groups, including volatile individuals who are not in gangs, are also responsible for much of the violence that is being attributed to the gang, while some problems being attributed to the gang turn out, on inspection, not to be gang related.

The second section draws the implications of this analysis together arguing for an approach to serious violence which looks beyond the gang. Rather than privilege a particular group as the object of intervention, the report argues instead that intervention effort needs to be directed at the spaces where gangs and other groups are located; this constitutes the volatile periphery of a violent street world. A framework for understanding this world is then developed.

The report concludes by examining the principles that should inform the intervention effort directed to address the violence of the street periphery and profiles a range of interventions that can be mobilised to confront the different risks and dangers peer groups and gangs types of group pose.
**METHODODOLOGY**

This report brings together relevant and current research that has been conducted into gangs and other criminal groups in London over the course of the last decade\(^2\). Substantively, the report draws upon four sources of data. First, this report reflects on findings of primary research that the author, along with colleagues from the Centre for Social and Evaluation Research, have conducted into issues connected with gangs and other criminal groups\(^3\). Secondly, this report makes reference to relevant research that has been conducted into the contemporary gang situation in the United Kingdom\(^4\). Thirdly, this report draws upon a wide body of literature relating to gangs, including a range of academic articles and books\(^4\). Fourthly, this report utilises findings from interviews conducted for the purposes of this project with a range of professionals and practitioners working with young people in London (see Section 3: Developing and Delivering Interventions and Appendix A: Intervention Programme Profiles).

**SECTION 1: CONCEPTUALISING GROUPS AND GROUP OFFENDING**

**GANG MYTHS AND STEREOTYPES**

To understand fully the ‘gangland’ situation in London it is necessary to be able to distinguish fact from fiction and evidence from assumptions. This is not always easy in a society where many stereotypes about gangs enjoy wide circulation and where the language used to describe them often dispenses with proportion in favour of an inflated rhetoric\(^5\). One way to accomplish this task is to consider some of the problems that follow from deploying the term ‘gang’ in ways that lack rigour but which are widely used. Another will be to consider some of the stereotypes that have evolved around the gang\(^6\).

Let us begin with bad definitions. The most popular but least helpful way of understanding the term ‘gang’ is as a blanket label applied to define any group that is felt to cause trouble to somebody. This is the way in which the media typically operate and this mode of classifying gangs is also widespread among the public at large. The term ‘gang’ applied this way constitutes a universal shorthand to denote a troublesome group. While popular, this approach is neither satisfactory nor useful. Street organisations vary significantly and mobilising the blanket label ‘gang’ to encapsulate them all submerges important differences that need to be recognised. A group of eleven year old lads ‘hanging around’, for example, is very different from an armed, territorially affiliated group of eighteen year olds looking for trouble; and this differs in turn from a group of adult criminals planning a heist. Calling all these groups ‘gangs’ is not helpful and works against producing a definition fit for purpose.

If we consider further the mythology that surrounds the gang then this often derives less from the dangers posed by the gang and more from stereotypical images that people hold which are then projected upon them. Though often a problem of inner urban life, the gang today is imagined as essentially new and this is accompanied by the perception that gangs are proliferating. This view is often accompanied by the notion that the gang is moving from a state of disorganisation to one of progressive organisation. It may, for example, be claiming new territory which its members then coercively control or be expanding its membership base by ‘grooming’ or ‘recruiting’ new members who are then brutally exploited. Rather than understand the gang for what it often is, a disorganised
street group, many impose upon the gang an organisational form and command structure few ‘gangs’ in fact possess. In effect, the gang and the street world it inhabits becomes corporatised: invested, that is, with a complex division of labour and a command structure that resembles that of a corporation or an army. While gangs often have a diverse membership, they are typically identified in the public mind with minority ethnic groups.

While gangs certainly exist, it is often the case that their actuality and prevalence is exaggerated and in many cases the perceived presence of a gang occurs because people elect to define a group as such. As we found in the course of conducting interviews with young people (many of whom had been classified as ‘gang affiliated’ by practitioners) most did not define themselves as gang members. It is also worth noting that the language practitioners use to describe what gangs are and what they do (they ‘groom’ and ‘recruit’, they have members with names like ‘wanabees’) reflects the language of control, not the gangland realities through which these young people live out their day-to-day lives. The point here is that the language used by practitioners to represent gang life and the way it is experienced by those who live ‘gang’ lives are sometimes two very different things.

The lesson to derive from this section is that if we want to talk about gangs we need to do so appropriately and accurately. In practice this means not falling into the pitfalls of ‘gang talk’ outlined above. It means knowing how to distinguish stereotypes and myths from an often very different, street reality. It means maintaining a sense of proportion in a context where this is not evident and recognising that effective policy must be evidence-based.

DEFINING THE GANG AND OTHER GROUPS

The extensive American gang research literature shows that gangs possess many different features. They are typically durable; they may have a leader and some division of labour within them. They often have a name by which they know themselves and by which they are known by others. Many lay claim to a territory which they attempt to control. Their members may adopt particular stylistic features that distinguish them from other groups, such as wearing colours. Gang members may develop a subculture which has its own language and which is defined by the performance of specific rituals. Finally, the life of the group may also involve engaging in violence and crime of various descriptions.

This begs the question as to which of these factors constitute the basic building block out of which we might want to construct a definition of the gang as it is found in the London context. The answer to this question is that we need to highlight core factors. Given the fact that the gang is not the only type of group in London that is responsible for committing crime and violence, it is not enough to profile the gang alone. This also needs to be accompanied by an analysis of other street and criminally inclined groups as well. In what follows, three kinds of collective which have some engagement in crime and violence are identified. These can be termed respectively the ‘peer group’, the ‘gang’ and the ‘organised crime group’. Each borough is likely to have variants of each of these groups, though the most violent and dangerous will typically be found in the poorer boroughs.

THE DELINQUENT PEER GROUP

The delinquent peer group is composed of friends and associates who are known to each other because they share the same space (school or neighbourhood) along with a common history and biography (they have grown up together and have shared the same experiences). Delinquency and
criminal activity is not integral to the identity or practice of the peer group or its members but can occur in given contexts in some peer groups, specifically in public spaces where they are most visible.

The peer group is the most pervasive form of social group found in European societies. Peer groups exist among all socio-economic groups and both young people and old, male and female, will find themselves members of one or more of them. Most peer groups have no involvement in crime and violence and people do not belong to them for this purpose. Through involvement in peer groups people live out their lives as social beings. In them they find comradeship, they pass the time of day, seek mutual support and avoid feeling isolated and alone. For the most part people do not join such groups, they spontaneously form.

While generally benevolent, some peer groups (particularly those populated by young people) may find themselves engaged in anti social behaviour and sometimes violence. In the British situation this may involve binge drinking, fighting, smoking, and low level drug use. Street robbery is also predominantly perpetrated by such groups and this is most likely to occur in poor inner city areas. Some groups may also become involved in fights with others and, because many also wear a ‘street uniform’ and have a pronounced public visibility, they regularly induce fear into adults who often imagine they are gangs. These are not gangs however nor should they be labelled as such because crime and violence is not integral to group identity as it is in the case of a gang. Members of peer groups may drift intermittently into some anti social behaviour and crime but most of those who do will also drift out of it as they complete their transition from childhood to adulthood. While most peer group engagement with anti social behaviour is trivial and episodic, peer groups can be volatile and such behaviour can escalate to that which is risky and harmful. It is when this occurs on an ongoing basis that the peer group can become a gang.

THE GANG

The gang can be defined as a relatively durable, predominantly street-based group of people who see themselves (and are recognised by others) as a discernible group for whom crime and violence is intrinsic to the identity and practice of the group.

The minimal characteristic features of the gang are that it has: a) a name; b) a propensity to inflict violence and engage in crime and c) violence and delinquency perform a functional role in promoting group identity and solidarity. While the presence of an organisational structure, a defined leader, group rituals and a definable territory claimed by the groups as its own are also characteristic features of some gangs, these are supplementary features not essential defining characteristics of all gangs. Whilst the organisation, ethos and structure of the gang differ from that of peer groups, the gang is a derivative and mutation of it.

Though there are examples of girl gangs in the USA such groups are relatively rare and gangs are predominantly male dominated groups with which women are associated. In the UK there are very few female gangs though female peer groups are often being mistaken for them. The age range for gang membership lies between early teens and the early twenties. Ethnically, the gang is likely to reflect the ethnic demographic of the estates where it is found; in this sense it is not confined to one particular ethnic group. In London, where minority ethnic groups are over-represented in many of London’s poorest boroughs, the gang structure typically reflects this demographic.
As John Pitts observes, it is in areas subject to concentrated disadvantage that gangs are typically found. These are areas where long term structural unemployment is high as are other indices of deprivation like poor housing, rates of poverty and benefit claimants. While most young people from deprived backgrounds do not join gangs and aspire to enter the formal labour market by obtaining qualifications, not all succeed. For those who are not bequeathed good opportunities in life engaging in the illegal economy may provide an alternative means by which socially desirable goods can be obtained. Gangs also provide spaces where structurally powerless men may accumulate a reputation and by so doing achieve status in a social world where they otherwise find little.

According to the few UK surveys that have been undertaken to establish gang prevalence within the population, the number of people who meet the academic criteria for being defined as a gang member is relatively low and usually comprises between 3-6% of the sample group. These kinds of survey are often conducted on high risk groups in high crime areas and tend to overstate the degree of membership in the wider population.

Like the peer group, gang members come together because they typically share a common history and biography and because they live in the same neighbourhood or estate. Some people may ‘join’ a gang, but most will spontaneously form in the same manner as a peer group. Like the peer group the gang also acts as a space where excitement may be generated and the mundane boredom of everyday life temporarily transcended. Like the peer group the gang offers its members the security of belonging, a place where friendships are established and where reputations can be made and tested. Indeed, for most of its existence, the gang functions like - and is indistinguishable from - street-based peer groups who ‘hang around’.

Where the peer group and the gang are distinguished from one another is in the role and status that crime and particularly violence plays within the group. Whereas in the peer groups violence is something that sometimes happens, in the case of gangs a propensity for violence is intrinsic to the group and its identity. This could be because the men within the group are themselves violent; it is also the case that the group actively search out opportunities to be violent.

While the American stereotype of the gang points towards a group with many members, a complex division of labour and a command structure located in a central hierarchy populated by leaders and lieutenants, this model does not apply in the case of London or indeed the UK as a whole. This does not mean to say that the members of some gangs do not allocate themselves different roles. However, rather than understanding organisational structure by reference to the division of labour a gang may claim, it is more accurate to understand its organisation as characterised by relations of domination and competition between members. In this sense the gang typically exhibits more pack-like behaviours than those found in formal bureaucracies. Dominant figures are dominant, for example, not because they have more qualifications or have obtained an elevated position through interview, they are dominant because they are more ruthless and ‘hard’ than less dominant members. Status within the group however only exists for as long as it can be defended from status challenges. As such reputation and honour can never be presumed but have to be continuously demonstrated and reaffirmed. This makes most gangs highly volatile and unstable entities. The lesson to take from this is that it is rarely the coherence of the group that makes it dangerous; it is rather precisely its volatility and the volatility of its members that lead to lethal outcomes such as
stabbings and shootings. Social disorganisation as opposed to corporate organisation defines the way most London gangs are organised. Gang life for most gang members is a very insular and parochial space where small insults and disagreements over status and respect can assume a significance and command a response literally inconceivable to those who are not part of this often institutionally disconnected world. The volatility of the gang is compounded by the fact that a number of gang affiliated men are psychologically unstable. Many have long and complex histories of violence and violent victimisation and a significant number derive from chaotic family backgrounds.

Finally, life is volatile because street life is itself often chaotic in the sense that things suddenly happen that involve violence or which demand a violent response. It could be, for example, that a gang member is found by another gang away from his territory and is beaten up. In the name of collective honour one gang may retaliate against another or proxies for it in what can quickly become a vendetta. It could simply be that someone looked at someone the ‘wrong way’ and such disrespect had to be addressed violently in the name of street justice. ‘Beef’, to use the colloquial street term for conflict, can be provoked for many perceived and actual slights. Unfortunately, among the more volatile gangs in London, weapons are also used.

The Organised Crime Group

The organised crime group is composed of men for whom involvement in criminal behaviour is intrinsic to their identity and practice and for whom such involvement is their purpose and justification. These are not boys nor would they typically define themselves as a street-based gang. These are professionals who ‘do the business’ where the business of crime is an occupation.

In economic terms, it is organised crime groups that exercise disproportionate control over the illegal means and forces of crime production. These are populated by professional criminals who typically occupy the core of the criminal underworld while the gang, along with volatile peer groups and various individuals, comprise the periphery.

Many of the organised crime groups in London are family based criminal firms and it is familial association that provides the bedrock of trust and loyalty between members. Ethnicity may also provide another axis around which membership may be based. Other criminals who are not family may be affiliated to these groups directly or through networks, but these are often close friends with whom family members grow up, or people who have mastered particular criminal skills and can be trusted. It could be noted that the family unit is the oldest and most traditional form of organised crime group. It persists because blood relations remain the strongest unit out of which trust is formed and trust is a crucial currency in illegal contexts.

The family firm is not the only form of organised crime group. Professional criminals may work together specialising in a particular criminal enterprise like commercial burglary. Membership in this sense occurs because these men have grown up together (sometimes being part of the same gang in their earlier life), or alternatively they have met through their involvement in various criminal networks including prison. Many possess key criminal skills; they may have an established reputation for being good at their job; and importantly, they also have a reputation for being trustworthy.
In the face of globalisation the family based ‘firm’ has not declined; it is more the case that iconic criminal families and other criminal groups are increasingly meshed into flexible, criminal networks and it is through such networks that criminal enterprise in the global context is conducted\textsuperscript{22}. These networks may be international in scope and are integrated through the use of communication technology. As Potter (1994) argues, these are ‘flexible adaptive networks that readily expand and contract to deal with the uncertainties of the criminal enterprise’\textsuperscript{23}. While popular mythology still likes to imagine organised crime to resemble a corporation (think here of the Godfather movies) this is not how serious crime is organised in the global ‘network society’\textsuperscript{24}.

Many of the professional criminals who operate through such networks are likely to have access to firearms but they will not routinely carry them. On occasions they will use them to settle conflicts which have a business motive and sometimes (but rarely) they will use them to settle personal disputes. To this extent they are also beholden to the ‘codes of the street’. As professional criminals they typically operate in ways that remove them from the street retail sector of the drug marketplace which is also the most violent; this they delegate / subcontract to more youthful peer groups, individual dealers and gangs in the street periphery\textsuperscript{25}. In their work orientation they operate as businessmen and operate in accord with the imperatives of capitalist business which is to make a profit. Because the businesses in which they trade are illegal, such transactions are not formally regulated by the rule of law (let alone formal business ethics). Violence, by default, becomes the de facto regulating force within the underworld in which they operate. This means that while professional criminals may be more careful than gangs members about the violence in which they engage, violence is still a currency in which they trade.

Professional criminals engage in a range of criminal behaviours. This can include providing illegal services such as prostitution or protection, selling legitimate goods acquired illegally, trading in illegal goods such as drugs, or engaging in acquisitive crimes such as fraud, armed robbery or kidnapping. The supply and trade in illegal drugs is the principal mainstay of the illegal economy in which most organised crime groups operate in London, as is also the case internationally.

**Profiling Groups in Relation to Risk**

The threats posed by each group described above vary. On one hand, organised crime groups are likely to be populated by men who engage in the most serious of crimes and who, if caught, will receive the most severe sentences. But because these men are likely to maintain a low street profile they are unlikely to provoke much public disorder. Gangs and delinquent peer groups on the other hand have a much more pronounced street presence and are likely to engage in activities that induce far more public anxiety. This occurs even if the crimes they commit are less serious.

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<td>Age</td>
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# Key features of street organisations

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<th>Peer Group</th>
<th>Gang</th>
<th>Organised Crime Group</th>
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<td><strong>crime</strong></td>
<td>some involvement in street robbery.</td>
<td>participation in the retail street end of the illegal drug economy.</td>
<td>and distribution, also trade in illegal services such as protection.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Participation in violence</strong></td>
<td>Predominantly episodic and low involvement in violence.</td>
<td>Violence is integral to the life of the group. Can express itself in gang wars and violent territorialism, in defence of drug markets, in attempts to rob other drug dealers, in leisure venues, in the context of street level justice as a response to honour slights and acts of disrespect. Violence is rarely regulated by street codes and conventions. In the street world business imperatives and more personal motivations blur and merge.</td>
<td>Violence is typically regulated by norms that delimit unnecessary violence. Violence is mobilised instrumentally in pursuit of criminal goals (armed robbery), as defence against attack and as a mode of regulating a business where normal rule of law does not apply.</td>
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<td><strong>Weapons use</strong></td>
<td>Some may carry knives, predominantly for defence.</td>
<td>This group will carry and use weapons. While most likely to use knives they will occasionally have access to reactivated guns although it is unlikely that gang members will know how to use these nor have knowledge of their origin.</td>
<td>Organised criminals will often be armed with guns and will know how to use them though many will not routinely carry them. They will typically subcontract violence to individual career criminals and/or gang members.</td>
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<td><strong>Structure</strong></td>
<td>Friendship groups.</td>
<td>Fluid, chaotic, messy and volatile friendship groups, limited (if any) division of labour, rarely if ever any corporate structure.</td>
<td>May operate through family ‘firms’ or a group that specialises in a particular crime. These will be locked into global networks.</td>
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**Gangs, Weapons and Violence**

The fears that gangs provoke are largely connected to the perception that the gang is involved in the most serious and worrying forms of crime and violence in the capital today. But what exactly is the relationship between gangs, violence and weapon use? Are we justified in seeing the gang as ‘public enemy number one’ and, if not, how might we best understand the violence currently being attributed to gangs? This section addresses these questions by reviewing the available evidence.

As this section will establish, the violence in which gangs are involved can be serious and, as such, clear steps need to be taken to address the risks that gangs pose. But as this section will also show, the thesis that holds the gang to be responsible for the most serious violence in London cannot be sustained if we consider the evidence. As this section will conclude, much of the violence being
attributed to gangs has deeper causes that go beyond the gang. There remains, in other words, an excess to the violence that cannot be attributed to gangs and this has implications for thinking about intervention strategies.

**GANG VIOLENCE**

Given that the gang is a group defined by its relationship to violence we cannot be surprised when gangs revert to type and violence ensues. Because these groups are populated by violent men who occupy a violent street-based world, nor can we be overly surprised by the fact that the violence in which they engage is serious and weapons are sometimes used by these men to settle their conflicts. As the American gang research tradition reminds us,$^{16}$ if you are in a gang you are more likely to be involved in violence than if you are not. This research also tells us that gang affiliated people have a higher probability of engaging in more serious violence than non gang affiliated people, that the gang tends to draw mutually violent people together, and that once a gang is formed there is a propensity for involvement in crime and violence to proliferate.

While gangs therefore are more violent than non gang groups and while it is evident they use weapons, it would nevertheless be a mistake to assume that violence in general and weaponised violence in particular can be reduced solely to an issue of gangs. They are part of the problem certainly, but the problem of violence in London also extends beyond the gang to include non gang affiliated offenders, drug dealers and various lone operators in the criminal market place. This point is important but is often lost by media that like to place all violence at the door of the contemporary gang which is then made responsible for every killing and stabbing. Two examples can be cited to illustrate this point. In 2000 eleven year old Damilola Taylor was killed in Peckham in what was widely, and inaccurately, reported as a gang related killing. In 2007 seven year old Toni Anne Byfield was killed in Brent and her murder was again, incorrectly, linked to gangland violence. Damilola Taylor was in fact killed by two brothers, while Toni Anne Byfield was murdered by a lone gunman who also shot her father.$^{27}$ While these murderers may have been involved in gang activities elsewhere the critical issue is that they were acting in their individual capacities - not as part of a gang.

**CONTEXTS FOR VIOLENCE**

If we examine the situations that tend to provoke gang violence four key contexts may be identified. Some violence is connected with territorialism. The gang will lay claim to a territory (usually the streets or estate where members live (their ‘endz’, often denoted by a postcode) which it defends from outsiders and importantly from other gangs located in adjacent estates. Sometimes group enmity is longstanding between groups whose members are in many respects identical but who happen to live in different postcodes.$^{28}$ But it is worth noting that most young people who grow up in an estate will also affiliate with their estate and those who live there. Many will also be known by the area or estate where they live and often these affiliations lead to the assumption that they must belong to gangs.
The second context for violence is related to the involvement of some gang members (and occasionally gangs) in the street retail sector of the illegal drug trade. This is the single most violent arena of the criminal underworld. This sector is violent because dealers typically hold both drugs and the money used to purchase them. Because of this a number of other criminals may seek to rob them, knowing that their violence will not be reported to the police. Many drug dealers are therefore armed, just as the people who may try to rob them are. Violence may also occur if one group tries to take over another’s territory, or when imprisoned dealers are released and try to re-enter the criminal economy. Violence will also be meted out to people who amass drug debts or to dealers who ‘lose’ their drugs to other criminals or through enforcement activity.

The third context for violence occurs when different groups visit leisure venues away from their territory and encounter other groups in them. This could involve visiting night clubs or events like festivals. Given the insular and parochial world many gang affiliated men inhabit, visiting leisure venues is one of the few opportunities they have to leave their ‘endz’ and move into spaces that bring different groups from different territories together. Given that many of these groups may have a prior history of conflict, such venues can provide the stage for serious violence.

The fourth context is violence which may emanate from a perceived act of disrespect or honour slight. This may be directed at non gang members, gang members or, importantly, at members of one’s own gang. Violence in this context is dispensed in the name of street justice and will be conducted without reference to law enforcement agencies which are widely distrusted. It is also likely that such violence may also provoke a counter response in what can quickly become a vendetta.

Again a qualification is necessary, for it is not only gangs that may engage in fights in leisure venues; many peer groups may as well. So too will many other individuals where such violence is driven forward by the alcohol and drugs readily available in the night time economy. The same applies in the case of disputes over respect and honour. ‘Beef’, in other words, is not monopolised by the gang.

**Weapon Use Among Gangs**

While it is by no means unusual to find gangs armed with weapons (knives being more commonly carried and used than guns), many other young men, including those in peer groups, also carry such weapons. The carrying of weaponry however is principally for the purpose of defence, often against those who would aspire to rob them. Although more young people in London have begun to carry knives in recent years, this can be explained less by the rise of organised gangs and more by the sudden escalation in street crime that has occurred from 2000 onwards. This is a crime wave instigated predominantly by the fact that more young people are now carrying relatively expensive and desirable goods, particularly mobile phones, which are desirable to armed and motivated offenders. Weapons like knives may in this sense be used as a defence against being ‘mugged’ just as they are also used to ‘mug’ people.

Guns have been used to settle a range of conflicts and the fact that around 50 young men (many from the African Caribbean community) have been shot dead attests to the self destructive violence these young men are capable of. While a certain proportion of this violence can be attributed to ‘gang wars’ other factors also need to be taken into account. It is also the case that young men who are gang affiliated may also use weapons in an individual capacity not as part of their gang affiliation.
London is also home to many who may use and carry weapons in their individual capacity and who are unrelated to gangs. The most serious forms of weaponised violence however are connected to the street retail trade in drugs like crack and heroin. Gangs are involved in this trade but so are many other participants, including professional criminals and individual criminals (such as lone drug dealers and delinquent individuals) who aspire to rob them.

If we examine the problem of gun use further, two observations can be made about the contemporary situation in London. To begin with, whereas the ownership and use of guns was once predominantly located in the core of the criminal underworld, where guns were principally the property of professional villains, it would appear that this has changed. A number of these weapons are now dispersing into the street periphery with alarming consequences. Whereas professional criminals typically know how to use their weapons and possess considerable knowledge about them, the young people who operate in the street periphery 'on road' (a way of life which young people choose or in which they find themselves when they are excluded from mainstream society) typically know little about the source of the weapons they use and most have not practised using them. It is also quite likely that the weapons they use are reactivated. Finally, whereas professional criminals typically use their weapons for instrumental business reasons, in the street periphery where gangs operate business and more personal motives overlap and merge. This again makes the street-based world where gangs are located a far more volatile climate than that which prevails in the core where the violence is more regulated by pragmatic considerations, such as avoiding unnecessary conflicts which could arouse suspicion and draw attention from enforcement agencies.

**Weapon Dogs and the Gang**

In addition to the guns and knives gangs routinely carry it has been argued by a number of commentators that gangs are now equipping themselves with a new kind of weaponry, 'status dogs'. The dogs in question appear to be predominantly Staffordshire Terriers, American Pit Bull Terriers and various crosses between the two. In the words of an RSPCA briefing paper on the problem:

> Dangerous dogs are widely used by gangs and criminals to intimidate and cause injury to other people and also some animals. The possession of them is often closely associated with other worrying elements of ASB and gang culture, including knife violence and drugs.

Similarly in the publication ‘Weapon dogs: The situation in London’ produced by the Greater London Authority we are told:

> there is no doubt that a proportion of Pit Bulls and other ‘weapon dogs’ are being deliberately trained to attack people and for dog fighting.

Like many claims that have been made about gangs these invite critical scrutiny.

The first point that could be made is that claims about the use of 'dangerous dogs' by gangs are not supported by any compelling evidence. The RSPCA paper provides no objective evidence to justify the claims it makes. What is presented in the GLA report is information regarding police and RSPCA activity but activity alone cannot be taken as evidence of wider trends in crime. For example, we are told that ‘the number of dogs seized by the MPS has increased 44% between 2007 and 2009’. As the reasons for this growth in seizures may have as much to do with policy changes (i.e. the decision to create a specialist unit with a mandate to seize dogs and a policy shift to seize more dogs as opposed
to fewer) it may be as much the police response to rising concerns about ‘dangerous’ dogs, rather than changes in gang behaviour, that explains the extent of the problem.

While increases in dog bites have also been used to justify the alleged gang connection, these statistics do not separate domestic from non domestic incidents; nor are the breeds who bite identified. If the goal of good policy is that it is evidence driven anecdotal and subjective evidence alone does not provide the grounds to develop evidence driven policy. We cannot therefore treat as credible assertions also made in the GLA report such as:

*anecdotal evidence suggests that many residents do not want to leave their houses or make use of their local parks because of the intimidation and threats posed by dangerous and aggressive dogs and irresponsible owners.*

So what is the nature of the threat posed by so called ‘dangerous dogs’ and what if anything has this to do with gangs? As no systematic research has been undertaken it is difficult to answer this question. If we apply common sense to what the available evidence shows then the picture that emerges is rather different from the alarmist headlines the public typically receive.

At first sight it might appear that the relationship between ‘dangerous dogs’ and gangs is very real given a widely reported gang related violent incidents in London in 2009\(^39\). In this case a dog was used to attack two people and in the assault that followed the victim received a number of dog bites. It was human inflicted stab wounds, however, that were ultimately responsible for the victim’s murder. While this case attests to a gang connection, it was also reported that this was the first case of this kind, which is also why it received so much media coverage. This case alone certainly cannot be used to justify the reduction of the problems posed by ‘dangerous dogs’ to a question of gangs, or to establish that ‘gangs are now using weapon dogs to ‘solve their conflicts’ as claimed by the RSPCA.

While many gang affiliated men may own or aspire to own ‘status dogs’\(^40\) like Pit Bulls and Staffordshire Terriers, many other young people in working class estates in London (including a number of young women) do as well. So too do a number of adults. This suggests that these breeds are popular in working class areas in London (just as Whippets are popular among many northern communities), and that many want to own one, not just gang members\(^41\). The population of ‘status dog’ owners, in other words, is not homogenous and gang membership as we have seen above remains small in the population at large. Nor is ownership for status pathological as owning dogs for ‘status’ or ‘reputation’ is an historic phenomenon, whether it be the reputation associated with German Shepherds, Labradors or Staffordshire Terriers, most ‘pure-bred’ animals are acquired either for status or enterprise / employment. While it could be the case that owning a dog like a Pit Bull occurs because of the ‘hard’ image it is associated with (its extrinsic appeal), it could also be the case that such dogs make devoted pets and are by nature very tractable with humans (their intrinsic appeal)\(^42\). In rare cases where proscribed breeds have been involved with human fatalities\(^43\) these typically involve dogs who have been abused or under-exercised and left in proximity to young children with no adult present\(^44\). These cases all occurred within a domestic setting and family pets not ‘gang dogs’ were involved.

When dogs are inter-dog aggressive it by no means follows that they are human aggressive\(^45\). In fact, a trait in the breeding of most dog-fighting breeds is that they are bred not to be human aggressive. Turning them into human killing machines as such requires considerable effort and skill as it opposes
their basic instincts and most young people (gang affiliated or not) are unlikely to possess refined dog training capabilities of this kind. Rather than define the many real problems posed by ‘status dogs’ as a problem of London Gangs a less sensational interpretation probably has greater explanatory power. The problem here is likely to be one posed less by innately psychotic dogs trained to attack humans on command by organised gangs settling their conflicts; the issue is more likely to be posed by young, immature people owning powerful dogs that are under exercised, badly trained, often neglected and which are not kept under effective control by their owners. While humans can certainly be bitten and intimidated by such dogs, the problem here is not ‘gang dogs’ but the irresponsible ownership of such dogs by a growing number of young people.

While it could be the case that criminals use dogs, the context in which they do so varies. To begin with, they may use them to protect criminal property like drugs. This is not a new tendency in criminal circles. In fact, the motive here is no different from that applied by legal companies who also employ guard dogs to protect valuable goods. It could also be the case that the ownership of status dogs occurs, not because of a desire to own a ‘weapon dog’ to ‘terrorise a neighbourhood’, but because it is part of the wider cultural fabric of the criminal fraternity. Like wearing branded clothing, it is something you do to affirm and cultivate your status relative to others. It could be remarked that legal dogs like Alsatians are better equipped with the instincts that allow them to be trained as human aggressive rather than dog fighting breeds like Pit Bulls.

While some people illegally breed dogs like Pit Bulls, prior to jumping to the conclusion that they are being bred for gangs and as weapons, a more sober appreciation of the facts may suggest other motives. To begin with, in a society where the demand for these dogs is high money can be made by breeding them. If you are poor this may be one way to address the problem. As evidenced by increasing dog ownership of these breeds, many people want to own these dogs and it is likely that the gang member is only one of many customers. It seems unlikely that gang members, like other individuals, would in fact want to own a dangerous and unpredictable dog which may attack its owner or their companions. To date there is no evidence to substantiate claims that dogs are being bred to be aggressive to humans or that gang members in fact desire such animals. Although the increase in ownership of ‘status’ dogs in London has been linked to the rise in gang culture, such an assumption may in fact be erroneous.

Consideration should also be given as to whether the increase in ‘status’ dog ownership may in fact be partly the result of the unintended consequences of the Dangerous Dogs Act which was introduced with the explicit aim of eliminating dogs like Pitt Bulls as a breed. As Mathiesen argued, deterrence only works if you are likely to be deterred and it is by no means clear that many of the Pit Bull owning fraternity fall into this constituency. Many distrust law enforcement and few know much about the Dangerous Dogs Act. By criminalising these ‘status’ dogs the Dangerous Dogs Act has paradoxically worked to enhance their reputation and increased their appeal to those people the state is actively trying to discourage from owning them, while also creating the preconditions for an illicit market that trades in these breeds. While there certainly exists a small subculture that breeds dogs for dog fighting purposes as yet no evidence has been presented that connects this subculture to the wider gang situation in London.

Although there is evidence that fear of ‘status’ or ‘dangerous’ dogs has increased, this may well be a result of a media and enforcement-driven moral panic, rather than the dangerousness of particular
dogs. The media in this sense not only increasingly write about ‘status dogs’ but do so in a way such that unusual and atypical cases are now presented as the norm\textsuperscript{52}. Although assumptions have been made about the association between gangs and ‘status’ dogs, the ownership of such animals may well be attractive to gang members for the same reasons they are to non-gang affiliated persons. Without in-depth rigorous research into the relationship between dogs and gangs, current anecdotal and subjective evidence can only be viewed as producing false-positive findings of a causal correlation between illegal breeds and gang ownership. Given recent intensified public fears surrounding ‘dangerous’ dogs and increased reports of dog attacks on people, issues surrounding ‘status dogs’ warrant further systematic investigation on which credible evidence-led policies and interventions can be developed than has been the case to date.

**Gangs and Sexual Violence**

In addition to mobilising ‘weapon dogs’ as their ‘preferred weapon of choice’, London gangs, it has been argued, are now mobilising sexual violence against women in the form of group rape and sexual exploitation. As with ‘dangerous dogs’ and gangs, the link between gangs and sexual violence also requires careful scrutiny. If we consider the evidence that has been presented to substantiate the connection, two sources can be cited. The first is data amassed by the MPA which appears to show a rise in the number of recorded multiple perpetrator rapes\textsuperscript{53} (defined as sexual assault involving three to eight suspects). These increased from 73 in 2003/4 to 93 between 2008/9. The second is a recent report released by ROTA which was based upon interviews and focus groups conducted with 352 women who, according to the ROTA website, were composed of ‘friends, relatives, victims or perpetrators of gangs and gang violence’. From this face to face research two key findings are presented which appear to demonstrate a clear relation between gangs and sexual violence. The first is that:

> Sexual violence and exploitation are significant weapons used against females associated with, or involved in, gang violence. Rape has become a weapon of choice, and used against sisters, girlfriends and on occasion mothers, as it is the only weapon that cannot be detected during a stop and search.

The second:

> Girls who carry firearms and drugs for their boyfriends often live in areas that are not perceived to have a ‘gang-problem’ may attend grammar or private all-girls schools will rarely be under any form of surveillance or be known to any specialist services such as children’s or youth offending services have their own bank account where their boyfriend can store his money.

Taken together with the MPA report these findings implicate the gang in serious sexual abuse of women; forms of violence which, as the ROTA report intimates, has not been treated as seriously as the male on male violence that gangs are usually associated with. But how strong is the evidential base from which these claims are derived? While this research raises important issues, as we shall now see, clear gang connections to sexual violence cannot be easily established.

The MPS report presents concise overview of what is known about multiple sexual offences by examining the reported data around it. Initiated against a background characterised by growing fears
about what has popularly been termed ‘gang rape’ the report profiles age, ethnicity and gender of perpetrators and victims, it examines the boroughs where this offence appears to occur and the relationship between deprivation and sexual offending is also profiled. Unlike much that has been written about gangs in London the report acknowledges the difficulties attached to defining the term ‘gang’ and commendably uses the term ‘multiple perpetrator rape’ in place of the populist expression ‘gang rape’. The report also notes that connecting such rape to gangs is difficult.

When examining rapes committed by multiple perpetrators it should be noted that the number of offenders involved and the methods used by assailants vary. Analysis on such offending is primarily based on victim testimony and any other supporting evidence, so links to ‘gangs’ cannot necessarily be established. These offences are complex in nature ranging from allegations of consensual sex between the victims and a known party, followed by non-consensual assaults committed by associates, to stranger attacks involving large groups.

If the MPS report presents findings which follow from a clear review of the available evidence the same cannot be said of the ROTA report many of whose conclusions are not justified by the evidence presented. The report includes several case studies of women who are associated with gangs, only one of whom claims to have been raped. One quote is made by someone who claims to know mothers who have been raped but none by mothers who have been raped. It could also be noted that despite claiming in its website that the report involved ‘face-to-face research with 352 friends, relatives, victims or perpetrators of gangs and gang violence’ 43% of the women interviewed had no involvement in gangs and only 25 claimed they were gang members. As the report contains no systematic attempt to define what they meant by the term ‘gang’ and where it appears the term was self defined by the women interviewed, it is difficult to know whether we are dealing here with any one of the different types of street organisation profiled above. Much of the report is based on opinion and hearsay rather than personal experience and the report makes no reference to research conducted with male gang members to triangulate research findings. As to the ‘key finding’ that gang affiliated girls may attend grammar and all girl schools, here again no evidence is provided in the report to substantiate this claim. None of this of course means that gang members might not target grammar school girls or that immature grammar school girls may be attracted to ‘bad’ men, only that stronger evidence must be presented if such a claim is to be taken seriously.

Given that gangs are populated by men who are violent it might well be the case that the sexual abuse of women by gangs does occur, but to suggest that rape is a culture or ‘weapon of choice’ of gangs is to advance a claim that is not supported by the evidence presented. To begin with, it could be observed that the overwhelming majority of rape cases in London are perpetrated by individuals and duos, not groups or gangs. The overwhelming number of cases will involve family or friends known to the victim and stranger rape is very rare. As we have seen above while multiple perpetrator rapes occur it is by no means always the case that ‘gangs’ are responsible. As Horvath and Kelly (2009) point out there is currently ‘no evidence to suggest that perpetrators with these [gang] characteristics make up the majority of multiple perpetrator rape suspects’. As recent cases testify other groups of men, such as professional footballers, have also been implicated in such abuse. It is inappropriate to assume that offenders who commit multiple perpetrator rapes are necessarily part of a ‘gang’ or ‘group’ (as groupings may also form spontaneously). A recent study by Hauffe and Porter (2009) also suggested that the relationship between young people and multiple perpetrated rape is similar to that of other youth co-offending, being that people in this age group spend more
time in groups, are vulnerable to peer pressures, lack the skills to negotiate dysfunctional group behaviour and/or use their peer group to develop social identity and status\textsuperscript{58}.

More importantly, we should be careful not to reduce the explanation of sexual violence, proliferated by men from all sectors of society, to that of ‘gang culture’. Such conjecture and reductionist thinking negates the real issues involved and by so doing obscures an examination of the basis for such behaviour. Reframing sexual violence as a gang-related issues may therefore be counterproductive to effectively addressing the very complex issue of sexual abuse and rape\textsuperscript{59}.

Rather than lay the blame for multiple perpetrator rape and the sexual abuse of women at the door of the gang it is best to define the issue as one that pertains to highly problematic gender relations and the forms of violent ‘lawless masculinity’ these promote\textsuperscript{60}. Again, the issues here are about the sexual mores that prevail in some communities and to reduce this to a problem of gangs is misguided and dangerous. For interventions to be effective policies need to reach beyond the gang to target the wider population of young people (young men but also women) who are socialised into what remains a pathological system of gender norms. As with the claims that have been made about ‘weapon dogs’, the relationship between sexual violence and young people warrants systemic and systematic research, rather than supposition, upon which appropriate policies and interventions may be based.

**REVIEWING THE EVIDENCE**

In summary, gang violence is serious and can include the use of weapons. The violence provoked is less likely to be driven forward however by organised gangs. It is rather the volatile, febrile nature of the violent street world which gangs inhabit that creates the context which provokes their formation and persistence. While gang members may own ‘status’ dogs, as yet there is no compelling evidence to support the claim that the many problems posed by these dogs and specifically their owners can be reduced back to a problem of gangs. Nor are claims to the effect that gangs are engaged in the systematic rape of girls, their girlfriends and mothers supported by credible evidence.

As we have also seen from this review, while gangs can certainly perpetrate violence and use weapons, the violence they use and the weapons they carry are also used by a range of other groups and individuals. There remains, as such, an excess to the violence that is not gang related. While policies need to be developed to address the real risks gangs present it is irresponsible to concentrate on this constituency at the expense of considering the wider and serious levels of violence that occur among other groups and individuals. Doing so merely highlights one small part of the street jigsaw at the expense of ignoring other parts of the puzzle, how they relate to each other and the significant big picture.
SECTION 2: RETHINKING THE FOCUS

FROM THE GANG TO THE VIOLENT STREET PERIPHERY

As the section above concludes, to focus on the gang alone and see this as the only group that requires an intervention would be to make a mistake. It would also be a mistake to condense all the problems of urban violence into a problem of gangs. As we have seen gangs are not the only group that engages in violence, nor is the problem of weaponised violence a problem of groups alone as many other violent and volatile individuals are also involved. The policy implications of this are profound because these findings challenge the current focus which is to lay the blame for serious and weaponised violence in London at the door of the gang.

Despite the fact that the problem of urban violence extends beyond the gang, intervention policy runs a real risk of being reduced to an issue of gang suppression programmes. While gang suppression is certainly justified it could be observed that such intervention alone will not prevent interpersonal violence; it will not prevent drug distribution; it will not prevent young women being sexually exploited; nor will it address the problems posed by ‘status dogs’.

Rather than focus on a particular group and see this as the solution to the problem of violence, it would be far more sensible to focus instead upon the space where gangs and other violent groups and individuals are to be found - the violent street world where they intersect. In what follows we consider the structure of this street world to identify its constituent features. One way to understand this violent world is to conceive it as possessing a constitutive core and an outlying periphery.61

PROFILE THE CORE

The core will typically be populated by older men ‘who do the business’ of crime and who operate either as individual professional criminals or as members of more organised crime groups. Entry to the core would appear to be dependent on a number of factors: the ability to demonstrate entrepreneurial flair and ability, the ability to be well connected to local and national criminal networks, a capacity to be violent and ruthless but also to control the exercise of violence appear essential characteristics. Most who operate within the core have grown up as part of the periphery but have grown out of it. Instead of drifting out of crime and into law abiding behaviour (as most do) they have become ‘differentially associated’13 into the criminal underworld, accumulating criminal contacts and criminals skills along the way.55

PROFILE THE PERIPHERY

The periphery is populated by younger, more volatile young men (and occasionally women) along with various individuals (such as lone drug dealers) who have some involvement in crime and the criminal economy. It is within the periphery that we will tend to find gangs and delinquent peer
groups. Here we find volatile, fluid, messy, amorphous and chaotic networks, rather than organised corporate entities. Here violence is less predictable and more impulsive and situational. People in the periphery are also more likely to be more psychologically unstable and immature than those found in the core and are subject, as such, to low levels of social and self control. In the periphery business imperatives and personal motives often blur together with fatal consequences.

RELATIONS BETWEEN THE CORE AND PERIPHERY

Different forms of relationships exist between the core and the periphery. This relationship can veer along a continuum from mutual support and help to ruthless exploitation.

MUTUAL SUPPORT

While by no means under the explicit direction of professional criminals or organised crime groups it is evident that there are often close ties that bind groups in the periphery to the groups that occupy the core (to which many younger people may be related). Younger siblings of established gang members may form youthful equivalents of the groups populated by their brothers, while older gang members may subcontract out lower level, street based work to them or, on occasion, set them up to conduct illicit business.

INSTRUMENTAL RELATIONSHIPS

Relations between the core and periphery can also be of a more instrumental kind. This is particularly the case in the drug retail sector where individual drug dealers will purchase illegal drugs from a higher level dealer in the core for street level distribution. Here the relationship, usually between people who have grown up together or live in the same area, is of a strictly business kind.
where drugs are exchanged for money. The real risks and dangers associated with the violence that often accompanies this sector are thereby negated as younger people take the risks involved.

**Exploitative Relationships**

Relations can be of a more violent and exploitative kind. Where people are known and trusted deals are typically honoured on the basis that you ‘don’t jack your peeps’ (you do not rob from your own). Relations can however be far more coercive and some young people (whom Pitts calls ‘reluctant gangsters’[3]) may be forced into doing particular jobs for older gang members who might also prey on young, vulnerable women. Those who betray the older and established criminals (for example, by running up a significant drug debt) may be violently assaulted or kidnapped. The same can happen to people who have their drugs confiscated by the police.

To summarise the implications of this for practitioners:

- it is not enough to focus solely on the gang as violence and weapon use cannot be addressed through gang suppression alone;

- the focus needs to be located on the violent street world where gangs and other violent groups and individuals intersect which has two spheres:
  - an inner core populated by professional criminals and organised crime groups locked into national and international networks; and
  - a volatile street periphery populated by gangs and delinquent peer groups along with other individuals;

- intervention efforts as such must address the street periphery as a totality - not focus attention on one part of it (the gang) at the expense of the whole (individuals, peer groups and gangs).

**General Principles of Intervention**

If the problem of the street cannot be seen solely as a problem of gangs then a comprehensive and holistic intervention strategy needs to address the risks posed by all troublesome groups within the volatile street periphery, not just the gang. Applying a one-size-fits-all model as an intervention strategy will not work.

For the most part confronting organisations which have some involvement in crime will not require importing gang ‘solutions’ created in other societies which are very different from the UK. Overall, the aim of interventions must be to strengthen existing provision within each borough, not create new tiers of intervention which then become expensive, self serving industries.

Given that the violence of the street periphery is not a problem of gang members alone interventions should target the criminal behaviour of all the individuals and groups within the periphery. This should involve using existing criminal ordinances and being cautious about erroneously treating offences as gang issues when the relevant evidence does not merit such an assumption. To put this...
another way, care should be taken not to make the mistake of conceding to the gang an importance and significance it often does not possess.

IDENTIFYING WHAT WORKS

Care should be taken to discover what interventions, or features of interventions, do and do not work. Projects, as such, need to be rigorously evaluated to demonstrate that they are successful and effective in achieving their targets. There cannot be evidence free zones particularly in the context where policy should be evidence led. Finally, as individual communities are unique, what appears overall to be similar problems between them may stem from different causes or, because of the make-up of the community, require a different response. What works in one area may not work, or indeed may be counter-productive, in another area. Therefore, importing models and projects successful in other areas (including American models) to London may be inappropriate and outcomes unlikely to be replicated.

Targets pertaining to what works should be meaningful and care should be taken that activity is not masquerading as performance. The value of programmes is not necessarily locked in explicit outcomes but works on many levels in different ways. Strategies and protocols should be flexible to allow agencies and services to develop organically in response to the needs of the young people they work with.

 LOCATING EFFORT AND ALLOCATING SERVICES

Interventions directed at peer groups that are not systematically criminal need to emphasise proactive and informal interventions over the use of repressive sanctions. The kind of work conducted by youth workers, conflict mediators, arbitrators and community workers would all fall within this category as they presuppose some kind of conversation and negotiation with groups and their members. Conversely, for those who are more criminally inclined such as gangs and organised crime groups, the situation would reverse and favour official law enforcement over non-repressive interventions. The rationale for this is simple. As organised crime groups comprise career criminals who cause high levels of social harm, evade detection and are committed to their vocation of crime, informal interventions are unlikely to be successful. Peer groups however are composed of law-abiding individuals and low-level offenders and treating them as competent career criminals is likely to criminalise those to whom the label ought not to be deployed.

In what follows an overview of the intervention strategies for confronting different groups is outlined. Given that the audience for this report is practitioners who will have a remit to work with gangs and volatile peer groups (rather than organised and professional criminals) the interventions described apply specifically to these groups.
The hierarchy of the threat posed by each group can be conceptualised in different ways dependent on the purpose of classification, as demonstrated in the pyramid of risk below. It is useful to note that while peer groups and gangs (often indistinguishable from one another) pose the highest risk to public order given their street visibility, in terms of social harm it is the organised crime groups which pose the greater threat given the seriousness of the crimes in which they are involved.

This bears relevance to designing interventions strategies and programmes which, in order to be fit for purpose, should be developed with awareness for the following:

- Where risk is high interventions should be tailored to address particular problems posed by different groups. For example, if the high risk pertains to fear of crime, more needs to be done on the level of social integration and building community relations, whereas if the high risk pertains to serious offending a tailored law-enforcement strategy is more appropriate;

- where risk is low interventions should be general and generic, with care taken not to unnecessarily marginalise nor criminalise low-risk groups;

- interventions are required at each level both to inhibit delinquency and upward migration to more serious levels of criminality and violence;
• interventions targeted at particular groups, rather than social problems, can have negative unintended consequences, such as glamorising gang membership or illegal dog ownership;
• addressing the problems posed by one group in isolation is unlikely to have a significant impact on crime reduction; and
• interventions aimed at peer groups and gangs will not appreciably reduce the serious and serial offences which cause the most harm to society.

LOCAL PARTNERSHIP WORKING

Intervening in gangs requires effective partnership working between the police, community safety officers, housing officers, social services and, importantly, youth workers. Ideally this work needs to be integrated at the policy making centre within boroughs by Community Safety Partnerships and at a pan London Level by London Councils. At the point of practice intervention effort would be implemented through joined up partnership working by frontline officers working collaboratively in problem solving teams. The intersection between partners is represented in the diagram below.

Rather than aspire to build dedicated ‘gang busting’ teams the issue of confronting the street periphery ought to be dealt with by multi agency problem solving teams established within the areas where street based groups are
known to operate. These will be best placed to collate community intelligence and to respond rapidly to street based violence.

Only if gangs are identified as armed or engaged in patterns of violence that exceed the capacity of local teams should specialist operational units be deployed to confront them. Rather than being established along the lines of American models this must simply be a mechanism for drawing together specialist problem-solving teams with a mandate and remit to intervene decisively if gang behaviour is reaching pathological dimensions. It can be anticipated that such teams will have the skills and resources to enable the administration and operation of surveillance, intelligence gathering, interventions and effective enforcement of sanctions.

INTELLIGENCE GATHERING

Given the fluid nature of the street periphery, different groups within each London borough are likely to be in a constant state of flux, real problems follow in trying to obtain hard, reliable and up to date intelligence. One difficulty is that not only is life on the street changing constantly, events occur spontaneously (in ‘fast time’) and unpredictably, while agencies tend to operate in slow bureaucratic time. A further problem is that information gathered by different agencies (each corresponding to small incomplete parts of the street jigsaw) is often not consolidated by one single organisation. Such information therefore can neither accurately present the bigger picture of causes, associations, consequences and outcomes, nor be examined to produce meaningful, contextual intelligence.

In this context the following processes need to occur:

To gain hard intelligence in real time officers need to be well-established in these communities. They need to be aware of the contexts which precipitate violent events - know why they happened and who was involved.

- If the gang issue is a real problem in particular wards and/or boroughs all relevant agencies should meet to form a problem solving group where information on gangs and gang members is shared and exchanged. Co-working and co-presence and cooperation are important.
- Given the speed at which volatile street worlds change such meetings need to be regular.
- If interventions are to be effective tactical information will need to be accumulated from a variety of sources including gang affiliated young people, their families and the community as a whole.

This in turn presupposes that there are multiple contact points where such interventions will be provided and that these constituencies trust enforcement agencies enough to provide the information.

INAPPROPRIATE INTERVENTIONS

It is important to ensure that the intervention efforts are well thought through. When developing interventions it is important to consider the following factors:
- Invoking punitive sanctions as the primary solution to a gang problem may be short lived if they are not mobilised smartly (proportionately and appropriately) as part of a wider more balanced intervention programme.

- Invoking contradictory responses will undermine the success of all efforts. For example if youth workers are trying to build relations of trust with a group in order to transform its behaviour, suddenly finding itself the object of a law and order crack down will undermine both efforts and community relations.

- Treating a disorganised street gang as if it has a corporate structure, or assuming that the distribution of illegal drugs is controlled by integrated criminal gangs, are not models fit for purpose. The lesson here is in deriving policy interventions from appropriate and reliable resources and evidence, rather than from gang talking stereotypes.

- Providing services that are under-resourced or which only offer short term intervention will result in limited effectiveness and temporary outcomes. These interventions are likely to result in the young people in question merely returning to the violent street periphery from which they came. For example, media based interventions which develop videos and DVDs designed to confront gangs and gang membership are, on their own, unlikely to have any effect on gang members. While such interventions may have a short term effect on some individuals these are unlikely to be gang members who are often excluded from the arenas in which these interventions are presented. Further, such programmes can have unintended consequences of equipping gang members with the skills and technology enabling them to advertise their violent activities on formats such as YouTube.

**SECTION 3: DEVELOPING AND DELIVERING INTERVENTIONS**

**DEVELOPING GOOD PRACTICES**

In order to design appropriate and effective intervention strategies what is first required is an understanding of groups and group related activities from which relevant issues can be accurately identified. Developing solutions and approaches to delivery should be borne out of theoretically sound and evidenced conceptual backgrounds, as set out in the previous sections of this report.

In order to outline possible solutions to street violence at regional, cross-borough and local levels we have investigate a range of interventions aimed at confronting group offending in the UK and particularly in London. To gain insight into governance and managerial issues we held meetings with five local council representatives from different London boroughs to discuss the role of officials and representatives. For an understanding of issues in delivery of programmes and appreciation of ‘what works’ we undertook 13 interviews of practitioners / facilitators delivering interventions in and across different London boroughs, comprising the case studies at Appendix A: Intervention Programme Profiles. The following discussion and recommendations is derived from this body of information together with findings of our prior research.

Although interventions are primarily informed from the bottom-up (from research and practice) their implementation and success is principally directed from the top-down. Those in governance not only create policy, but through their management can make or break the success of delivering policies. It
is from this perspective that we set out our recommendations for designing and delivering street violence interventions.

THE ROLE OF LONDON COUNCILS

London Councils is an autonomous cross-party organisation which works closely with central government, the Greater London Authority (including the Metropolitan Police Authority, London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority), the Mayor of London and London boroughs, together with private and third sectors to represent all 32 London boroughs and the City of London. London Councils aims to ensure that ‘local government has the freedom, resource, power and capacity to make life better for Londoners’66. It promotes councils’ leadership of local communities and is instrumental in both challenging and supporting local government to improve performance and efficiency. This includes advocating for resource provisions and providing a mechanism for sharing of practice, knowledge and resources between boroughs to provide efficient and effective services to Londoners.

London Councils commissions and funds organisations to: provide opportunities, reduce social exclusion, poverty and disadvantage, and promote equality and reduce discrimination, across London. This work includes supporting research and policy to provide communities with social services (including housing, health care, employment and regeneration), funding research to provide an evidential basis on which grounds decisions regarding the allocation of resources can be influenced, lobbying for policies to sustain and improve London (including environmental protection and providing housing, transport and amenities), and promoting and funding evaluations to ensure effectiveness and cost-efficiency of services.

Advocating and lobbying for: local government finance (i.e. influencing allocation of funding), economic development (i.e. promoting regeneration), health and social services (i.e. addressing relative deprivation), crime reduction and public protection (i.e. improving community safety and accountability), and culture and tourism (i.e. providing opportunities and amenities), London Councils is in a unique position to collate information from these discrete directorates. London Councils is therefore able to examine relationships between sectors and provide a holistic perspective67. This organisation thereby plays a key role in tackling a range of issues affecting young people in London ensuring cross-borough continuity and consistency where appropriate and tailored provisions where necessary.

London Councils also provides an important service in helping to fund key evaluation research aimed at establishing which forms of intervention work in practice and which features of particular programmes enable their success. Too often policy communities tend to talk past each other and this is not beneficial.

In a cosmopolitan city like London where different interventions are practised in different boroughs the forum London Councils provides, which brings authorities, practitioners and academics together to discuss the changing face of violent crime, is pivotal. London Councils is in a unique position to:

- Create dialogues between those making policy and funding decisions in governance, those in a position to investigate the causes of street violence and the efficacy of programmes through research, and those who confront the realities of service delivery and what works in practice.
• Provide an overview and evaluation of services in a forum in which partnerships can cultivate relationships and develop protocols and strategies for efficient and effective collaboration and devolution.

• Generate an holistic, evidence-based synopsis of the causes of street violence and its correlation to wider social issues, such as deprivation and exclusion, to develop approaches and practices which provide a proportionate solution to appropriately confronting street violence.

• Establish incentives for partnership working to provide solutions which fit comprehensive political priorities, improve co-ordination between departments and organisations and deliver cost-efficient quality of service.

**Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs)**

Authorities who have a statutory duty to work in partnership are Councils, Police Forces, the Police Authority, the Fire and Rescue Authority, the Primary Care Trusts in England and the Probation Trusts. Co-operating bodies who typically support CSP processes include: NHS Trusts, NHS Foundation Trusts, Registered Social Landlords, proprietors of independent schools, governing bodies of schools and further education institutions; but there is scope for any agency considered appropriate to be incorporated into CSPs. Development and implementation of youth services and interventions in the street periphery by and large fall under the jurisdiction of CSPs which should involve complex networks of local agencies who form purposeful relationships to achieve common objectives. In a context where much of what has been written about gangs and said about them owes less to proportion and much to an inflated rhetoric it is CSPs who have the power to ensure that a sense of proportion returns to the ‘gang’ debate where currently this is lacking.

Her Majesty's Government ‘National Community Safety Plan 2008-11’ lists the approaches available to local partners to reduce / prevent crime and increase community safety as being (1) early prevention; (2) prevention; (3) enforcement; (4) reducing reoffending; (5) substance misuse; and (5) social inclusion. To tackle problems of, and associated with, crime and violence in the street periphery the primary goals of CSPs should be social inclusion and prevention (which addressing substance misuse may be seen a part of), coupled with enforcement. Despite many official publications providing guidance and strategies for effective partnership working particular challenges remain to be overcome in joining up approaches and practices of CSP agencies to effectively deal with the array of issues experienced by young people in the street periphery.

All agencies involved in CSPs should be familiar with, and have an understanding, of the structure of partnerships. Leadership roles should be clear and it is recommended that Local Authorities be in a position to assume or delegate such functions as they have the capacity to oversee local statutory and voluntary organisations who each deal separately with particular facets of causes or effects of crime and violence in the street periphery. It is imperative that all partners are aware of whom has responsibility for development and/or delivery of all services delivered to young people and that each partner has a clear sense of their strategic role in relation to dealing with young people involved in the street world. This clarity will help to avoid fragmentation of services and requires communication at all levels of the CSP structure so that a holistic service can be delivered to engender the trust of alienated young people in service providers. Those involved in decision-
making should be skilled in presenting and interpreting information (i.e. employing critical thinking and avoiding confirmation bias) and the decision-making process should be collaborative, in the interests of communities and based on relevant and reliable information about the lives, experiences and robust research regarding young people in the street periphery.

A culture shift away from targets towards outcomes would help to alleviate the dilution of focus and co-operation which stems from the often conflicting targets of individual agencies. Issues affecting young people and factors associated with crime and violence perpetrated in the street periphery are everyone’s problems. Bearing this in mind may reduce the incentives for agencies to evade responsibility and help to streamline services so that disorganised and disruptive groups of young people in the street periphery can receive a consistent message and continuous service from agencies to provide some stability in their often insecure and unpredictable lives.

CONTRIBUTION OF ELECTED OFFICIALS AND LEAD OFFICERS

Elected officials and lead officers have a vital role to play in confronting the violence posed by groups and individuals who operate in the street periphery. Their role works at two levels: firstly, ensuring that effective upstream work is directed at confronting the deeper causes of violence; and secondly, supporting the reactive effort directed at addressing the violence of the street. Their positions afford them authority in policy-making and management of resources and delivery, in terms of which they are expected to advocate for and support the communities to which they are held accountable. These representatives are in a position to address the polarisation of policy and to help link and integrate efforts in prevention, reaction and sanctioning which effect the success of interventions in the street periphery.

REPRESENTATION AND ADVOCACY

The National Census of Local Authority Councillors 2008 found that 64.8% of councillors were male and 30.8% female, the average age of councillors had increased from 55.4 in 1997 to 58.8 in 2008, 96.6% were white and 3.4% came from ethnic minority backgrounds. The census showed a clear disjunction between the demographics of communities and their representatives in terms of gender, ethnicity and age. One of the consequences of this lack of representation of all sections of the community is that young people, particular those in the street periphery, are often not seen as being part of their communities. Publications such as ‘Communities in Control: Real People, Real Power’ (2008) and ‘Report on a National Policy Round Table: Gang, Gun and Knife Crime: Seeking Solutions’ (2008) recommend that women and young people of all ethnicities should be encouraged to be active citizens and take up civil roles. One of the ways in which young people can be encouraged to get involved is through programmes for them to shadow government ministers and supporting their involvement in developing and commissioning services. Democratic decision-making and community governance first requires consultation with all members of communities and reference to appropriate sources of information. Widening the demographic basis
of representation puts agents in contact with the street world and such proximity can positively help inform their approaches. This strategy also has the potential to actively include young people, encouraging their migration out of the street periphery and into their communities.

Elected officials and lead officers play a crucial role in balancing the interests of many stakeholders working in partnerships. What may be helpful, particularly in encouraging social inclusion of alienated young people, is incorporation of a philosophy and attitude of care into strategies on which recruitment, training, support, development and delivery should be based. Such focus on care of the client (whether these are communities, another agencies, groups or individuals) has the potential to result in improved quality and continuity of services. The point here is that strategies should be care-driven, not target-driven, and based on adequate robust risk plans. Young people in the street periphery can be very astute and tend to be distrustful of a society and its agencies which they feel have already let them down. Their often chaotic and emotive experiences make them particularly perceptive of, and susceptible to, negative attitudes, prejudice and discrimination. A care-driven approach, even as the underlying philosophy of enforcement, is more likely to engender their trust and elicit their cooperation and participation in their communities and in services / interventions.

Two areas perhaps neglected by officials and officers are the basis on which personnel are recruited to work in particular sectors and the training which they receive. Many practitioners we spoke to believe that the effectiveness of partnerships is often dependant on the personal characteristics of the staff employed by statutory agencies. Where staff have a sense of responsibility and concern they tend to be more proactive in seeking relevant information and likely to engage in creative problem-solving. Many of the organisations we contacted advised that they recruit on the basis not only of qualifications but also select those applicants who demonstrate interest and care for the young people they dealt with. During interviews with practitioners practices which were positively commented on and recommended included prioritising comprehensive training of staff members on policies, procedures and practices and team working and providing access to guidance and instruction on how to engage with young people. Practitioners were of the view that these example of good practices enable genuine and positive relationship building, between colleagues and with clients, and provide practitioners / facilitators with the necessary tools not only to carry out their roles, but also to do so to the best of their abilities. The strategy here is, again, to enable organisations to provide seamless and quality services to provide stable networks of support to address the multitude of factors influencing the segregation and volatility of life in the street periphery.

Knowledge base and consultation
Public discourse on gangs and youth violence has been accused as being ‘at best confusing and at worst actively detrimental’. In the context of what can be seen as a moral panic around gangs, elected officials and lead officers need to ensure that they do not mobilise inappropriate language to discuss the real problems of the street and care must be taken to ensure that public statements are measured and proportionate. In the context where a moral panic about gangs is ongoing statements
Independent organisations are often in a position to provide holistic client-centred services based on ‘what works’ due to flexibility in approaches and strategies which are not informed by individual agency targets.

Practitioners’ views

If policy is to be evidence based then officials must ensure that they are appropriately briefed about the problems of the street periphery and have a detailed understanding of the current efforts being taken to address it. Sources of knowledge vary but should include liaising directly with community safety officers and practitioners who directly work with those in the street periphery. Community safety officers typically have an informed overview of the street world in the boroughs where they work while practitioners who engage with young people in the street periphery are aware not only of the problems and the realities of the street world which need to be negotiated, but of these young peoples’ capacities as well. Practitioners are therefore an invaluable resource to learn about and understand the street periphery and should be afforded the opportunity to contribute to development of approaches and strategies.

Elected officials should also ensure that they are acquainted with the relevant academic literature and police intelligence. In the case of elected officials they also need to ensure they consult actively with the communities affected by groups like gangs and young people themselves. Members of the community, which includes young people in the street periphery and their families, should also be involved in developing solutions to their own problems. Consultation with those who are recipients of services could assist in programmes being developed in a meaningful way. Services which are informed by the client are more likely to empower them and be sensitive to their requirements and the particular obstacles which they need to negotiate / overcome in order to exit the street world.

**MANAGEMENT AND DELIVERY**

**PARTNERSHIPS AND SUPPORT**

In order to develop and deliver holistic strategies and services to a disorganised, fragmented and deprived street periphery, collaboration between organisations is essential. Partnerships need to be extensive, integrating a range of statutory, private and voluntary organisations based on understanding of the complexity of issues relating to the street periphery and awareness of the impact of involvement in different facets of people’s lives in the street world. Partnerships need to be formed on the basis of which organisations are appropriate to involve to effectively address the risks posed by the street periphery. For example, enforcing dispersion orders will have no long-term effect if young people are not in conjunction given access to appropriate amenities and programmes which address their attitudes and behaviour. Which organisations to include in partnerships also needs to show consideration of those organisations which may be effected by the delivery or outcomes of programmes. As an example, Territorial Support Group (TSG) deployment to a critical incident may demand subsequent involvement of housing, health and/or education services; while providing young people with education and skills is futile if they do not subsequently have access to employment. As life in the street world is volatile partnerships need to be flexible, able to alter or adapt to the needs of particular people in, and communities affected by, the street periphery. Agencies should also have procedures in place to enable their responses to
be adaptable to unpredictable outcomes and unintended consequences of strategies and interventions.

**Reactive Efforts**

Councillors and officers are in a position to direct and manage targeted preventative and enforcement interventions and to play a central role in joining up agencies and approaches. Representatives should make every effort to ensure that the response to violence in the street periphery is appropriate and embrace their role in engendering relationships between agencies dealing with young people in this sector. To manage the chaotic street world councillors and officers should proactively facilitate the development and implementation of standardised communication and information sharing protocols, for developing intelligence, successful practice and effective solutions. Many practitioners experience a disjunction between policy and practice regarding the extent to which organisations actually implement protocols and procedures when responding to incidents involving young people in the street periphery. Councillors and officers should therefore take seriously their ability to influence the procedures and practices of organisations. All agencies involved in managing the street periphery should be required to consider the impact and consequences of their interventions on the community and other agencies and to liaise with appropriate partners (such as community safety officers).

An inescapable consequence of addressing the problems posed by the street periphery through the mobilisation of punitive sanctions is that many young people may find themselves imprisoned. While serious violence will invariably warrant such an outcome, it could be noted that the prison is an incubation space where radicalisation, gang culture and gang membership are most likely to flourish. Prison is also an expensive option. As such elected representatives need as such to make concerted efforts to ensure that young people should be given every available opportunity, including early interventions and noncustodial sentences, to reform and conform before being incarcerated. Given that many young people who engage in crime and violence in the street periphery often derive from chaotic family backgrounds, many are often left with no alternative but to return to the very environment which supported the lifestyle which led them in custody. Officials and officers should therefore focus on developing meaningful programmes which facilitate ex-offenders reintegration into their communities and provide them with necessary resources that enable them to lead a stable life, such as housing and employment.

**Proactive Efforts**

If the wider aim of intervention is to reduce and prevent self destructive behaviour more will be required than investing in reactive efforts. Reaction alone typically addresses symptoms while proactive efforts are more adept to confronting deeper causes. A multitude of factors including poverty, neglect, unemployment and deprivation result in anti social and criminal behaviour in the street periphery. To be effective official policies and strategies therefore need to reflect the multi-dimensional nature of street violence through balancing preventative and enforcement activities and linking these
activities to the deeper causes that help create it including entrenched deprivation and unemployment. To do this, officials and officers need to bring together the full range of partners involved with young people to simultaneously address all factors contributing to street violence. Although for administrative purposes services are typically compartmentalised into discrete departments (i.e. housing, health, education, employment, youth justice), for confronting the issues pertaining to young people and their behaviour in the street periphery, it is more appropriate, and indeed helpful, to ensure that service provision is interconnected. One way to ensure this is to ensure that all elected officials are not only familiar with Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act (which obligates all public authorities to place a concern with confronting youth offending at the core of their activities) but that all agencies reflect this in their practices.

Concerted steps also need to be taken to deal with wider social and socio-economic conditions that create the preconditions out of which the violence of the street periphery reproduces itself. Unfortunately, the socio-economic factors that promote such behaviour continue to persist despite ongoing regeneration effort. London’s poorest areas remain poor; within such areas we witness the intergenerational reproduction of poverty and high levels of youth unemployment; while upward mobility for the poorest has virtually ceased. Coupled with social polarisation in a society where inequality has widened, these factors all help create the basis for the violence that emanates within the street periphery. These are difficult issues to address but without commitment to a long term strategy which aims to address them, violent groups like gangs will invariably emerge and reproduce themselves.

RESOURCE ALLOCATION

Officials and officers hold important functions in ensuring that the funding necessary to confront the street periphery is effectively funded. This means ensuring that funding streams are secure, sustainable, long term and which support initiatives which have been demonstrated to work. It could be noted that in many cases the funding of projects do not conform to this model. As practitioners observed, too often, funding is short term, piecemeal and often used to support fashionable new projects at the expense of established ones. Representatives should provide a quality assurance role holding intervention outcomes to account against stated goals. Evidence suggests that there needs to be better communication between government and funding bodies to ensure that funding is allocated to appropriate people in those places which have the greatest need.

It could be noted that it costs approximately £170k to build one prison place and £41k per annum to incarcerate one person. As suggested by the Prison Reform Trust (2009), intervention programmes cost considerably less and investing this money in delivering comprehensive and integrated services capable of making a meaningful difference to the lives of young people in the street periphery offers value for money. For the cost of one year in prison two jobs could be created or fifty young people provided with support. Such a strategy would not only save monetary costs, but would be more likely to reduce offending and offending, fear of crime and promote social inclusion thereby reducing the social harm resultant of crime and violence in the street periphery.
CONFRONTING THE STREET PERIPHERY IN PRACTICE

FORMS OF INTERVENTIONS

As observed above there is no magic bullet that will solve the problem of the street periphery. Nor can one standard model be applied to reduce its violence. Solutions require the integration of a range of programmes and these must aim both to confront the symptoms of violence as well as address the deeper causes of it.

Organisations have opportunities to intervene at many different levels. Types of interventions can be categorised into standard, general and targeted interventions and these should be viewed on a continuum supporting and encouraging social inclusion of those in the street periphery. The first level of intervention comprises standard social services which, if adequate and effective, should reduce the requirement at other preventative and reactive levels as young people would be less likely to find themselves inhabiting the street world. The next tier of interventions involve general early interventions which should be accessible to all young people and their families with particular attention paid to allocating resources to deprived areas where young people are more likely to engage in anti social behaviour and violence located in the street periphery. For those young people assessed as being at risk of offending, or already engaging in low-level offending, more tailored and targeted preventative interventions are required to confront particular problems with these individuals, and if appropriate their groups, to prevent them migrating from the street periphery towards the core. The final strata in the catalogue of available interventions involve enforcement effort directed to confront those prolific offenders who have not responded to preventative interventions. In our parlance this would include career criminals and serious violent offenders located towards the core in the street ecology. In other words, interventions must operate on different levels, with prevention efforts located in the street periphery and enforcement efforts located at the core.
As we have seen, the risks associated with, and needs of, young people located in the street periphery are multi-dimensional and support networks therefore need to incorporate services at all levels of intervention - from standard to specialist as well as from social to personal - to address the variety of factors which precipitate street violence. To reduce risk factors and enhance protective factors associated with the street periphery organisations supporting young people need to be flexible and dynamic to adapt to a constantly changing street world. As well as leading unpredictable lives, young people in the street periphery do not always have the knowledge, experience or resources to engage with agencies and services in a conventional manner and it is at times the structure and organisation of services which also limits their access to support and mainstream inclusion. When confronting the street periphery agencies should consider themselves ‘learning organisations’ and be structured in a way which allows them to adapt to the needs of their clients, rather than clients adapting to structures or facilities of organisations.

**GENERAL INTERVENTIONS**

**PRINCIPLES AND AIMS OF INTERVENTIONS**

Most young people are engaged in peer groups and not systemically involved in crime and violence. As these young people are predominantly law abiding appropriate generic services and early / preventative interventions should aim to confront the commission of anti social behaviour and prevent individuals migrating into a higher risk category. Although peer groups sometimes occasion fear in the adult world the level of fear is often disproportionate to the actual risk the group poses. As much of what these groups do is ‘hang around’ efforts need to be taken to address peer groups and the risks they pose in a proportionate non criminalising way. The aim of interventions must be to encourage law abiding behaviour and impede delinquent behaviour without antagonising the group to the extent that its members come to distrust enforcement agencies. If the group members perceive themselves to be a ‘suspect community’ they, and indeed their parents, will be unlikely to support enforcement efforts or cooperate with enforcement agencies, who rely on communities to report information about crimes. This requires front line officers being sensitive to the nature of groups and member’s behaviour.

**MODES OF INTERVENTION**

Confronting the risks posed by young people in volatile peer groups can best be addressed by developing an appropriate and consistent response to their presence.

Interventions that ought to be avoided include:

- Attempts to treat peer groups as if they are gangs.
- Mobilising indiscriminate stop and search of young people.
- Automatically dispersing peer groups when they congregate.
- Treating members of peer groups in an aggressive and disrespectful manner.
Useful general intervention practices associated with engaging young people and encouraging their continued prosocial behaviour include:

- Understanding the perspectives of young people and not disturbing or harassing groups of young people if they are not threatening others.
- Creating environments where peer groups may congregate safely. This means providing spaces where young people may come together without fear of being attacked by violent groups.
- Ensuring that there are positive activities available that young people can gain access to should they require. This includes ensuring that provisions are available at the time that young people are likely to be at leisure.
- Practitioners and mentors, trained in effective communication, engaging with and getting to know young people in their locality, treating them with respect and not means to an end (such as sources of police intelligence).
- Educating young people about the consequence of anti-social and offending behaviour to discourage young people from engaging in rule breaking.
- Broadening the network of support for young people by providing advice and support to parents/caregivers and schools.
- Engaging young people in their communities to build positive relationships between youth and statutory agencies and between young people and adults in their communities.
- Tolerating minor rule breaking which does not pose a serious risk and addressing problematic situations posed by young people and peer group in a measured way without invoking criminal sanctions unnecessarily.
- Mobilising sanctions to target and prevent delinquent behaviour rather than as a primary response to young people in groups.
- If a young person engages in a particular crime, such as street robbery, existing criminal justice sanctions should be used to address the offence which should not be treated as a group phenomenon unless there is objective evidence to suggest a collective enterprise.
- Being able to advocate for young people who are disadvantaged, discriminated against, unfairly treated by the adult world or victimised by violent groups.

Early intervention schemes

- Boy X, Growing Against Gangs (Lambeth), Junior Citizen, Knife Crime Workshop, Operation Trident (priority boroughs) and Stolen Lives are programmes that provide peer education to create awareness of the consequences of offending and violence and promote good decision-making and responsibility;
Young people require consistent and indefinite support not subject to arbitrary time frames or age limits.

Practitioners’ views

Case study example: Outside Chance developed their early intervention programme based on feedback from working with young offenders who commented they would have benefit from participation in a similar programme prior to becoming involved in offending behaviour.

Kickz and YOU London programmes are youth inclusion projects which provide activities for young people to develop character, encourage responsibility and engage young people in their communities;

Met-Track is a sports talent spotting programme which aims to provide young people with meaningful opportunities; and

Eternal Life Support Centre Parent Workshops provide the parents of young people with advice and support.

The majority of interventions being offered to young people in London however are targeted at those who have been identified as ‘at risk’ of offending or are already engaged in offending. This is unfortunate as providing more early interventions and better facilities to young people before they become involved in delinquent behaviour may negate their drift into crime while offering better value for money.

Delivering early interventions consistently to young people across London would obviously require extensive resources and major investment. In addition to improving the availability and quality of standard social services, some methods of facilitating widening participation in early intervention programmes are through encouraging young people to take up civic roles, activating members the community (including young people) to become involved in volunteering and incorporating education programmes and peer mentoring into school curricula. What would perhaps be most beneficial, in terms of long-term success of such projects, would be to ensure that they are delivered simultaneously across priority boroughs. Although there will always be a proportion of young people engaged in offending behaviour, proactively investing in young people before they become offenders may save greater future cost, monetarily and in terms of social harm.

TARGETED INTERVENTIONS

PRINCIPLES AND AIMS OF INTERVENTIONS

Gangs have a different relationship to crime and violence than peer groups. They commit more crime and violence. That said, for most of its existence the gang behaves in much the same way as a peer group and because of this most of the interventions listed for the peer group should also apply in the case of the gang. It is also important to remember that the problems posed by gangs and gang members stem less from the fact they are organised like corporations and far more from their social disorganisation. Such disorder makes gangs and the violence they perpetrate volatile and unpredictable. Targeted interventions should be directed at individuals and groups which pose higher risk in the street periphery – who are drifting towards to the core – for example, through engaging in serious offending.

Given the heightened risk posed by young people engaging in individual or collective crime / violence targeted intervention strategies need to be more resource intensive and integrated than that used to
confront peer groups. Interventions also need to work at a number of different levels and require an appropriate balance between prevention and enforcement, with reactive responses directed at addressing the risks posed by volatile individuals and groups as they occur in time and space. Responses also need to be balanced by a long term intervention strategy directed at addressing the social economic forces that create the preconditions for the formation of the violent street world where high risk individuals and groups, which include gangs and gang members, are to be found. In addition to factors relating to a preventative agenda, discussed above, elements out of which reactive strategies should be developed are discussed below.

There is no single approach that will solve the problems associated with high-risk individuals and groups in the street periphery. To manage the risks posed by this volatile street world requires a multi level intervention strategy adapted according to what is required and what works in relation to local situations in each borough. Currently interventions targeted at young offenders and gangs are grouped into three categories: ‘at risk’; gang-related; and offender-related. This is however not necessarily a useful typology as it separates issues which are essentially related – those in gangs or engaged in offending invariable experience the same as well as additional problems to those ‘at risk’. Such typology does not allow for an holistic approach which views interventions as operating on continuums of risk and offending and simultaneously at each level in the social world.

MODES OF INTERVENTIONS
Although targeted interventions are categorised and become more specialised as the perceived ‘risk’ of targeted young people increases, they should not be viewed as discrete or isolated from each other. In order to promote social justice all levels of social service provision, from the general (early intervention) through to the targeted (prevention) and more specialist (reaction and rehabilitation) interventions need to work in conjunction to interrupt offending behaviour in the street periphery. This requires interventions to be operating at social and individual levels from community reassurance to exit and reintegration strategies. Delivered in conjunction an appropriate variety of modes of targeted interventions will promote downward migration on the hierarchy of risk, for individuals and groups in the street periphery, in terms of harm and at the same time reduce fear of crime in the community.

COMMUNITY REASSURANCE
Violent events within a community can erode its social capital and raise fear of crime. Given this, in areas where violence occurs a community reassurance policy is required. While agencies such as the police now recognise the importance of a such an agenda sometimes the policies initiated to reassure the public are questionable. For example, the idea recently floated by the MPS to station armed patrols on the streets of some South London boroughs in order to prevent gun related violence was ill thought through. Whilst initiated as a community reassurance project this was without consideration for the possibility that the presence of armed police might raise insecurity. Another example would include using response units to maintain public order through indiscriminate stop and search practices without consultation with local officers, or considering the impact of such interventions on local communities and other agencies.
Issues of community reassurance in relation to the actual threat of the street periphery are particularly important if efforts in activating the community and neighbourhood capacity building (discussed below) are to be successful. Another way in which community reassurance can be promoted is through engendering trust by delivering consistent (within and across departments/agencies) and effective services which are client-focused (on the needs of individual users and the community) and care-driven.

**Activating the Community**

At their worst ‘gangs’ of young men ‘hanging around’ can intimidate bystanders and raise the fear of crime in a community. This, in turn, can threaten community cohesion and erode its capacity. Finding ways to mobilise the community and its members to take a stand against disruptive and violent individuals and groups and weapon use is therefore important. There is scope for similar programmes to be developed and run locally within boroughs. The vehicle for this can be events like a peace week and, as well as encouraging community involvement eliciting the cooperation of victims of gang violence and their families in delivering education programmes to young people may also be considered.

**Neighbourhood Capacity Building**

Violence in the street periphery forms in areas subject to concentrated disadvantage, where community capacity to confront violence may be low. It is therefore important to develop a capacity building effort in such communities. The aims of such a project must, as John Pitts notes, be to ‘reconstruct residents with each other but crucially with political and administrative networks, and social and vocational services able to ameliorate their isolation and develop their capacity to take joint action’

Projects could include developing key anchor organisations in poor areas where community members can meet with support services to develop community projects. Such projects can also be used as a way of promoting dialogue between often alienated young men and public authorities.

The Cultural Community Project run by the Hillingdon Police is a community engagement group designed to build relations of trust with local Somali women. Its aim is to develop a support network and to address their concerns regarding anti social behaviour associated with Khat (drug) houses in the area.

**Engagement Programmes**

Youth engagement programmes need to be developed in order to encourage and promote law abiding behaviour and discourage rule breaking on the part of violent young people located in the street periphery. In the first instance this can be accomplished by mobilising the same kind of interventions against criminal or violent groups as those listed for members of peer groups above. It is important therefore to have in place mechanisms that facilitate positive dialogue between group
members and established community projects and problem-solving teams.

The majority of targeted interventions delivered to ‘at risk’ young people in London are focused on engaging young people referred by statutory agencies in workshops which address risk factors and behaviour and/or provide positive activities.

- **Challenge and Support** provides sports education and leisure activities in tailored one-to-one and group sessions;
- the **Forward Steps Project** encourages responsibility through a media and arts based peer education programme;
- the **Turnaround Centre** is a multi-agency ‘one-stop-shop’ providing advice and links to services and activities (also self-referral); and
- the **Aspire Programme** provides group workshops and mentoring support to explore and address risk factors of offending.

As the street is often the preferred venue for criminal activity it would be prudent in the first instance to allocate youth workers to where people tend to congregate. Outreach youth worker facilities, supported by centre based workers, can be developed to engage with groups on site to make their street presence less threatening and could then be used as a basis for subsequently attempting to draw groups or individuals into centre based programmes.

The Youth Inclusion Programme (YIP) engages in outreach and detached work which targets 50 of the most ‘at risk’ young people in a neighbourhood to voluntarily engage with a key worker who helps them to address their attitudes and behaviour and engage them in skills training and positive activities.

Engagement programmes should be available either to work with high risk young people as individuals (mobilising tailored programmes) or, if identified as being involved in a gang as projects that work with that group as a collective (social inclusion programmes). The first type of programme is appropriate in the case of individuals who wish to change their lifestyle or leave their groups (such as YIP and mentoring programmes). The second is more useful if the aim is to confront the behaviour of a gang treated as a distinct grouping (such as YES and educational workshops).

Initiatives need to be accessible to the populations they seek to support. Facilities and services should be delivered at locations which are easy for young people to get to as well as at the times that the young people are available to engage in them. Arbitrary boundaries such as catchment areas or ‘hot spots’ can limit access to programmes which might be beneficial to young people from other boroughs (assuming that such cross-borough participation does not involve rival groups).
There are examples of sports initiatives, such as midnight basketball, football and boxing, being offered at convenient locations and times. What makes these attractive is that they are often available during those times when the population of the street periphery might be less usefully engaged and which corresponds with temporal increases in crime. These activities can serve as a mechanism for community involvement which builds relationships between young people, who might otherwise be hostile towards each other, their local community and law enforcement agencies. They can also function as a way of widening young people’s horizons which, if relative deprivation is part of the problem of those affiliated with gangs, may provide part of the solution.

Attention should also be paid to the nature of the spaces provided to young people to ensure that those spaces made available are not stigmatised by discrimination, criminalisation and gang affiliation.

**Developing Employment Opportunities**

The street periphery is often found in areas subject to high youth employment and in areas where, as a consequence, the illegal economy offers an alternative pathway into work. There is an American expression ‘the best cure for a bullet is a job’ and ensuring that the young people (in peer groups and gangs) who occupy this periphery are able to enter the world of paid work is essential. This is by no means easy to achieve because many people within the periphery will have experienced a poor relationship with education providers; many will not be well educated; and a number are quite likely to have been imprisoned which reduces their prospects further.

To engage young people in the street periphery education must be made relevant to their situation and they must believe it will equip them with vocational skills. Projects that provide this, along with entrepreneurial skills more generally need to be encouraged. While there are a few programmes run in London boroughs which offer residential at which skills are taught the availability of such interventions should be increased and need to be run in conjunction with route ways to employment which could include developing apprenticeships and internships.

Local authorities need to lead by example in creating job opportunities for young people and supporting private and public bodies to employ young offenders, such as encouraging local developers to engage in such programmes. Agencies should be creative in developing these opportunities as young people in the street world who have been alienated from conventional processes often make themselves unnecessarily unemployable. Sometimes elementary support, such as help changing their appearance and writing a CV, can vastly improve their chances of obtaining gainful employment.

**Conflict Management and Mediation**

For groups and individuals whose lives are often locked into violent conflict with others (as groups or as individuals) it is important to create structures of intervention which allows conflict to be dealt with.
with in ways that do not results in lethal outcomes. One possible solution would be to attempt to initiate peace between warring factions by instigating suppression / conflict meetings organised through dedicated conflict management bodies. In this instance the group (or representatives) would be brought together to discuss the situation and negotiate terms for their existence within a given area. Another alternative would be to organise a mediation service to manage conflicts between rival individuals. It must be recognised that the aim of intervention here is not necessarily to end conflict between groups and individuals, but rather to manage the conflicts in which groups and individuals enter in order that they do not escalate into violence.

Conflict Mediation services are currently run across London boroughs for high risk individuals and groups referred to the service by statutory agencies.

As the gang is distinguishable from the peer group by the importance its members attribute to violence, steps need to be taken to ensure that consequences are severe and that groups are aware of the response which will follow should they mobilise this resource. Should a retaliation or counter retaliation be anticipated known protagonists can be contacted and warned in advance about the certain consequences of revenge.

Youth Engagement Teams, utilised as a tactical response to reduce serious violence, can be employed to contact these high risk groups and refer them to appropriate local support services and activities.

Enforcement Interventions
If individuals or groups in the street periphery engage in vendetta-based violence a coercive approach needs to be adopted. However, repressive tactics should be aimed at the main protagonists and not at the more marginal characters. In other words, the full weight of the law should be directed at the perpetrators of crime rather than bystanders and uninvolved associates. For this reason ‘solutions’ such as curfews would be inappropriate because they involve imposing an undiscriminating sanction that is quite likely to impact negatively on innocent parties as well.

The government have developed a range of punitive instruments that can be mobilised against the street periphery. These instruments include, but are not limited to:

- Acceptable Behaviour Contracts (ABCs) which are voluntary agreements whereby young people agree to refrain from engaging in anti-social behaviour and the relevant local council undertakes to provide support to encourage the young person to engage in prosocial behaviour. Breach of this voluntary agreement however provides cause for the issuing of an ASBO.
- Anti Social Behaviour Orders (ASBOs) are civil orders which prohibit an individual from engaging in anti-social behaviour, the breach of which can result in a criminal sentence.
- The recently available ‘Gang ASBO’ which prohibits anti-social behaviour of the group.
- Community Orders which prohibit particular anti-social activities or require treatment (i.e. for mental health / substance abuse).
- Dog Warrants which authorise the state to remove dangerous dogs from owners who display inappropriate behaviour.
- Youth Rehabilitation Orders which are community sentences in terms of which gang members can be referred to intervention programmes such as Decipher and Double Edge (both run in
Lewisham) which deliver 10 week programmes addressing offending attitudes and behaviour; or the London Junior and Senior Attendance Centres which requires offenders to spend time engaged in positive activities and/or in education.

While such instrument can be usefully deployed to target particular serious or prolific offenders care should be taken that they are not issued carelessly or negligently as an attractive immediate reaction as these sanctions can have major long-term negative consequences (through criminalising, marginalising and alienating) for young people and their communities.

If a group is actively involved in offending in a particular area this group must not be allowed to claim the area or estate as its own. ‘No go’ areas cannot be tolerated because they encourage fear of crime and weaken community cohesion. As such there must be a clear and consistent enforcement approach in such areas, including the use of punitive instruments. It could also be remarked that if ground is lost to criminal groups seizing it back will be difficult, not least because the groups in question might violently resist such efforts.

- Effective Drug Enforcement (Tower Hamlets) has a dedicated drugs desk and drugs crime squat which proactively targets drugs networks;
- Operation Bison targets Prolific and Priority Offenders through a ‘fast time’ response unit;
- Operation Blunt 2 deploys uniformed police officers to ‘hot spot’ locations to prevent serious violence; and
- Operation Layercake involves a police taskforce proactively gathering intelligence about gang members and designs enforcement activities.

Where violence in the street periphery is serious and dedicated operations are mounted by agencies, such as the Territorial Support Unit (TSG), care must be taken to ensure that all relevant public agencies and elected officials are notified in advance so that steps can be taken to address potential consequences. It could be, for example, that there are additional child care, educational and housing issues which will be disrupted or caused by enforcement efforts. There also needs to be a strategy in place to ensure that the public are informed about critical incidents, such as a shooting, and are advised on what has happened and why. In interviews conducted with practitioners many were highly critical of responses to incidents which did not involve local borough and police officers or which mandated highly coercive policing interventions the consequence of which they then unexpectedly had to address after response teams had left. Borough officers also pointed out that reactive enforcement efforts often undermine more preventative interventions within an area and that relevant agencies should therefore be consulted before executing such operations.

While there may be useful results from deploying punitive instruments and enforcement tactics the unintended consequences of criminalising young people can be serious and have long term effects. A case could also therefore be made for mobilising these sanctions in ways which appropriately and proportionately address problems. At times, for example, a stick and carrot approach can yield positive results. This can involve warning high risk individuals and groups about the sanctions that...
will be deployed against them while also providing them with access to support services if they agree to address their behaviour.

Triage scheme (by the Youth Justice Board) through which young people who have been arrested and assessed as low-risk are recommended for restorative justice interventions rather than pursuing court proceedings. Other programmes to which low-risk offenders might be referred for an opportunity at reform are exit strategies and reintegration interventions (which could be extended to support offenders before sentencing).

**Exit Strategies**
Exit programmes need to be available to help individuals exit from their lifestyles in the street periphery and/or life threatening situations.

- **GATES (Gangs Advice Training and Exit Support)**, offers a hotline which provides advice and support to young people in London who feel they are at risk.
- **SERVE (Southwark)** is a relocation project which gives supports offenders by giving them a 12 week opportunity to change their lifestyles.
- The Pathways Programme (Southwark, Croydon, Lewisham) provides offenders with an opportunity to avoid enforcement tactics on the proviso that, through one-to-one support, they change their lifestyles.
- The Street Outreach Service (SOS) supports high risk offenders in developing their support networks to enable them to desist from offending.

It is imperative that exit strategy interventions are holistic and simultaneously meet the full range of risk factors contributing to individual and group offending. These services should be linked to statutory and other voluntary organisations which can assist, on an on-going basis, with issues such as housing, health, education, developing networks and relationships with agencies and communities. These interventions also need to work at both the individual and group levels, to address individual’s needs through one-to-one sessions and group dynamics through workshops and organised activities.

**Reintegration Programmes**
Reintegration or rehabilitation interventions are required to support those young people already convicted of an offence. These are specialised programmes designed to provide offenders with necessary means to reform through personal development, education, training and access to support services. Although there are numerous programmes run for offenders in prison, there are a limited number of programmes available to ex-offenders on release which is possibly when they could most benefit from additional specialised support to prevent them relapsing into their original lifestyles and behaviours.

- **Not Another Drop**, is a community lead project which delivers workshops designed to address the attitudes and behaviours of individuals convicted of weapon-related offences.

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Case study example:
**SOS Gang Project** is an ex-offender led programme which involves a number of partners to provide young offenders with support both in prison and on release.
The Personal Development Programme for Offenders provides coaching and personal development through tailored education provision and positive activities.

Group Work in Young Offenders Institutions (Network Alliance Group) deliver workshops to examine and address gang-related violence.

Young and Safe provides offenders with one-to-one support to address their needs and provide support.

The street periphery is populated predominantly by highly alienated young men who resent society and lead unstable lives which provide limited access to protective factors, such as familial support and employment opportunities. Young men already convicted of offences potentially pose the greatest risk but are provided with limited support and opportunities to reintegrate them back into society. On being released they have little to no control over their lives and often have no recourse but to return to their former unstable lifestyles where they are marginalised even further by the stigma of a criminal record. Although ex-offenders are seen as being the responsibility of the Probation Board, we have established that the issues associated with offending and violence in the street periphery cannot be unpacked into discrete categories. While the issues which lead young people in the street periphery to offend persist, their return to the street world can on exacerbate offending by themselves and, through their augmented influence after being in prison, by others they associate with. Local Authorities may therefore look to systematically review their role in creating opportunities to provide these young people with additional help through community support programmes and access to services such as housing and employment.

London Councils: Future Areas of Research

London Councils have an important role to perform in helping ensure that the problem of urban violence is confronted in a joined up and integrated manner. By funding research into the violent street worlds of London an evidence base can be developed from which sensible proportionate policies can be developed.

In a society that is undergoing a moral panic around gangs London Council can help create the space where a better sense of proportion can return to debates over group membership, juvenile delinquency and street violence. It is important to recognise that: memberships to groups is considered to be a normal developmental process expected of well-adjusted young people and there is much evidence to support that juvenile delinquency is something which most young people will naturally drift out; and violence is produced and triggered by a range of social factors. Such sense of the virtues of proportion and sensibility are often lacking from official responses to street violence and, being inappropriate often exacerbate the problems.

In relation to the question of developing the evidential base further, London Councils might find it prudent to pursue the following research considerations. At present research conducted on violence which occurs in London’s streets usually takes the form of a short term projects. These typically rely on interviewing gang affiliated youth or practitioners where the research, often due to budgetary constraints, is conducted in one borough and the focus is on gangs. This approach has generated some worthy reports but is limited in its focus which overlooks the complexities of deprivation and offending. Outcomes are not necessarily enduring and findings cannot necessarily be generalised.
What is really needed is a commitment to a longer ethnographic study which traces in depth the complex social relations that inhere to the street periphery. This could be an opportunity to look at the way groups form, merge and intersect together. Such research could be used to study the way the drugs trade intersects with gang and group life and, not least, used to study the problems posed by status dogs and forms of sexual abuse and violence within communities. A number of excellent ethnographic studies have been undertaken in American cities, such as New York, but in London no long term research of this sort has yet been funded.
ENDNOTES

1 Stan Cohen (1980) highlighted the role control agents play in constructing and producing the deviant groups they seek to manage. Cohen argued that the creation of ‘moral panics’ and ‘folk devils’ issues, such as troublesome young people, are reconstructed as major social problems evoking an escalated and disproportionate social and political response. Stuart Hall (1980) developed the thesis regarding the role of control agents asserting that such responses are designed to perpetuate and reinforce stereotypes, facilitating the criminalisation both of social policy and targeted groups resulting in further suppression and marginalisation of already alienated and excluded groups.

2 This report focuses upon understanding the nature of collective offending as this pertains to the London situation and considers what is to be done about it. As such this report should not be read as a text book on gangs per se. For those interested in a wider literature review of gangs and other groups see Hallsworth S. and Young T. (2010). ‘Street Collectives and Group Delinquency: Social Disorganisation and Beyond’. In T. Newburn and E. McLoughlin (eds). The Sage Handbook of Criminology. London: Sage.

3 This includes research conducted for the Metropolitan Police Service, the European Union, the Home Office, Youth Justice Board and various London boroughs, including Hackney, Brent, Ealing and Enfield. The evidential base for this research has involved extensive interviews with gang affiliated and non gang affiliated young people with older ‘gangsters’ and with a range of practitioners who have some involvement with or expertise in relation to criminal groups and weapon use.

4 See bibliography.

5 A good case can be made for suggesting that the UK is currently experiencing a ‘moral panic’ around gangs. Hall et al (1978) define this as occurring: ‘When the official reaction to a person, groups of persons or series of events is out of all proportion to the actual threat offered, when ‘experts’ in the form of police chiefs, the judiciary, politicians and editors perceive the threat in all but identical terms and appear to talk with one voice of rates, diagnosis, prognosis and solutions, when the media representations universally stress ‘sudden and dramatic’ increases (in numbers involved or events) and ‘novelty’ above and beyond what a sober, realistic appraisal could sustain, then we believe it appropriate to speak of the beginnings of a moral panic’. See Hall S. Critcher C. Jefferson T. Clarke J. and Robert B. (1978). Policing the Crisis: Mugging, the State, and Law and Order. London: Macmillan (p13). For an examination of the contemporary gang problem as a moral panic see Hallsworth S. (2010). ‘Gangland UK: Realities, fantasies and industry’. In B. Goldson. Youth ‘Gangs’, Territorality and Violence. Cullompton: Willan.


7 This tendency is not new, the same occurred in relation to the American Mafia which was fantasised as a mirror image of the American corporation in the 1960s. See Cressey D.R. (1969). Theft of the nation: the structure and operations of organized crime in America. New York; Harper & Row.

This definitional framework was originally developed for the Metropolitan Police Service. See Hallsworth S. and Young T. (2005). Interpreting the gang and other criminal groups, Metropolitan Police Service.

David Matza (1964) concluded that juvenile delinquents are in fact very similar to their law-abiding peers, being equally captivated by social conventions and engaging in delinquency intermittently for excitement. Matza found that rather than delinquent behaviour being the result of pathology or commitment to a counterculture, juveniles engage in delinquent behaviour as their means to combat the banality of everyday life. Such delinquency has since come to be referred to as ‘anti social behaviour’. For Matza individual and collective delinquency is therefore something most young people drift out of as their responsibilities and access to other conventional social activities increase (see Matza D. (1964) Delinquency and Drift. London: Wiley).

There is little written until recently on the British gang situation. This reflects the fact that through most of the post war period the primary focus of British researchers was upon subcultures such as the Mods, Rockers, Punks and Hippies. This reflected both the fact that gangs were not a major social problem and the fact that subcultures were more generally characteristic of the British situation. For an early attempt to apply American gang theory to the British situation see Downes D.M. (1966). The delinquent solution; a study in subcultural theory. New York: Free Press. For the classic text on British subculture see Hall S. and Jefferson T. (eds) (1976) Resistance through Rituals: Youth Subcultures in Post-War Britain. Harper Collins Publishers.


While there may be an instrumental reason why young men engage in offending behaviour it is often the case that it has no purpose other than the excitement it generates. As Katz’s work shows there is also a pleasure attached to appearing dangerous. See Katz J. (1988). Seductions of crime: moral and sensual attractions in doing evil. New York: Basic Books.
An important note here on street language. The people who inhabit the street worlds of London often have a vocabulary that they use to define its occupants. They may refer to ‘tiny’s’ (meaning very young children), ‘youngers’ (teens), and elders (adults). They may also use expressions like your ‘endz’ (your territory), the ‘man dem’ (your friends); ‘crew’ or ‘brethren’ (the group you hang around with). They may also talk of ‘faces’ (known criminals). None of this is surprising or sinister unless gang obsessed individuals take hold of these terms and from them construct the fantasy of a criminal gang where designations like ‘tiny’s’, ‘youngers’ and ‘elders’ are now brought together as part of a corporate street structure, while the term ‘man dem’ is reconstructed to mean ‘gang’.

There is currently an ongoing debate between researchers on how organised contemporary gangs in the UK are. For researchers like John Pitts the gang in London today can take the form of a highly corporate structure that imposes total control over social life in the estates where it is based. This position however has attracted considerable criticism both on the basis that this attempt to corporatise the streets reflect gang talking myths rather than realities (see the note above); and because other researchers such as Hallsworth and Silverstone and Aldridge and Medina have found little empirical proof of such structures. Their work stresses instead the fluid, volatile and ‘messy’ nature of street life and organisation. See Aldridge J. and Medina-Ariza J. (2007). Youth gangs in an English city: social exclusion, drugs and violence. ESRC; Pitts J. (2008). Reluctant gangsters: the changing face of youth crime. Cullompton: Willan; Hallsworth S. and Silverstone D. (2009). “That’s life innit” A British Perspective on Guns Crime and Social Order. Criminology and Criminal Justice 9(3): 359-377; Hallsworth S. (2010). ‘Gangland UK: Realities, fantasies and industry’. In B. Goldson. Youth ‘Gangs’, Territorality and Violence. Cullompton: Willan.


In a Home Office study into gang and gun crime conducted by Hales, Lewis and Silverstone they found that of their sample of 80 people, “40 had previously been threatened with guns, 29 shot at and eight had been shot; 28 had been stabbed, 17 injured with other weapons, 34 had been robbed and three had been kidnapped. Additionally, 26 reported friends or family members shot and injured and another 26 reported friends or family shot dead”. See Hales G. Lewis C. and Silverstone D. (2006). ‘Gun crime: the market in and use of illegal firearms’. Home Office Research Study. London: Home Office.


For a discussion on the nature of organised crime networks see Edwards A. and Gill P. (2003). Transnational organised crime: perspectives on global security. London: Routledge; and Lea J. (2002). Crime & modernity: continuities in left realist criminology. London: SAGE. It could be noted that in studies of organised crime (rarely referenced by gang ‘experts’) the idea that this was perpetrated by a ‘Mr Big’ who heads a corporate criminal gang was discredited long ago. It could also be noted that while large organised criminal groups exist, they are typically found in weak states and crisis states. These typically include major drug producing countries.


29 The lethal nature of the violence associated with this sector of the criminal economy can be illustrated by reference to the experience of a British drug dealer who worked in a crack house. He had been kidnapped, seriously assaulted (and dumped in woodland), seen shots fired in the crack house during several robberies, been shot at and seen a man shot. He had also been robbed at gunpoint in public on several occasions. None of these attacks were reported to the police. Quoted in Hallsworth S. and Silverstone D. (2009). ‘“That's life innit” A British Perspective on Guns Crime and Social Order’. *Criminology and Criminal Justice* 9(3): 359-377.


31 The lethal inter-gang dynamic of violent conflicts featured significantly in the research conducted by Aldridge and Medina in their 5 year ethnographic research in ‘gang city’. See Aldridge J. and Medina-Ariz J. (2007). *Youth gangs in an English city: social exclusion, drugs and violence*. ESRC.


34 For an examination of the rise of street crime in London see Hallsworth S. (2005). *Street crime*. Cullompton: Willan. It could be noted that while undertaking research for this book no one at the time was talking about ‘gangs’ but ‘muggers’. No one today talks about the mugger though street robbery remains a real social problem. The gang is the folk devil of the moment.


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40 Note here the demonising language of control. ‘Weapon dogs’, ‘dangerous dogs’ ‘trophy dogs’, ‘dogs from hell’, status dogs. This is not the language of a proportionate society, this is the language of a moral panic. It is also worth noting that in a moral panic a sense of proportion is one of the first casualties.

41 This is the respected dog expert Dr Bruce Vogal talking about the Staffordshire Terrier. ‘There is practically no breed that is more loving with its family, and often with strangers, even veterinarians, than this kinetic mass of solid bone and thick muscle’. He remarks in relation to the American Staffordshire Terrier that: ‘like its close British relative, the Staffordshire Terrier, it can be extremely gentle with children and adults’, though as he also notes ‘and at the same time potentially lethal with other dogs’. See Fogle B. (2000). Dogs: The worlds best loved breeds. London: Dorling Kindersley.

42 A significant number of young gang affiliated young men interviewed in recent research by Mahlar and Pearpoint claimed that it was specifically the issue of companionship that defined their relationships to their dogs. None of the dog ‘experts’ interviewed in this research made any referenced to this issue. See Mahler J and Pearpoint H. (2010). The use of dogs by gangs and troublesome youth groups, provisional findings. (unpublished).

43 Eight people have died in dog related incidents since 2005. Eleven dogs were involved in these cases, only two of which involved a Pit Bull. In every case the fatality occurred within a domestic setting NOT on the streets where the dogs were family pets.


This would also help explain why growing numbers of these dogs are being abandoned as young people quickly discover the old truism ‘a dog is for life, not for Christmas’. This interpretation is certainly more likely than alarmist claims to the effect that the abandoned dogs are those which are not aggressive enough for the gangs. See Davis R. (2010). Are dogs the new weapon of choice for young people?. The Guardian: http://www.guardian.co.uk/society/2010/feb/17/dangerous-dogs-as-weapons; BBC News (2009). Increase in number of stray dogs. http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/england/london/8245531.stm.

One elderly drug dealer interviewed defended his house with a Rottweiler and a Pit bull, a CCTV camera placed above his front door which also had a large iron grilled door set before it.

The value of breeding of ‘status dogs’ is noted by Metropolitan Police Federation (2010). Man’s best friend?. MPF: http://www.metfed.org.uk/metline?id=976, but this report does not, however, comment on the unintended creation of a black market for prohibited breeds.


In a recent paper Kaspersson compared the consequences of the UK Dangerous Dogs Act with the consequences of Sweden’s attempt to ban the purchase of sexual services. The Dog Act failed for the reasons cited above which is derived from Kaspersson’s argument. The Swedish Act however succeeded. In her attempt to explain this difference she argued that in the case of Sweden, many of the men who purchased sexual services were middle class and married and, as such, had a reputation and status to lose if they were prosecuted under the law. In other words deterrence worked for this constituency in ways it did not for Pit Bull owners. See Kaspersson M. (2009). ‘When deterrence works - and when it doesn’t: a comparison of Sweden’s prostitution law and UK’s Dangerous Dogs Act’. School of Humanities and Social Sciences Research Conference. University of Greenwich: (unpublished).


Differential association theory was developed by the American Criminologist Edwin Sutherland in the 1930s. Its core principle is that ‘a person becomes delinquent because of an excess of definitions favourable to violation of law over definitions unfavourable to violation of law’. See Sutherland E.H. (1924) 'Principles of Criminology' Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Horvath and Kelly (2009) found that the majority of multiple perpetrator rapes involved two or three offenders, but no evidence that these groups were ‘gang’s. Their findings also suggest that similarly to single perpetrator rapes most offenders of multiple perpetrator rapes are known to the victim and multiple perpetrator rapes are more prevalent amongst young people, as is consistent with findings regarding other types of co-offending. See Horvath and Kelly, Liz (2009). ‘Multiple perpetrator rape: Naming an offence and initial research findings’. Journal of Sexual Aggression, 15(1) pp. 83-96(14).


One of the problems attendant on those who like to imagine the gang as a complex corporate structure is that they make no distinction between the core and the periphery. In this model the core controls the periphery.


A search on YouTube (http://www.youtube.com/) for the name or location of a London ‘gang’ will yield results of video footage of incidents such as group offending and police chases.


http://www.londoncouncils.gov.uk/aboutus/corporateinformation/guidetolondoncouncils.htm

http://www.londoncouncils.gov.uk/aboutus/corporatepublications/manifesto/default.htm?mode=1
&pk=24443&comment_id=16&report=1

Information sharing for community safety. Guidance and practice advice Home Office:

69 See Audit Commission (2009). Working better together? Managing local strategic partnerships. UK:
Trident Publishing GSY3525.


71 See Audit Commission (2002). Route to justice: Improving the pathway of offenders through the

72 See Audit Commission (2008). In the know: Using information to make better decisions: a


IDeA/LGA/LGAR.

75 Communities and Local Government (2008). Communities in control: real people, real power.

77 See IDeA (2006). Elected members’ planning skills framework (version 1.3). Planning Advisory
Service: IDeA IDT 1303.


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APPENDIX A: INTERVENTION PROGRAMME PROFILES

DEVELOPING THE PROFILES

A range of programmes were invited to participate in this project to substantiate the above report with examples of a variety of different types of interventions delivered across London boroughs. To strengthen the validity of findings programmes which have been evaluated and/or which have won awards were selected from a list compiled of intervention programmes offered throughout London.

A number of difficulties were encountered in identifying what programmes are in fact being offered to young people in London as there was no single up-to-date database which collates this information. There also appear to be a large number of programmes which have relatively short lifespans (often due to funding), and currently available information does not readily provide information regarding new initiatives nor clarify which initiatives have ceased to operate. Further difficulties arose in trying to locate current contact information for programmes which limits access to resources. While undertaking this research it was also observed that it is far easier to identify and contact independent charities and organisations and often not possible to do so for those run by statutory agencies without local knowledge. For this reason, most of the programmes profiled comprise independently run initiatives.

Practitioners involved in developing and/or delivering the identified programmes were invited to participate in telephone interviews which investigated a range of factors including: the rationale for operational approaches/models; the format, delivery and actual outcomes of the programme; together with practitioners views on the strengths of partnerships, key features enabling success of the programme and the potential for widening participation.

A positive and enthusiastic response was received from the majority of organisations and practitioners invited to participate in the project, although participation was in a few instances prevented by time constraints and the inability to contact relevant parties.

Set out below is a list of profiles developed based on interviews with relevant practitioners, available official information and documentation and, where possible, with reference to independent evaluations of the programmes. Although it is noted that the most robust evaluations are those which are independently undertaken, for the purposes of these profiles, evaluations include reference to internal evaluations, feedback and awards.
PROGRAMME Profiles

EARLY INTERVENTION

**CHANCE UK**

**Type:** Early Intervention

**History:** Chance UK developed their model based on work done in family therapy centres in Milwaukee and London, together with results of analysis of youth work conducted by their programme team. This solution-focused approach has now been in operation for 15 years.

**Client Group:** Clients are 5-11 year olds usually referred as a result of disruptive behavioural problems at school or in their communities through a programme which also involves enabling family members and school teachers to provide support.

**Location:** Hackney, Islington, Lambeth

**Aims:** Prevent upward migration to gang affiliation, anti-social behaviour and criminal activity by addressing undesirable behaviour, developing self-esteem and enabling clients to develop their strengths through stimulating activities.

**Form / Services:**

On referral the Chance UK team will meet with the client, school teachers and family members to assess the client's needs and make recommendations regarding support strategies. Participation is voluntary and on consent from the parties the client is required to complete the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire, a behavioural screening instrument which assesses the likelihood of their future engagement in anti-social and/or criminal behaviour.

The Chance UK team matches each client to the most suitable and compatible mentor and attributes the success and strengths of these relationships to the directionality and rigour of such process.

Mentors provide clients with tailor-made structured programmes of objectives and activities which address their difficulties and encourage them to engage in physical activities, broaden their interests and develop their knowledge and skills. Such activities include attending museums, sports, arts and are aimed at stimulating and educating clients. Mentors also provide role models for clients encouraging pro-social behaviour and supporting clients in meeting their individual goals, achievement of which is identified as raising self-esteem.

The programme is delivered in weekly sessions which last for one year. On completion clients complete the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire again and, together with family members and teachers, are debriefed and provided with feedback.

There is an annual graduation ceremony at which clients are rewarded for their achievements on the programme.

**Delivery:**
Clients meet with mentors for 2-4 hours consistently every week in a structured programme which takes place in a variety of settings, from playgrounds to museums, depending on the client’s needs.

**Organisation(s) / Partnership(s):**
Chance UK works with a range of statutory bodies and other agencies to address individual client needs.

**Resources:**
All staff and volunteers are carefully selected in terms of dedication, knowledge and experience and attend 3-day in-house training. The management structure provides good supervision and support to all staff, who work as a team to deliver the programme. The focus is on team work, flexibility and being open to different perspectives.
**Chance UK**

**Outcomes:** Feedback from family and teachers indicates that the programme has a positive impact on client’s behaviour and engagement.

Independent evaluation by Goldsmiths University (2008) found that 98% of clients achieved a reduction in Strengths and Difficulties scores and that 51% demonstrated no behavioural difficulties at the end of the programme (http://www.chanceuk.com/site/61/214.html).

Chance UK has been awarded Gold Start Status by the Cabinet Office for good practice.

**Widening Participation:** Local authorities can commission the services of Chance UK, and other agencies consult with them regarding incorporating the Chance UK model into existing programmes.

**Further information:** http://www.chanceuk.com/

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**Hanworth Centre - Junior Youth Inclusion Project (JYIP)**

**Type:** Early Prevention/ASB Related

**History:** The Centre was originally a local authority youth service which closed due to funding cuts. Due to the persistent need for youth services Hounslow Action for Youth Association (HAY) charity funded the opening of the independent Hanworth Centre which has now been operating for 10 years. Content of the programme has been developed based on experience of ‘what works’ with local youth.

**Client Group:** 8 to 13 year old local residents at risk of offending and their families. Participation in the JYIP is voluntary and clients are taken on a referral only basis, usually by schools, the Metropolitan Police Service and Youth Offending Teams.

**Location:** Hanworth, Hounslow

**Aims:** To divert young people at risk of social and educational exclusion and/or involvement in anti-social and offending behaviour.

**Form / Services:** The Centre seeks to support young people to effect changes in their attitudes and behaviour, to take responsibility and behave respectfully through integrated and targeted support offered in a safe environment.

On referral facilitators attend home visits to meet with clients and the families to assess their needs and offer a place on the programme. Activities available at the Centre to facilitate development of social and life skills include sport, drama and cooking. Each session starts with a group discussion aimed at raising awareness, confidence and self esteem and confronting offending behaviour through a restorative justice approach. Individual 1:1 homework sessions are also available for clients experiencing difficulties engaging in mainstream education.

Facilitators adopt a youth work approach which focussed on long-term, consistent support. The client-centred programme is flexible in responding to individual’s needs and focuses on clients developing strengths and capabilities without being goal or target oriented.

The Centre also provides additional programmes and support to families of clients involved in the JYIP.
### HANWORTH CENTRE - JUNIOR YOUTH INCLUSION PROJECT (JYIP)

**Delivery:**
Clients are collected from, and dropped off at, their homes which is believed to facilitate attendance and increase engagement with the programme.

Due to logistical and funding issues the programme is offered only to young people in Hanworth.

Each client is offered the opportunity to attend four two-hour sessions per week run four days per week between 4:00pm and 6:30pm. Attendance is voluntarily and support available for an indefinite period.

The Hanworth Centre also provide school holiday provision including arranged activities over four weeks in the summer.

**Organisation(s) / Partnership(s):**
The Hanworth Centre is an independent organisation which works in partnership with local statutory agencies.

**Resources:**
Funding is received from HAY and donations.

The Centre employs one full time member of staff and four to five part time members of staff to deliver the programme.

**Evaluation:**
An independent evaluation of client’s individual perceived outcomes following the programme found that the majority of young people involved in the programme felt they had benefited through improved family relationships and school attendance (http://www.hanworthcentre.org.uk/admin/uploads/2008%20Annual%20Report.pdf).

**Widening Participation:**
To extend delivery of services additional funding and facilities would be required.

**Further information:**
http://www.hanworthcentre.org.uk/?id=club&item=6

### OUTSIDE CHANCE-- 'YOU DON'T KNOW WHO YOU'RE DEALING WITH!'

**Type:**
Early Intervention

**History:**
Developed during 2003 in response to feedback from young offenders involved in the ‘A Career in Crime’ programme Outside Chance have been delivering ‘You Don’t Know Who You’re Dealing With’ workshops since 2004.

**Client Group:**
All young people attending local schools and youth groups.

**Location:**
London and Essex

**Aims:**
To divert young people away from anti-social and offending behaviour.

**Form / Services:**
Workshops informing young people of practical issues relating to crime such as policing methods and detection rates of offending, the relationship between drug use and offending, sanctions for offences and consequences of sentencing.

The workshops provide young people will a realistic insight into prison life from facilitators who have experience working with young offenders in prison. Discussions also focus around individual and social factors such as bullying and peer pressure and individual

**Delivery:**
Workshops are usually 60 to 70 minutes long, but can be tailored to suit individual organisation’s timetables.

**Organisation(s) / Partnership(s):**
Outside Chance work in close partnership with prisons and organisations for whom they deliver the workshops.
OUTSIDE CHANCE - ‘YOU DON’T KNOW WHO YOU’RE DEALING WITH!’

Resources: Outside Chance are supported by a wide range of funders and donors and charge fees of between £195.00 and £345.00 for contracting delivery of the ‘You Don’t Know Who You’re Dealing With!’ programme.

Evaluation: Feedback from clients, both participants and observers (including Metropolitan Police’s Operation Trident and teaching staff) is positive although no formal independent evaluation has been undertaken of the programme.

Widening Participation: Outside Chance can be contracted to deliver the programme in schools and other youth organisations.

Further information: http://www.outsidechance.org/

EARLY INTERVENTION & GANG RELATED

CATCH 22 - POSITIVE FUTURES

Type: Early Intervention/Gang Related

History: Catch 22 has been running for 10 years. Originally a sports programme it has extended activities to include arts in response to clients requests and interests. Recognising that ‘one size’ does not ‘fit all’ the programme is developed and delivered by local agencies who receive management support from Catch 22.

Client Group: 10 to 19 year olds in deprived communities who are offered open access to local programmes. Clients are also referred to the programme by police, housing and social services.

Location: Most London Boroughs

Aims: To prevent and confront anti-social and offending behaviour through providing incentives by way of an activities-based programme which develops relationships, ties with the community, personal and social skills.

Form / Services: Clients are required to agree action plans which set out their goals and recommend activities in which they might purposefully engage to achieve their objectives.

Group activities are client-focused and seek to develop clients social and personal skills through teamwork, promoting healthy lifestyles and education.

Clients are offered opportunities to gain accreditation in sports qualifications and achieve arts awards.

Delivery: Open access is provided in targeted ‘hot spots’ and deprived communities identified by Local Authorities.

Participation is voluntary and indefinite and activities are usually held in early evenings during the week and at weekends. Agencies also try to provide school holiday provision through organised activities over school vacations.

Organisation(s) / Partnership(s): Catch 22 is responsible for national management of programmes which are developed and delivered locally by statutory agencies and work in partnership with a number of organisations.

Programmes are run locally by a variety of agencies such as Football Trusts, Community Schemes and Local Authorities.

Resources: Catch 22 receives Home Office funding for delivery of its programmes and employs a large number of full time and part time staff and volunteers across locations who are trained to support and challenge young people.
CATCH 22 - POSITIVE FUTURES

Widening Participation: There is scope to extend the services and activities available to young people to include educational provisions/facilities and facilitate the pursuit of interests beyond sports and arts.

Further information: http://www.catch-22.org.uk/

LEAP - CONFRONTING CONFLICT - FEAR & FASHION PROJECT: TACKLING KNIFE CRIME

Type: Early Intervention / Gang & Offending Related

History: Based on findings of Lemos & Crane (2004) that fear and fashion were the two predominant reasons young people carry knives, the Fear and Fashion Programme was developed and has been delivered by LEAP (a national youth organisation and registered charity which has been in operation for 22 years) since 2007.

Client Group: 11 to 21 year olds in high risk areas and/or communities which have recently been affected by knife crime.

Location: Westminster

Aims: To prevent crime and violence through developing cognitive and social skills enabling effective conflict resolution and mediation.

Form / Services: The programme involves intensive group workshops delivered by peers who have completed the programme and trained as mediators.

Local needs are assessed from which tailor-made workshops are developed. These workshops provide a forum for directed discussions on the consequences of anti-social and offending behaviour through interactive methods exploring group dynamics and interpersonal relationships, as well as individual choices.

LEAP employ a ‘cascading model’ whereby clients who successfully complete the programme becoming peer educators in their communities to act as role models to other young people – to be “community makers”.

Delivery: The Fear and Fashion Programme is bought in by agencies which have identified a need in their locality and is currently delivered at schools, community centres, youth centres and on urban estates.

The duration and frequency, as well as the content, of each programme are tailor-made to suit individual requirement of communities/agencies.

Organisation(s) Partnership(s): LEAP work in partnerships with contracting agencies.

Resources: The Fear and Fashion Programme has been funded by Trust for London, City Bridge Trust, Esmee Fairbairn Foundation, Wates Foundation and John Lyon’s Charity.

LEAP employed a pool of experienced trainers who work closely with partners commissioning their services.

Evaluation: LEAP undertake internal evaluations of their programmes which includes positive feedback from clients.

Clear Plan has been commissioned to undertake an independent evaluation which is due to be published in Autumn 2010.

Widening Participation: The Fear and Fashion Programme can be bought in by organisation for delivery of workshops and/or training of peer educators.
**GANG RELATED**

**2XL PROGRAMME**

**Type:** Gang Related

**History:** Based on the evaluated success of the X-It Programme (developed from findings of US initiatives and youth work experience) which was piloted from 2004 to 2008, the 2XL Programme has been in operation since 2009.

**Client Group:** 14 to 19 year olds at risk due to offending and/or gang affiliation.

**Location:** Lambeth

**Aims:** Encourage downward migration away from gang affiliation, anti-social behaviour, weapon use and offending. To divert clients from offending behaviour through empowering them to make positive choices by developing self-esteem and social skills, providing challenging goals and vocational skills training.

**Form / Services:** Young people from high crime ‘hot spot’ locations are recruited to take part in the voluntary peer-led programme which supports them to engage in further education, training and gaining meaningful employment.

The programme involves group workshops, residential courses and leadership programmes together with a mentoring support scheme. Each client is assigned a personal youth worker who provides them with individual tailored support dedicated for up to 18 months after completing the structured courses.

**Delivery:** The programme runs for 32 weeks, delivering group work sessions over 10 weeks, a 6-day residential and 20 week leadership programme. 2XL is being introduced at youth centres across Lambeth and seeks to employ and train a minimum of 120 peer mentors per annum.

**Organisation(s) / Partnership(s):** 2XL works in partnership with a variety of agencies, including Lambeth Council, the police, community safety teams, youth and social services.

**Resources:** Funding is provided by a number of organisations including the Lambeth Council and Brathay Hall Trust.

The project is staffed by youth workers and more than 120 peer mentors.

**Evaluation:** Independent evaluation of the original X-It Programme found that 72% of clients desisted from offending while engaged in the programme which earned the programme the Children’s Services Award in the Guardian newspaper’s Public Services Award contest in 2007.

**Further information:** http://www.lambeth.gov.uk/Services/EducationLearning/2XLProgramme.htm
**Intervention Programme Profiles**

**RECRE8 - SEGREG8**

**Type:** Gang Related

**History:** Recre8 was founded in 2005 following research on Offender Behaviour Programmes and experience of teaching drama at schools which together demonstrated that traditional methods of teaching are not working for at risk young people. The Segreg8 developed specifically to confront the growing concern over gang issues was developed in 2007.

**Client Group:** At risk secondary school students who have usually been excluded from mainstream education.

**Location:** Barking & Dagenham, Greenwich, Ealing

**Aims:** To encourage downward migration away from gang affiliation and to confront and prevent anti-social and offending behaviour.

**Form / Services:** Workshop content is developed through research findings, experience and incorporating the perspectives of young people with whom facilitators engage. Workshops are also tailored to suit the locality or setting in which they are run to reflect the interests and needs of local communities and clients and engage young people in a way which is relevant to their lives.

Workshops are designed to challenge client’s thinking and motivation through creative learning which offers them a realistic perspective on choices and consequences. Through a drama-based approach utilising a number of interactive teaching methods, including multi-media, props and movement, clients are encouraged to develop empathy, confidence and problem-solving, reasoning and communication skills to deal with challenges such as peer pressure.

Clients are required to complete pre and post programme questionnaires regarding their attitudes to offending which provide evaluation of outcomes and feedback to organisations.

**Delivery:** Workshops are usually delivered in four four-hour sessions over four weeks, although this timetable is flexible and tailored to suit organisational requirements.

Workshops can be delivered in any setting which provides a space for the client group and although they are usually run in schools and theatres Recre8 has also run sessions in less conventional settings such a kitchen.

Recre8 rely on the organisation contracting their services to identify the client group and to provide a neutral setting for the workshops.

**Organisation(s) / Partnership(s):** Recre8 works in partnership with other statutory agencies such as social service, fire brigades, together with private organisation who provide volunteer guest speakers and offer opportunities to young people.

**Resources:** Recre8 provides all necessary equipment and charges fees for delivery of workshops.

Recre8’s policy that no-one is ever removed from the workshops demands that all staff and volunteers are carefully selected. All facilitators have backgrounds in psychology and/or acting and all staff and volunteers are recruited for their passion, patience, caring, flexibility and determination.

**Evaluation:** Evaluation of pre and post questionnaire scores indicate that the programme has a positive effect on clients attitudes. These effects, however, are likely to be short-term and Recre8 is working on developing programmes which may have a longer-term impact.

**Widening Participation:** Recre8 suggest that their methods of creative learning may be incorporated into the existing school curriculum and seek to offer training to other organisations and facilitators.

Recre8 would also like to develop partnerships with the police to provide trained volunteers to engage with client groups as they anticipate that both parties would benefit from strengthening relationships.
ST GILES TRUST - SOS GANGS PROJECT

Type: Gang Related

History: The SOS Gangs Project was the first UK ex-offender led project developed from facilitators personal experiences regarding the causes of offending, consequences of incarceration and challenges of life on release.

In response to feedback and experience from the SOS Gangs Project the St Giles Trust have also developed SOS Plus which is an early intervention programme delivered at secondary schools.

Client Group: 18 to 31 year old offenders targeted through searches of the prison database and referrals from prison, probation and police.

Location: Young Offenders Institutions across the UK.

Aims: To reduce re-offending through dynamic opportunities through a multi-faceted support scheme, based on an empowerment model, which seeks to facilitate personal development while in prison and reintegration into the community on release.

Form / Services: Individual clients are approached and offered the opportunity to contract support. On volunteering participation in the programme their needs are assessed and tailored holistic support offered to provided information, advocacy and access to services, such as employment and housing.

Clients are encouraged to dissolve criminal associations and supported with opportunities to make informed and positive choices. SOS works to facilitate clients' access to a range of challenging activities, education, training and employment enabling them to cope with life in prison and prepare them for release.

Facilitators seek to engage the community in supporting ex-offenders to facility reintegration and to engage clients families in providing care and support.

Delivery: SOS facilitators are available on-site all week and meet with clients on request.

Organisation(s) / Partnership(s): St Giles Trust works in partnership with a number of statutory agencies including Youth Offending Teams, probation and social services.

Resources: The SOS Gangs Project receives funding from Southwark Council and a number of other private companies.

The programme employs five full time members of staff and five volunteers, including peer mentors who have completed the programme. As mentors have personal experience of the consequences of offending they are viewed by the clients as credible and caring which the St Giles Trust identifies as facilitating engaging and impacting clients.

Facilitators have personal experience of the criminal justice system which enables them to realistically and sensitively negotiate services.

Evaluation: St Giles Trust report that out of over 300 clients who have participated in the programme only 15% have reoffended.

Junior Smart and the SOS Gangs Project have won a number of awards including the Centre for Social Justice Award, the Longford Prize and Community Project of the Year Award.

Widening Participation: The programme model and services can potentially be extended to all young offenders institutions.
### ST GILES TRUST - SOS GANGS PROJECT

Further information: [http://www.stgilestrust.org.uk/what/208746/sos_gangs_project.html](http://www.stgilestrust.org.uk/what/208746/sos_gangs_project.html)

### YES (YOUTH ENGAGEMENT SCHEME)

**Type:** Gang Related

**History:** During 2008 the YES programme was developed following community concerns regarding a group of young men, comprising 12 core members. This group’s engagement in drugs taking and dealing, anti-social and criminal behaviour intimidated residents and resulted in the local police issuing a dispersal order. After negotiations with the police and community YES offered a conditional alternative solution to the group members providing an incentive for change.

**Client Group:** Young gang members engaged in anti-social and offending behaviour in local area.

**Location:** Brent

**Aims:** To confront and prevent offending behaviour, encourage downward migration and reintegration into the community through holistic support and peer-led activities and ‘giving a voice’ to street active young people.

**Form / Services:** The first phase of the programme offers the client group the opportunity to develop their own programme of agreed meaningful activities which YES support them in organising. Such activities include football and basketball during the summer and boxercise during the winter. Requiring that the client group leads the project develops their interpersonal and social skills, self-confidence and empowers them to take personal responsibility for their lifestyles. The emphasis is on the client group running the project, aspect of which require them engage other members of the community, with support from YES facilitators. In order to receive support clients are required to adhere to social conventions and there is an ethos through the organisation that everyone take 51% responsibility and behaves in a conventional respectful and courteous manner.

The second phase of the programme works with group members individually to provide them with tailored programmes setting out objectives they are expected to achieve with support from facilitators. Clients are provided with advice and advocacy regarding practical issues such as housing, health and are encouraged to engage positively with statutory agencies such as the police.

Clients are motivated to achieve their ambitions, such as employing and returning to education, and to become involved as peer mentors in the community. Facilitating their engagement with, and reintegration into, the community has enabled some of the clients to develop and deliver talks at local secondary schools, to become involved on the management group for their Local Residents Association and the client group has also become a part of the local police training curriculum.

**Delivery:** The YES Centre is open every day, but is not a drop-in facility. Clients are required to make and keep appointments, made at the clients’ discretion, at which relevant facilitators and youth workers will be available to support them.

**Organisation(s) / Partnership(s):** YES works in close partnership with local statutory agencies, community groups, young people and their families and emphasise that the causes and consequences of social exclusion and deprivation are the responsibility of all agencies involved.

**Resources:** YES receive limited funding from the Home Office and rely on other sponsors for support.

They employ a number of full time and part time members of staff who are dedicated to providing client-focused quality of service.

**Evaluation:** YES report that the clients engaged in the programme desisted from offending behaviour after approximately one year in the programme and YES have won the Problem Orientated Partnerships (POP) Award for good practice.

The Tribal Consortium are in the process of independently evaluating the project.
**YES (YOUTH ENGAGEMENT SCHEME)**

**Widening Participation:**
Extension of the project to neighbouring postcode areas was unsuccessful due to the refusal of the client group to engage with rival groups whom they were certain would initiate conflict. YES have therefore recently developed third phase of the programme which involves setting up a social enterprise with private companies and sponsors to develop a handbook on operationalising their approach and model. This handbook can then be used by agencies in other areas to support desistance of gang activities after which it is anticipated that relationships between young people in neighbouring postcodes can be fostered.

**Further information:**

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**GANG & OFFENDING RELATED**

**FROM BOYHOOD TO MANHOOD FOUNDATION - CALLING THE SHOTS**

**Type:** Gang/Offending Related

**History:** Developed from experience of the From Boyhood to Manhood Foundation this programme was developed to address the growing problem of anti-social and violent behaviour in particular areas of London.

**Client Group:** 11-18 year olds who are referred by schools or statutory agencies (such as the Police and YOTs).

**Location:** Trident Boroughs in London

**Aims:** Confronts and prevents offending behaviour through educational and self-reflexive discussions regarding attitudes to crime and violence.

**Form / Services:** Multi-media education package for delivery of workshops designed to get young people to examine the realities of gang culture and gang life – the real impact it has on, and consequences for, individual offenders, victims and communities.

Content of workshops are tailored to take account of local issues and address individual communities interests and needs. On developing a rapport with each cohort, facilitators are flexible in responding the interests of the group who direct attention to topics of discussion relevant to them, and which reflect their interests, concerns and experiences.

Workshops incorporate a range of teaching styles including activity worksheets, videos and discussions, which address issues of responsibility, respect and citizenship. The focus is on trying to get young people to evaluate the world from different perspectives and to increase tolerance of difference and informed decision-making.

The format of the workshops includes information regarding practical issues such as policing and sentencing, reviewing how the media has produced myths and stereotypes, and examining how emotions and attitudes inform behaviour. Young people are encouraged to find their own solutions to their difficulties and challenges and to make choices which create the world they want to live in.

Workshops provide a forum in which young people can learn from each other with facilitators trained to help them to analyses and debate relevant issues in a safe and comfortable environment.

**Delivery:** Workshops incorporate 18 units delivered to 10 to 25 people at a time. Typically four workshops are delivered over two days by 15 facilitators, although the programme can be tailored to suit organisational requirements.

Workshops are delivered on-site in a variety of settings such as schools, community centres and prisons.
### FROM BOYHOOD TO MANHOOD FOUNDATION - CALLING THE SHOTS

| Organisation(s) / Partnership(s): | The From Boyhood to Manhood Foundation works in partnerships with agencies and organisations commissioning their services. |
| Resources: | The pilot programme was funded by the Mayors Office for delivery schools in Trident Boroughs. From 2010 fees are charged to schools who contract services. |
| Evaluation: | Feedback from agencies involved indicate that there has been a reduction in truanting and violent behaviour at schools where the programme is delivered. The pilot programme has been independently evaluated by Middlesex University who found that young people activity engaged in, and enjoyed, the programme (http://www.london.gov.uk/gangs/docs/calling-shots-report.pdf). |
| Widening Participation: | Suggestions have been made that the educational package could be delivered in all schools as part of the PHSE curriculum. |

### FROM BOYHOOD TO MANHOOD FOUNDATION - DAY SUPPORT CENTRE

| Type: | Gang/Offending Related |
| History: | Founded in response to an increasing number of disadvantaged and maladjusted young people and requests from the community to support young black men educationally and socially excluded, the Day Support Centre (soon to be renamed a College) has been operating for 14 years. |
| Client Group: | 11 to 21 year olds excluded from mainstream schools who are referred by schools or statutory agencies (such as the Police and YOTs). |
| Location: | Southwark |
| Aims: | Encourage downward migration from at risk behaviour through providing a facility for young people who do not respond to mainstream education to learn, develop their capabilities and become responsible and successful adults. |
| Form / Services: | Originally the centre provided practical support, activities and programmes to develop clients interests and skills and confront undesirable behaviour. Due to requests from the clients themselves the centre became an Ofsted independent school during 2004 in order to provide GCSE qualifications. The school provides an alternative ‘culture-specific’ curriculum to up to 30 young black men who are required at the outset to sign a learning contract. The curriculum is flexible allowing for the vacillating process of development, in terms of which clients’ progress in nonlinear – turning mistakes into opportunities to learn from and improve. Learning and is adapted to suits the needs of each cohort and the school requires a high standard of excellence from clients who are encouraged to have high expectations of themselves, to take responsibility and manage outcomes in a respectful, loving and trustful environment. Clients are provided with support through advocacy and access to youth and social workers and graduate peer mentors and encouraged to engage in community service. Education and activities are designed to address behavioural and learning difficulties, improve clients engagement in education and provide with qualifications and skills. Activities are led by the clients who are required to pursue activities and interests of their choice and to work on an annual project which gives back to the community. Clients are also offered residential where they can undertake specialised apprenticeships and vocational skills training. |

A-12
FROM BOYHOOD TO MANHOOD FOUNDATION - DAY SUPPORT CENTRE

Delivery:  
The school is run during term time from 8:15am to 3:30pm and offers evening activities two days a week. Summer holiday provisions include organised activities and residential.

Organisation(s) / Partnership(s):  
The From Boyhood to Manhood Foundation works in close partnerships with statutory agencies, schools and parents.

Resources:  

Evaluation:  
The Day Support Centre has been independently evaluated by the Home Office (2002) and Ofsted (2007) who found a significant improvement in academic achievement, pro-social behaviour with a high proportion of clients successfully returning to mainstream education and/or transferring to employment/training.

Widening Participation:  
The Centre is seeking to expand to other areas in London, such as a larger facility in Southwark and new facility in Peckham in order to facilitate access to the school and increase client capacity.

Further information:  
http://www.usatfbmf.com/TheFromBoyhoodToManhoodFoundation1.php

KIDS COMPANY

Type:  
Gang / Offending Related

History:  
Established in 1996, Kids Company have been providing wrap-around, holistic care and support through drop-in centres for 14 years. In response to the needs of their clients they established the Urban Academy in 2005 and offer support in schools.

Client Group:  
0 to 23 year old disadvantaged young people, the majority of whom are homeless, illegal immigrants, offending, taking drugs, experiencing mental health issues and/or are young carers. Clients self-refer and usually learn about the programme through word-of-mouth.

Kids Company also support to clients parents and teachers.

Location:  
Lambeth, schools in South and North London

Aims:  
Through holistic support and wrap-around provisions Kids Company aims to address the practical needs and improve functionality and emotional wellbeing of disadvantaged children.

Kids Company in association with Great Ormond Street Hospital is also undertaking research regarding neuro-chemical effects of deprivation and trauma influencing cognitive-behavioural development.

Through research, evaluation and experience Kids Company also aim to develop approaches and tools for supporting young people and assessment.
## Kids Company

**Form / Services:** Kids Company run a number of client-centred programmes and interventions in a family atmosphere. They provide a wrap-around service for clients where all their needs can be met at one facility. On self-referral clients are assessed into high, medium or low risk and thereafter assigned a key worker who provides individual tailored support. Key workers mitigate for clients who have been unable to advocate for themselves, support and advice regarding any housing, medical, psychological, social and/or legal requirements. Clients are also given access to behavioural and educational support and access to creative activities.

The Urban Academy provides education and skills training to clients excluded from mainstream schools to facilitate their return to mainstream education, engaging in further education and/or gaining employment.

Kids Company also deliver group workshops in schools where they offer therapy, social work and activities to engage young people to prevent exclusion through support and education.

**Delivery:** Street-level drop-in centre are open six days per week from 7:15am to 9:30pm. Clients have access to the service for as long as they require support and until their needs are met.

The Urban Academy runs during school terms from 10:00am to 6:00pm.

Kids Company delivers support and services in over 30 inner city London schools.

**Organisation(s) / Partnership(s):** Kids Company have developed partnerships with a range of statutory bodies and private agencies to deliver required services.

**Resources:** Kids Company receive funding from the Department for Children, Schools and Families, through the Youth Sector Development Fund together with donations from the private sector and individuals.

Kids Company employs over 300 qualified staff members and recruits over 600 trained and/or qualified volunteers, including social workers, doctors, mental health professionals, educators and professionals. Criteria for employment include empathetic qualities and flexibility as well as qualifications. Staff are supported by a team structure and meet with supervisors every week.

**Evaluation:** Independent evaluations have found that Kids Company have a 100% impact rating and 95% satisfaction rating (The National Children’s Bureau, 2001), that 89% of clients experiences positive outcomes overall and 83% achieved a positive education outcome (Queen Mary, University of London, 2008).

Kids Company was awarded the 2007 Liberty and Justice Human Rights Award and selected as a ‘Child Poverty Champion’ by the End Child Poverty project in 2010.

Independent observers have estimated that over 10 years of operation Kids Company have diverted more than 3,000 children from offending and prison.

**Widening Participation** Kids Company offer training to organisations wishing to replicate their model and approach.

**Further information:** [http://www.kidsco.org.uk/](http://www.kidsco.org.uk/)
### OFFENDING RELATED

**OUTSIDE CHANCE - 'A CAREER IN CRIME?'

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type:</th>
<th>Offending Related</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Client Group:</td>
<td>15 to 18 year olds in Youth Offenders Institutions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location:</td>
<td>HM YOI Huntercombe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aims:</td>
<td>To confront and prevent violence and criminal behaviour by reducing re-offending.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Form / Services:</td>
<td>Workshops designed to inform clients of the consequences of re-offending and challenging them to gain insight into the causes of their offending behaviour. The workshops also educate them on the realities of what to expect after prison and coach them to develop skills to build confidence to cope with the realities and challenges of life on release (such as gaining employment, securing housing and developing relationships).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delivery:</td>
<td>Workshops are delivered to groups and each run for an afternoon.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organisation(s) / Partnership(s):</td>
<td>Outside Chance works in close partnerships with the prisons, penal support agencies, Safer Neighbourhoods Teams and other statutory social and youth services.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resources:</td>
<td>The programme receives funding from the Big Lottery Fund.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation:</td>
<td>The 'A Career In Crime?' programme has been endorsed by UNLOCK, The National Association of Reformed Offenders for the past 8 consecutive years and is the only UK prison workshop programme to be publicly endorsed. Independent evaluation by Research Development Statistics found that clients attending the programme showed an average 14% reduction in re-offending over two years following release.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Widening Participation:</td>
<td>Subject to funding, the 'A Career In Crime?' programme can be delivered at more Young Offenders Institutions.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Further information:</td>
<td><a href="http://www.outsidechance.org/young_offender_institution_projects/">http://www.outsidechance.org/young_offender_institution_projects/</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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