

London Serious Youth Violence Board



Final report

LSYVB
London Serious Youth Violence Board



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Introduction from the Chair

This report reflects the work of the London Serious Youth Violence Board (LSYVB), covering the two-year period to March 2011. The background to the establishment of the Board was the particularly high volume of incidents of serious youth violence (SYV), especially teenage homicide, in the capital in 2007 and 2008.

The Board's work was always intended (a) to be time limited; and (b) to be focused on a manageable and realistic number of key issues. The aim was to assemble the necessary stakeholders required to mount a coherent partnership response and to begin to make a difference to what is acknowledged as a complex and often chaotic problem. As such, the Board decided throughout to take a pragmatic view so far as what it could (and perhaps could not) deliver.

I would particularly highlight the Board's conviction:

- ▲ that solutions are only likely to be successful and sustainable if they are grounded in, and shaped by, the communities concerned
- ▲ that any solution requires the input of the voice of young people
- ▲ that the disproportionate impact of serious youth violence (SYV) on black teenagers must be acknowledged and addressed
- ▲ that the voluntary sector makes a significant but often unrecognised contribution.

Reflecting these elements, the Board has added value to the apparatus that is spread across London tackling SYV and related problems. The Board's role was never to replace this apparatus but rather to encourage, share, demonstrate practice and show gaps to be filled.

Board members and the Secretariat have also been able to develop and share with strategic leads and practitioners a better understanding of the impact of SYV, and the fact that such incidents represent not only devastating personal tragedies for those involved and their families and friends, but are also extremely damaging for the communities concerned, as well as for public perceptions of safety and cohesion more generally.

The Board has therefore been clear that 'more of the same' is not enough, and that it is worth listening to and testing new and innovative approaches that might be effective – in particular, where practitioners believe that such an approach is having an impact on the ground – whether or not the hard evidence is immediately to hand.

In addition, the Board has consistently focused on early intervention and prevention in an effort to begin to break damaging patterns and cycles. It was accepted, including by those representing the Metropolitan Police and the Criminal Justice System on the Board, that the contribution we should seek to make directly in terms of enforcement would be limited. Nevertheless, the Board has been able to offer specific and focused support to the enforcement agencies – and our early intervention/prevention work has been complementary to parallel enforcement activity.

As part of its approach, the Board has been clear that there is not only a moral imperative for this agenda, there are also compelling financial arguments. In an environment of diminishing resources, the system can save money by preventing young people from being caught in a cycle that leads them through the costly criminal justice system. As such, a number of the projects the Board has developed and delivered are low cost, replicable and scalable across the capital – the Safer Learner programme is a good example.

I hope after reading the report and recommendations that you will share my firm belief that one of the greatest threats to tackling SYV in the future is complacency and/or being drawn away from focusing on this priority by other pressures. The destructive and damaging nature of SYV and some of the unique characteristics that are not necessarily replicated or present in other forms of violence means a sustained focus is required to take delivery forward, ensuring that the strands of this report can be brought together - for example, victim advocacy, youth MARAC (multi-agency risk assessment conference) - and determining how best to promote those protective factors highlighted in the disproportionality recommendation.

The body of this final report, and the recommendations set out below, represents a chapter in a continuing story. Our aim and hope is that legacy partners and other stakeholders pick up the baton and continue to respond positively and coherently to the challenges ahead.

Finally, I would like to pay tribute to Board members, Secretariat, individuals and groups that have made the work of the LSYVB possible.



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Will Tuckley".

Will Tuckley
Chief Executive, London Borough of Bexley
Chair of London Serious Youth Violence Board

Dedication

At the beginning of July 2010, the London Serious Youth Violence Board hosted one of its series of Next Practice seminars. The subject was the award winning Shame Violence Intervention (SVI) programme which had been running successfully in Her Majesty's Prison Wandsworth – helping violent adult prisoners to confront their behaviour, find some sort of resolution and move on to lead constructive and positive lives. The programme was also being piloted at a pupil referral unit (PRU) in London, and the session featured – alongside former and current HMP Wandsworth inmates – young people from the PRU. One of those pupils was a 15 year-old boy called Zac Olumegbon.

Zac and his fellow pupils spoke powerfully, articulately and movingly about their experience before an audience of over 100 adults – a wide range of practitioners and professionals with an interest in the field. They took questions from the audience and were able to convey in a few minutes the reality they faced on the street on a daily basis, as well as the support they felt they were getting through their school and the SVI programme. The following day, Zac was murdered on his way to school in a violent incident unconnected with the school, or the SVI programme.

If there was one single event that underlined for the Board and for the large number of partners the Board has worked with the fact that this agenda is concerned with life and death issues for real people, then Zac's killing was that event. It is critical that all stakeholders, and particularly those taking on this agenda after the LSYVB (a) recognise that Zac's death was exceptional – and so the response must always be measured and proportionate; but (b) that it was an exception that was nevertheless as needless as it was tragic. We all owe it to Zac and his family, and others who have tragically suffered as result of SYV in London, to ensure that a robust and coherent response is sustained.

Will Tuckley,
Chair of LSYVB

Executive summary

The Board's focus and work has covered the following key elements, which are expanded in the body of the report and in particular in the recommendations:

Strategic (Recommendations 1 and 2)

- At national, regional and local level, the specific focus on serious youth violence should continue.
- Local responses to serious youth violence should meet local priorities, but should also reflect simple and flexible minimum standards, including around how 'cross-border' issues might be tackled.

Information-sharing (Recommendations 3 and 4)

- Information-sharing will continue to be key so local partnerships should consider models of co-located multi-agency information-sharing that offer the potential for significant social returns and financial savings on investment.
- Violence should be recognised as part of the public health agenda. Benefits are clear - for example, sharing information that becomes available to hospital Accident and Emergency departments in particular can be a powerful analytic tool. Where such agreements exist and are working well with local community safety partnerships it can be extremely effective in providing a more accurate picture of violence, thereby influencing strategic and tactical decision-making for the better.

Education (Recommendations 5, 6, 7 and 8)

- Schools (including pupil referral units) and colleges should promote the effective sharing of information (including risks to individuals) at the key education transition points – including Year 6/7, Year 11/post-16, and into and out of pupil referral units.
- Schools and colleges of all types and phase have a pivotal role to play in their communities. The locality based work started by the LSYVB should be pursued on a wider

scale in London on the basis of a flexible, locally shaped Safer Learner approach.

- Partners should recognise that the decision to exclude or move a pupil into a pupil referral unit may present risks, so personal safety must be of paramount consideration alongside learning objectives in deciding a placement. In addition, pupil referral units (and schools more generally) should consider using restorative approaches to achieve measured improvement in pupils behaviour, and teach young people ways to manage conflict without causing harm to others.

- Colleges and their partners (e.g. youth offending teams) need to be helped to build on the best of existing practice in monitoring attendance and sharing information. This must be done in a way that is manageable and realistic, but which at the same time protects students and (as a result) supports better outcomes. A new finding of LSYVB was that a significant proportion of perpetrators/victims of SYV had been enrolled on a course at college but were not attending at the time of the incident.

Specific groups (Recommendation 9, 10 and 11)

- A significantly disproportionate number of victims and perpetrators continue to be young black African-Caribbean males. All partners need to recognise that fact, adopting holistic approaches that mitigate against identified risk factors and support and promote protective factors.
- That Black and Minority Ethnic victims of serious youth violence, in particular young black African-Caribbean males, would benefit from access to an independent advocacy service, in recognition of the risk of further victimisation and the increased risk of becoming a perpetrator. National and local partners also need to recognise the value of approaches like youth MARAC (multi-agency risk assessment conference).

- ▲ The impact of serious youth violence on girls and young women may often be hidden. As a result, the scale of the problem is difficult to gauge, and the response is often piecemeal and taken up by determined and committed (but small and localised) community groups. More could and should be done to identify the scale of the problem and the effectiveness of particular interventions. Meanwhile, the challenges and solutions could and should be considered at school and college level as part of Safer Learner activity.

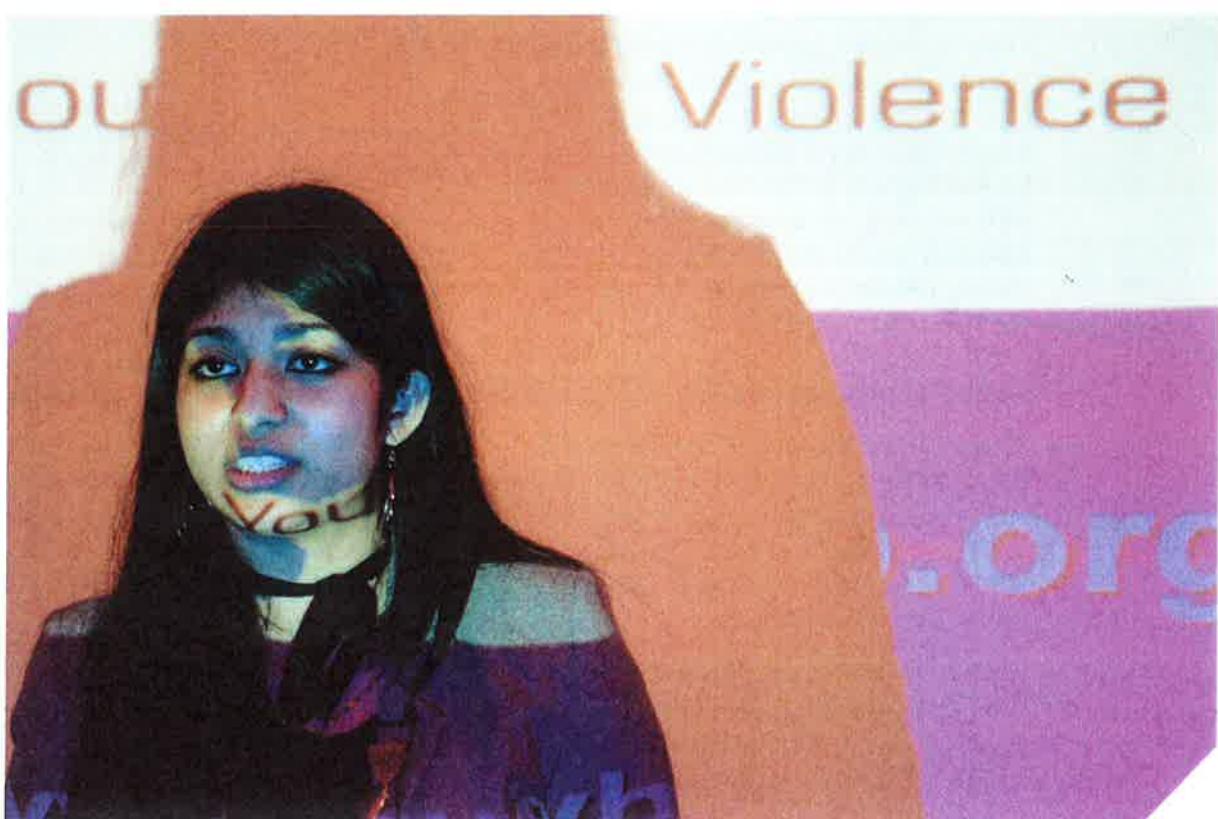
Young people (Recommendation 12 and 13)

- ▲ Local and regional partners should continue to find ways to promote the voice of young people as sustainable solutions to serious youth violence are unlikely to emerge unless they reflect the priorities, energy and commitment of local communities, and in particular the voice of the young people who live in those communities.
- ▲ All partners need to understand that negative stereotyping, in the media in particular, can have a damaging effect on public perceptions but also on young people themselves, so far |

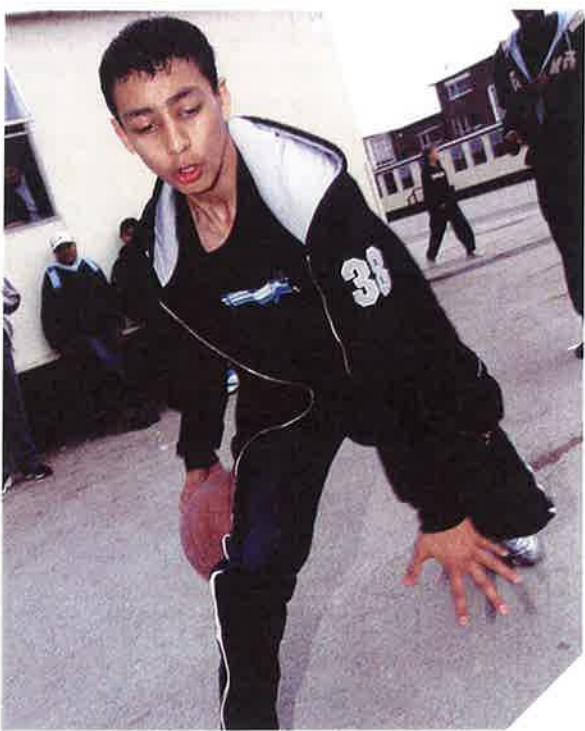
as limiting aspirations and life chances are concerned. All partners should ensure they promote a proportionate approach, whilst at the same time acknowledging that the vast majority of young people in London contribute actively and constructively to their schools and local communities.

The Board's contribution is necessarily a stage in a journey. The Board is confident that this contribution has been significant, but is equally realistic that much more needs to be done. Many of those issues, including those that feature in the recommendations below, are addressed to a range of partners and partnerships, and in particular to:

- ▲ the London Crime Reduction Board (LCRB) – the Mayor-led pan-London group now addressing crime issues at a strategic level
- ▲ (commissioned by the LCRB) the Anti Violence Partnership - whose workstrands reflect a number of recommendations in this report
- ▲ the London Criminal Justice Partnership whose youth strategy has elements which support these recommendations.



Recommendations



Recommendation one: Sustained focus on youth violence

At national, regional and local level, the specific focus on serious youth violence should continue.

Partners should retain a specific focus on serious youth violence because of the particularly damaging effects of serious violence when it involves young people (as perpetrators and as victims) and as a means of beginning to break patterns of violence more generally among particular parts of the community.

The LSYVB journey

It is self evident that (serious) violence in any form is extremely damaging. The response from a range of partners over the life of the Board has confirmed the conviction that where it involves young people (as perpetrators as well as victims) it can be particularly devastating.

There are a number of reasons for this, including the fact that where SYV results in serious injury or death to a young person it is particularly tragic; and because of the publicity that surrounds an incident when teenagers are involved, the impact can be particularly damaging for public perception. But there are perhaps even more compelling arguments.

The first is a moral argument and relates essentially to the safeguarding duties owed to young people by key partners both on an individual and collective basis. The second is more practical. Parts of the violence agenda will inevitably overlap, and there will of course be factors (causes and potential solutions) which are relevant to violence whether it relates to young people or adults.

And there is also an extent to which a disproportionate volume of violence involves a small number of families - both the adult and younger members. For example, there is good evidence to suggest that young people who have witnessed or suffered domestic violence are more likely themselves to go on to become involved as perpetrators (and because of the close links, also victims) of SYV. Against that background, a sustained focus on early intervention is likely to be critical so far as breaking the cycle that blights the lives of a small number of families, and the communities they live in.

A third argument relates to the critical role of schools and colleges. Because of the pivotal position they occupy in their localities, schools and colleges are likely to have a key role in identifying workable and sustainable local solutions – this applies principally to SYV but links strongly to more general issues in the communities in question.

Who needs to drive this recommendation?

Local partners – to develop a shared local knowledge of patterns and trends in serious youth violence.

Government – to retain a coherent and integrated focus on youth justice as a whole and not allow dilution of that focus.

Case study: Knife Possession Prevention Programme in Redbridge

The borough offers a range of support for young people in an effort to tackle youth-related knife crime. This includes:

- ▲ Specialist support is delivered by the youth offending team (YOT) through either one-to-one or group work. It is compulsory for young people with knife-related offences and voluntary for other 'at risk' young offenders. It covers a range of issues including attitude to carrying weapons; the law; health and social implications; conflict management; victim testimony; public space awareness; ex-offender interaction.
- ▲ Targeted support is delivered for those young people at risk but have not yet offended.
- ▲ Universal support is delivered through interactive classroom based drama performances that are currently being delivered in all secondary schools in Redbridge.

The support programme is complemented by a range of other initiatives such as:

- ▲ Safer Transport Teams carrying out targeted work on buses and transport hubs at the end of the school day, with increased work at the end of school terms.

▲ The Summer Nights programme saw multi-agency teams visiting premises to enforce the law and licensing conditions – including serving those under age or intoxicated, providing adequate door security and measures for prevention of drug use. Funding has now been provided to re-commence this programme.

▲ Redbridge Business Improvement District (BID) has provided funding to the police to provide additional officers in Ilford town centre, a hotspot for youth crime. In addition, the police are deploying special constables in the town centre both during the day and in the evenings at weekends.

▲ A new gang escalation approach has been adopted. This includes a multi-agency approach to ensuring all young people associated with named offending groups are being picked up. The police are providing the names of all those who have any association with groups and other agencies are putting in place strategies to work with those who are not previously known to the YOT and other agencies.

London Crime Reduction Board/Anti Violence Partnership – to retain a clear and sustained focus on serious youth violence because of the particularly damaging effect it can have on individuals and communities

A practitioner's view of this recommendation

"As a headteacher with many years' experience of working with some of the most vulnerable young people from particularly challenged parts of the capital - as well as their families - I am happy to support this recommendation.

"Indeed, I have seen at close quarters the impact very serious violence has had on individuals and whole communities. My professional conviction is that a continuing focus on a specifically youth-

based angle is not only desirable but essential - in terms of discharging our collective duty to young people in our localities, but also as an effective way of tackling patterns of violence, criminality and deprivation in our communities more generally."

Richard Leonard - Head of Alternative Education Provision, Children and Young People's Service (CYPs), London Borough of Lambeth

Recommendation two: Strategic approach

Local responses to serious youth violence should meet local priorities, but should also reflect simple and flexible minimum standards, including around how cross-border issues must be tackled.

- ▲ London Crime Reduction Board (LCRB) and the Anti Violence Partnership (AVP) should articulate and endorse concise simple and flexible minimum standards of an approach to SYV.
- ▲ All boroughs should be able to articulate a simple and coherent approach, which demonstrates for example how cross-border issues are being tackled.
- ▲ Localities to recognise the role of non-statutory bodies and look at ways of harnessing their contribution.

The LSYVB journey

The background to and causes of serious youth violence are complex. Much of the Board's work and many of the recommendations in this report seek to unpick that complexity. But even within that complexity, this can often be a volatile and chaotic environment. The incident at Victoria Station at the end of March 2010 illustrated that vividly. A fight organised by rival groups ended with the death of a teenager in broad daylight in front of scores of bystanders at the peak of the evening rush hour. The groups had no connection with the area and there was relatively little in advance that could have usefully predicted the individuals concerned as being at high risk of becoming perpetrators/victims of SYV. The Victoria killing serves as an example of how an incident involving young people who are effectively off the radar can escalate quickly and end tragically.

No system is perfect, and there is always the unfortunate risk of similar events happening again. On the other hand, there are clear indications that good systems are effective in minimising risk and reducing the number of incidents by supporting protective factors. The Board has felt that the strategic approach it has embodied – bringing together the 'right' players at a pan-London level – has delivered a coherent response. In principle it should be desirable to reflect that at local authority level.

Against this background, in 2010 the Board undertook a simple exercise to establish what strategic systems London boroughs had in place, to mount a coherent and joined up response to the challenge of SYV. We had replies from a majority of boroughs, although that does not of course mean that the rest are not adopting similar approaches.

The findings were helpful in identifying or confirming a number of key principles:

- ▲ An effective system can come in various forms – this is a good example of an area where one size certainly does not fit all.
- ▲ Systems must be flexible and anything specifically related to SYV should build on existing practice and intelligence - in many cases, young people at risk of becoming perpetrators and/or victims may well be on the 'radar' of local services for other reasons where risks are known, e.g. non-attendance at school, bullying, or domestic violence.
- ▲ Because of the possibility of incidents like the one described above at Victoria Station, there should be the capacity to escalate and respond quickly to soft intelligence, such that potentially risky situations can then be managed and contained by schools and/or the police.
- ▲ Systems should be simple, accessible to all relevant staff and easy to maintain.
- ▲ Systems should reflect the contributions that non-statutory bodies can make.
- ▲ Because admissions patterns, and travel to and from school and college, are particularly complex in London, systems need to be designed to reflect the fact that borough boundaries are often meaningless so far as the dynamics of SYV are concerned. Cross-border co-operation is likely to continue to be a key element.

Who needs to drive this recommendation?

Localities - to recognise the role of non-statutory bodies and look at ways of harnessing their contribution.

Boroughs - must be able to articulate a simple and coherent approach, which demonstrates, for example, how cross-border issues are being tackled,

Case study: The London Borough of Ealing

In the spring of 2009, the London Borough of Ealing developed a Serious Youth Violence Strategy, which built on models of effective youth violence strategies already in place in other areas in London, for example Lambeth's 'Young and Safe'. The strategy had three key objectives, relating to delivering safety, confidence and justice, improving health and well-being, and enabling enterprise and entrepreneurship. Activities and actions were delivered through a task group, made up of members of the Children's Trust and Safer Ealing Partnership (the Ealing community safety partnership). These included:

- To improve intelligence through making it easier for practitioners across agencies to act on early warning signs, by clarifying which interventions correspond to which assessment of need.
- Address disproportionality by addressing issues related to disproportionate representation of black and minority ethnic groups in the criminal justice system; school exclusion statistics and mental health services.
- To improve performance, efficiency and strategic commissioning, identifying

opportunities for more effective strategic commissioning across partnerships, and across neighbouring boroughs where appropriate.

- Building confidence promoting and communicating good practice, models of success and positive representations of young people in the community as well as strengthening community-based approaches to addressing serious youth violence.

The work of the task group has been instrumental in reducing the number of serious youth violence incidents in the borough. Between 1 April 2010 and 9 January 2011 there were 155 serious youth violence offences in Ealing, a decrease of 19.3 per cent upon the same timeframe the previous year. In contrast, average trends across London show a 0.9 per cent reduction in this crime type.

These initiatives have also contributed to an overall reduction in the number of first-time entrants to the youth justice system aged 10-17 per 100,000 and led to an increase in the number of young offenders engaged in suitable education, employment or training.

London Crime Reduction Board/Anti Violence Partnership - to articulate and endorse concise, simple and flexible minimum standards of an approach to SYV.

A practitioner's view of this recommendation

"The required approach needs not be overly bureaucratic and should link strategically to a borough's community safety partnership to ensure local accountability. It should be managed by operational officers to ensure a speedier flow of information among borough lead officers.

"Boroughs may need to start working in clusters, either based on geography or on crime trends. Above that level it would be very helpful to have a London-wide body looking at developing and sharing good practice, as well as supporting an understanding of the wider problems across London.

"I agree with the recommendations for a strategic approach and would also add that boroughs will need to work closer with local non-statutory bodies to develop new and innovative ways of engaging young people, understanding that they all don't relate to mainstream community provision. The new approach should include closer working with places of worship, and other community and commercial services providers".

Alva Bailey - Head of Service, Community Safety, London Borough of Islington



Recommendation three: Multi-agency information-sharing

Information-sharing will continue to be key, so local partnerships should consider models of co-located multi-agency information-sharing that offer the potential for significant social returns and financial savings on investment.

Based on the principles, experience and success of projects like Westminster City Council's Family Recovery Programme and Hackney's Triage Unit, other local London partnerships should consider the establishment of multi-agency information-sharing hubs.

The LSYVB journey

During its journey the Board has recognised the need to create strong links with the safeguarding recommendations of Bichard, Laming and Munroe – in stressing the importance of effective information-sharing.

Under the Board's original 'Safeguarding' workstream, information-sharing gaps were clearly identified by practitioners, despite the existence in some cases of statutory tools and process, including:

- ▲ between schools/colleges and youth offending teams
- ▲ at key educational transition points
- ▲ sharing of hospital admission information in relation to young victims of SYV.

Also, while recognising the complexities involved, the LSYVB has, as part of its Next Practice seminar series, been able to highlight the work of the City of Westminster's joint agency Family Recovery Programme, recognising that similar approaches have been developed in other localities, supported by government.

An important part of the rationale behind such models is the recognition that family pressures, tensions and breakdowns are among the factors that drive many of the young people who get involved in serious youth violence, and that effective and targeted support for families can be critical to the prevention of further risk.

The council's Family Recovery Programme (FRP) is based on multi-agency approaches that support and intervene with families facing multiple challenges and who, as a result, are at risk of losing their children, home and/or liberty. The programme developed a new way of working by adopting a whole family approach, rather than focusing on just young people or adults. The FRP is a service transformation that brings multiple agencies together to implement whole family change.

The council has a co-located multi-agency team who cover a breadth of services, including domestic violence, benefits and anti-social behaviour. Referrals come from a wide range of sources, including health, housing and the police. Families that are referred typically face a range of challenges, including child protection, anti-social behaviour, youth crime and domestic violence.

Some of the key successes have included:

- ▲ High levels of engagement from target families
- ▲ Health-related ‘wins’; increased numbers of GP registrations and immunisations, for example, as well as more effective access for those in need of mental health support
- ▲ Improved school attendance, and improving the prospects for employment – by helping parents get into training.

A key challenge has been demonstrating that this intensive service can create real savings in the long term. Indeed, Westminster City Council’s research (‘Repairing broken families and rescuing fractured communities- Lessons from the frontline’) suggests that for every £1 spent on FRP, £2.10 in costs is avoided by the public purse in year one. This social return of investment is supported by a central government-commissioned independent study of the FRP’s impact on crime and anti-social behaviour, which estimated that £3 in costs were avoided for every £1 spent on preventing offending through the programme.

In just one year, some well-engaged families that had previously suffered from complex and entrenched problems turned around their behaviour to such an extent that up to an estimated £136,000 in costs had been avoided.

Similarly, there is Hackney’s Partnership Triage Unit, a concept that envisages all records of police intervention where young people are present being quickly notified to a centralised ‘Command Centre’ where they are assessed. A group of Triage unit specialists drawn from different agencies use their experience to retrieve, pool and forensically assess information on previous interventions with the children or their family and proactively gather background information on health and education that would provide a holistic view of the circumstances of the child and inform how each case should best be handled.

Within four hours of receiving notification of the incident, its seriousness is reviewed, a lead agency assigned and each case handed off with a suggested course of action to all the agencies that should work together to prevent the risk of harm escalating or to mitigate the effects. The most serious cases are routed directly to intervention

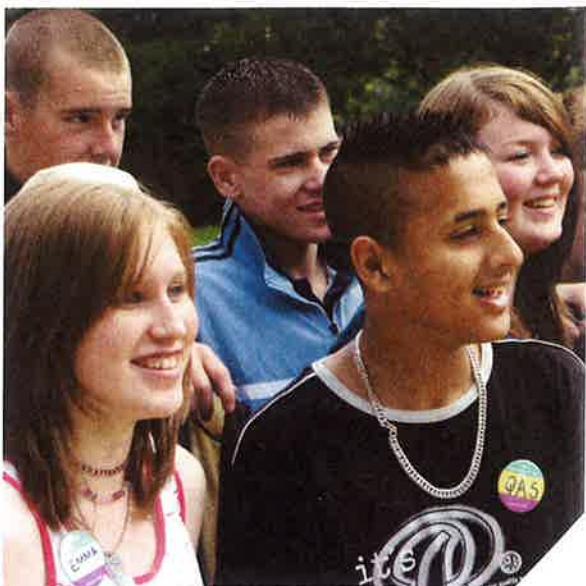
experts for immediate action, but still ‘Triaged’ to gather information to inform the follow up actions. The Triage unit is staffed by professionals drawn from all the major agencies involved with safeguarding children in Hackney and for the first time each incident is processed and handed off within hours, with an expert assessment of the incident, a lead agency defined and enough multi-agency background information to allow the case to be handled immediately by the receiving organisations.

Who needs to drive this recommendation?

Local partnerships – Under the strategic lead of the London Anti Violence Partnership to assist in establishing local schemes in recognition of how approaches like the Hackney Partnership Triage and Westminster FRP can achieve measurable results and produce significant return on investment and cost savings.

Government - Should promote effective community budgets to which the multi-agency (partnerships) information can apply to develop local priorities and guide local spending decisions.

Voluntary sector - To work with local partnerships to explore ways of ensuring they become part of the referral pathway as well as examining ‘payment by results’ options for the sector to become involved in local provision.



Case study: 'Family A' – Westminster City Council Family Recovery Programme

Referrer

Child Protection Team – Children's Services

Other agencies involved

Child Protection Team, Youth Offending Team, education welfare, Connexions

Background and concerns

Five children, one of whom has a child of her own. Mother, four children and grandson all live together.

- Mother has history of alcohol misuse and depression
- Poor educational attainment
- Anti-social behaviour among children
- Teenage pregnancy
- Domestic violence.

FRP Care Plan

- Address mother's needs
- Pre-birth assessment for pregnant child
- Benefits check and provision of support
- Examine housing needs
- Manage children's behaviour
- Gather information on children's health
- Nursery placement for three year-old
- Develop mother's parenting skills
- Support 15 and 16 year-old re-entry into education
- Improve school attendance for all children.

Progress and strengths

All aspects of care plan progressed:

- 15 year-old daughter is providing good day-to-day care for her baby and is motivated about education.
- Oldest child supported to move out of family home due to her behaviour posing risks to her younger siblings. She is now living in a hostel and making appropriate use of the resource. She is visiting home and her behaviour has improved.
- Mother has used parenting advice and support: children are attending school and nursery, have consistent routines, no exposure to domestic violence and mother is seeking employment.
- Family reacted protectively and appropriately following domestic violence incident.
- Mother started attending a course with a view to seeking employment.
- Non-statutory service (FRP) able to engage in meaningful intervention as family sees them differently to statutory services.

Total estimated costs avoided in 12 months following FRP intervention: £136,000

A practitioner's view of this recommendation

"Early identification and good information-sharing systems are important to reducing youth crime, including serious youth violence.

"I am delighted that the London Serious Youth Violence Board has recommended that other London partnerships should consider establishing multi-agency information-sharing partnerships. Hackney, in the past, had a range of early identification points and referral pathways which were confusing and cumbersome. Police Notifications (Merlins) used to come in to both the youth offending team and children's social care and each of us went through every Merlin to

consider individuals that might require additional support. However we only had our own databases to find out information about the individual and the work was not co-ordinated. The process was time consuming and not an effective or efficient system.

"Now this work is all undertaken in one place. Partnership Triage has helped us coordinate our systems to make informed decisions. We are now also receiving notifications about young people requiring support from schools, anti-social behaviour teams and health. Partnership Triage has most of the information we require about a child or young person and their family in one easily accessible place. The work also contributes to our

family approach as we are able to identify the factors of a family, not just the one individual, and this ensures support to the whole family is provided where required.

"There is more to do, but we are now much clearer about the gaps and are able to see where we can be more effective in sharing information across the partnership. Information-sharing is important not just for early identification but at every stage. By cross-referencing across the range of databases used within children and young people's services, Partnership Triage has also helped us identify when many agencies are working with the same young person or when risks are increasing. These cases

are referred to the partnership resource and review panel and we can make case decisions about the most effective way of working. This reduces duplication of resources, improves decision-making and practice and provides more co-ordinated support.

"Information-sharing has been the focus of much improvement in Hackney. I hope we can develop this further and enable adult services, particularly the probation service, to be involved in this multi-agency information-sharing approach."

Florence Kroll - Assistant Director, Youth Crime Reduction, London Borough of Hackney



Recommendation four: Violence recognised as part of the public health agenda

Violence should be recognised as part of the public health agenda. Benefits are clear - for example, sharing information that becomes available to hospital Accident and Emergency departments in particular can be a powerful analytic tool. Where such agreements exist and are working well with local community safety partnerships it can be extremely effective in providing a more accurate picture of violence, thereby influencing strategic and tactical decision-making for the better.

- ▲ *The sharing of hospital emergency department data with community safety partnerships should continue to be regarded as a high priority (with the full backing and support of the respective agencies that make up those partnerships).*
- ▲ *That the data should, as a matter of routine, be included to help set local strategic plans and influence tactical decision-making.*

The LSYVB journey

The LSYVB has had a keen oversight role in monitoring the progress of the A&E data sharing model development for London. This resulted from a shared belief of Board members that for serious youth violence to be effectively tackled, health had to be recognised as a key partner and violence had to be recognised as part of the public health agenda.

To give a flavour of the impact that alcohol misuse can have in terms of violence, including serious youth violence, London has the highest rate of alcohol-related crime in England. In 2008/9, there were 12.4 alcohol-related crimes recorded per 1,000 population in London compared with 8.6 per 1,000 countrywide (Local Alcohol Profiles for England Primary Care Trust). Also, in nearly half (45 per cent) of all violent incidents, victims believed offenders were under the influence of alcohol (British Crime Survey 2007/8).

The background to the data-sharing project is based on the experience and working model developed in Cardiff. Professor Jonathan Shepherd

(Cardiff University) showed that collation of emergency department data on attendances for assault, violence and youth violence has been vital in the significant decrease in the rates of crime within Cardiff. Subsequently, they have shown a significant decrease in the rates of assaults and alcohol-related disorder following activities implemented by the South Wales Police Service and the Cardiff City Community Safety Partnership (of which Professor Shepherd is the Chair of the Violent Crime Task Group).

Furthermore, according to the Department of Health (London A&E data sharing project delivery team), work on sharing A&E data in Cardiff has led to a 40 per cent decrease in A&E presentations for alcohol-related violence. Meanwhile, indications from early adopting London boroughs are that there has been an estimated reduction in A&E presentations for alcohol-related violence of approximately a 30 per cent.

The implication of this figure for London as a whole is that the Department of Health project delivery team would expect a reduction of 356.7 assaults per week, saving approximately £27,990 per week, based on 29 A&E units and a 12.3 per cent assault reduction throughout London. The total savings per year can be projected at approximately £1,455,493 in attendances for London A&E departments.

However, it should be recognised that while Cardiff has one police force, one city centre, one community safety partnership and one main hospital site, London is far more diverse and has numerous boundaries within which to work. Therefore, in addition to the local data sharing agreements and practices, a pan-London approach to analysis (led by the Greater London Authority Strategic Crime Analysis team) would enable the city as a whole entity to be reviewed, examining journeys, pathways of movement to hotspots as well as cross-border issues. Such a development may help to generate a further 10 per cent reduction in attendances, matching Cardiff's 40 per cent achievement.

The LSYVB jointly hosted a Next Practice seminar with the Department of Health on the subject of A&E data sharing. The seminar covered case studies from Camden, Islington and Newham.

The event examined learning around the practical development of setting up the data collection process within the A&E department, the practical application of the data within the community safety partnership setting, as well as police tactics that could benefit in terms of understanding their impact by comparison with A&E presentation/attendance data.

For example, the Islington 'Victims of Violence' presentation helped draw attention to how the data has been utilised in the community safety partnership setting as well as the potential for future uses:

Violence Against Women Strategy – The data has been used to help develop the current local domestic violence strategy into a much more comprehensive violence against women strategy. Specifically, the data was examined to see what type and demographics of violence was likely to be unreported to police in the borough.

Crime and Disorder Strategic Assessment – The data helped local partners to understand (by comparing and contrasting against other data sets) the levels, types and locations of violence occurring on the borough to ensure that the correct priorities were set for the forthcoming year.

Alcohol Strategy – The data was used to re-write the borough's alcohol strategy to help support the intelligence picture (how many victims were turning up to the hospital drunk, for example, and also where they consumed the alcohol). Potentially future developments may include this information leading to retrospective charging of costs if the licensed premises can be determined.

Referrals – Increasing the number of referrals to support agencies (victim support, drug and alcohol services, youth services).

Staff training/motivation – The data has been presented to hospital staff to explain what the data they are collecting shows and is being used for, which in turn helps to keep them motivated enough to collect it.

Potential resource allocation – The data showed that a high number of victims presenting at the hospital live in Haringey. This has persuaded that

borough to join the strategy group and contribute money and service provision. Domestic violence services have posted an independent domestic violence advocate to the hospital to help deal with the domestic violence and sexual cases that present. Also, police are now discussing the possibility of having an officer based at the hospital to deal with victims as they present.

Other potential uses include influencing licensing decisions, enforcement against underage sales of alcohol and late night transport improvements.

Who needs to drive this recommendation?

Local partnerships - By prioritising the inclusion of A&E data as part of strategic assessments and in local authority licensing and planning. Ensuring that there is an on-going process of feedback to the hospital staff involved in the collection of the data, to continue to strengthen the commitment required of them.

Central government - By continuing to prioritise A&E data-sharing, recognising violence as part of the public health agenda and promoting the Cardiff Model (together with any project implementation learning).

Metropolitan Police – By prioritising the inclusion of A&E data as part of tactical assessments and planning.

Greater London Authority – The Strategic Crime Analysis team leading on the central collation and pan-London approach to analysis.

Hospital clinicians – By being a data-sharing champion.

Case study: Traffic Light System – Tilley Awards Winner 2009

The Traffic Light System (TLS) addresses alcohol-related crime and disorder in licensed premises by taking account of data from police and health service sources and categorising premises according to objective evidence. This provides a management tool that is agreed by all parties making up the Cardiff Community Safety Partnership (CCSP), including the Cardiff Licensees Forum, and who play a key role in reducing crime and disorder.

The TLS exploits a long-standing data information-sharing protocol between South Wales Police (SWP) and the University Hospital of Wales (UHW) which together provides detailed information on the time, place and nature of alcohol-related crime and disorder, as well as new UK licensing laws.

The TLS has provided a method for reducing harm and suffering and supporting those who would otherwise be fearful of violence and disorder which would ultimately impact on a range of criminal justice and health-related services.

For the Traffic Light System, only data concerning incidents within premises or connected with the premises are used. Each premise-specific offence is classified according to its seriousness and scored.

Points are allocated and the total number of incidents for each venue places the premises into a red (immediate action), amber (monitor closely), green (no concerns) category. Since it is reasonable to expect that larger premises experience more crime and disorder, the TLS differentiates between premises according to size and capacity.

Premises found to be in the red zone are then assigned a dedicated licensing officer who meets with the premises management to draw up a SMART action plan that will seek to improve the premises promptly.

Improvements are carefully monitored and the points system is used as an outcome measure together with compliance of the action plan. Lack of demonstrable improvement in safety levels results in enforcement action taken against the Designated Premises Supervisor (DPS). In extreme cases where there is no improvement, premises are then referred to the Licensing Committee who are then able to change the conditions of that premise's license, for example to cut the hours of operation, change the Designated Premises Supervisor (licensee) or revoke the premise's license completely.

This initiative has received positive comments from the local media and from the vast majority of licensees at the licensees' forum. This is because the licensees were included in the development of the Traffic Light System and because the licensed trade valued fair steps to tackle the crime and disorder.

While effectiveness must be gauged provisionally, the TLS does appear to have had a dramatic and sustainable effect on crime and disorder in Cardiff. Looking solely at the difference between the numbers of offences recorded in the month before a premise was classified as red and the month post-intervention with the lowest number of crimes, there was a recorded 71 per cent reduction in the average number of offences across all intervention premises.

Dr Simon Moore (Cardiff University) who examined the system concluded: "Although it is possible that these changes may reflect a general downward trend in disorder, it is likely that they demonstrate how the Traffic Light System has prompted successful targeted policing."

The TLS has also been identified as one of the best practices with regard to meaningful partnership working in both England and Wales by LACORS (Local Authorities Coordinators of Regulatory Services).

A practitioner's view of this recommendation

"Violence has a significant impact on the health and well-being of Londoners. The links between physical and psychological health in relation to real or perceived threat of violence are clear.

A study by Liverpool John Moores University showed that assault is the second leading cause of hospital admissions among men aged between 15-24 years.¹ Therefore public health and the NHS have a clear interest in reducing assaults and the harm caused by violence.

"One way the NHS has sought to work with partners on this violence agenda has been to develop the Cardiff Model of data-sharing, pioneered by Professor Jonathan Shepherd, and fit it to the needs of London. The original model enabled the local emergency department to share depersonalised information in an attempt to reduce attendances for assault. This followed research in Denmark which showed that 62 per cent of those seeking treatment following an assault never report their incident to the police.²

"Since 2009, the Regional Public Health Group has been leading a project, in partnership with the Home Office, London Serious Youth Violence Board and the Metropolitan Police Service, to assist hospital trusts share non-confidential data with community safety partners in London. The aim has been to contribute to a better understanding of the volume and pattern of assaults locally, enabling more effective, targeted preventive activities.

"The sharing of data has become an essential place from where stronger partnerships can flourish, involving hospital staff in community safety initiatives. It is a good starting point for the development of further initiatives such as the Victims of Violence Project in Islington or the Youth Worker Project in Southwark. Currently we have 18 hospitals sharing data between their emergency departments and local partners, and another nine developing the means to collect and share information. In some of those boroughs with good systems already in place, we have seen significant changes in local approaches to

enforcement, such as licensing, and with respect to the management of the night time economy. This has followed the involvement of health partners, clinicians responding to strategic assessments and, in some areas, public health professionals taking active roles within the community safety partnerships.

"Given the significant changes that are occurring within the NHS, in response to the coalition government's policy changes, it will be very important to continue to support the NHS through this period of change so that the good work it has been doing continues and it remains involved in preventing harm from violence.

"The recommendations in this report to prioritise violence as a public health issue and to ensure the continuation of the emergency department data-sharing programme are therefore supported. This work needs to continue and be developed further, with healthcare practitioners and clinicians playing their role in the prevention of violence and alcohol related harm whilst recognising information-sharing is just one part of a much wider programme needed to ensure that the NHS makes its full contribution to the reduction in youth violence."

Dr Paul Plant - Deputy Regional Director of Public Health, London



1 McVeigh C et al (2005) *Violent Britain. People, Prevention and Public Health*. Liverpool, John Moores University.

2 Shepherd, J (1990) *Violent Crime: An Accident and Emergency Department Perspective*. British Journal of Criminology, 30; 289-305

Recommendation five: Transition management

Schools and colleges should promote the effective sharing of information (including about risks to individuals) at the key education transition points – including Year 6/7, Year 11/post-16, and into and out of pupil referral units.

- ▲ Schools should adopt good practice models for managing points of transition (for example, those identified by the LSYVB) to improve the sharing of information on pupils moving from primary to secondary education (NB this should apply both within and out of boroughs of residence).
- ▲ This information should include wider social risks as well as attainment, attendance and behaviour data – and be clear about other agency involvement with the child or family. It follows that receiving schools should use this as part of an early review of risk.
- ▲ This principle must also apply to pupils at KS4 and post-16 undertaking courses in further education colleges

The LSYVB journey

Education in London, as with other statutory provision, faces particular challenges arising from a highly mobile population, localities with high population churn, significant cross-borough travel, a widely diverse population with some schools faced with multiple language and deprivation issues all reliant on the often complex interplay with London's various transport systems.

While acknowledging this, the Board has found in London that information on young people is not sufficiently widely shared between educational establishments at key stages. The potential consequence is that relevant and important information that can affect a young person's vulnerability to serious youth violence (as victim/perpetrator) among other important issues is either not shared, missed or ignored.

A particular risk relates to young people not moving between phases at the standard points, for example because of family mobility and recent arrivals to the UK. Local partners (for example,

Headteacher Partnership Fair Access panels) could usefully test information transfer systems against these recommendations.

The Board came to this conclusion via a comprehensive consultation and research process. Under the Board's original 'Safeguarding' workstream, a focused workshop with safeguarding practitioners was hosted in June 2009. Three initial themes were identified by the practitioners as weaknesses in existing safeguarding process and proposed to the LSYVB as the focus for the workstream:

- ▲ Identifying where mandatory structures and frameworks are not working as they should be (either within or between boroughs).
- ▲ Highlighting gaps in current structures and suggesting what processes should be implemented to rectify these gaps.
- ▲ Paying particular attention to risks relating to transition points in the education system and developing guidance around best practice.

The idea of a 'process map', highlighting practitioner-identified gaps in the safeguarding system from birth to 19 years of age, emerged from this workshop (available via the Board's website, www.lsyvb.org.uk).

The process map further developed via widespread consultation that included all LSYVB members and their organisations, the LSYVB Practitioners' Forum (a robust practitioner-focused reference group for the Board), all London Safeguarding Children Board members and members of the third sector.

A subsequent 'Red, Amber, Green' (RAG) analysis and consultation process took place in order to ultimately provide the LSYVB with an informed prioritisation of the various elements identified from the process map and to generate, among others, this recommendation.

This recommendation, an example of a powerful practitioner-led process, is supported, unsurprisingly, in academic circles. An example of some of this academic research is included below:

"After a year in secondary school (age 13), the majority [of students] recalled having had difficulties of adjustment to both school and peer social systems at the beginning of secondary education.

"At age 15, a poorer school transition predicted higher levels of depression and lower attainment; a poorer peer transition, lower self-esteem, more depression... Although reduced in size, similar results extended to outcomes at age 18/19" (*West, Sweeting and Young, 2008*).

"The importance of effective and appropriate arrangements for the transfer of pupils from primary to secondary schools as a means of ensuring curriculum continuity and progression in pupils' education is now widely recognised as a crucial factor in school improvement" (*Powell, Smith, Jones and Reakes, 2006*).

"The transition from primary to secondary school is said to be a major cause of anxiety amongst children. This period of anxiety can affect not only children's academic performance, but their general sense of wellbeing" (*Dalton, 2009*).

However, while there is a wealth of academic research covering the primary to secondary transition phase there is relatively little that covers the secondary to college/further education phase that the LSYVB practitioner-led process uncovered; reinforced, in part, by the findings of its borough-based research (see college attendance recommendation).

The details of the good practice models scoped out by the LSYVB Secretariat are available via its website.

Who needs to drive this recommendation?

Greater London Authority, Metropolitan Police and pan-London partners - Via a pan-London 'framework' for Safer Learners to support local leaders in improving systems, which may also help to promote local partnerships including parents and the voluntary sector.

Headteachers, principals, local education authorities, academy sponsors and boards of governors

- At all key stages of transition, to recognise the role they play in early identification, prevention and safeguarding around serious youth violence and to ensure that relevant information is shared with the receiving institution and is utilised by ~~their~~ own.

Case study: The London Transition Picture

Many students make poor progress as they shift from KS2 to KS3, and repeat learning that they mastered at primary school.

Ensuring effective transition in London is a more complex task than across the rest of the country. The average London secondary school draws students from around 40 primary schools, compared to a national rate of 25, many of which will be located in different boroughs. Some draw students from as many as 90 primary schools. There is considerable movement of students between boroughs at the point of transition. For example, students in Camden primary schools in 2004 went to secondary schools in 23 London boroughs.

Students in London tend to make less progress from KS2 to KS3 than their peers elsewhere in England (although overall value-added KS2-KS4 is higher in London than nationally), indicating the additional challenge in ensuring continuity of learning between primary and secondary schools in London.

Students eligible for free school meals are considerably less likely than their peers to make a smooth transition from KS2 to KS3.

(Source: *The London Challenge*)

A practitioner's view of this recommendation

"In my work as a former headteacher, and from my current youth justice involvement, I know that one of the key risk points for young people is around educational transition points.

"A new place of study certainly means new opportunities but it also can mean new travel routes and new contacts with other young people. While it will open up exciting possibilities there is potential to being exposed to new risks.

"Transition is not just the obvious progress of KS2-3 and KS4 to post-16. It is also:

- ▲ a process that schools are dealing with throughout the year given the degree of mobility of families in London
- ▲ for young people undergoing managed moves or exclusions
- ▲ for the number of young people who undertake courses in colleges and with alternative providers at KS4.

"In theory, the systems are all there to get the information transfer – but in practice? Without doubt the London complexity including cross-border movement, the sheer number of feeder schools, plus promotion of the autonomy of schools into the future could make information-sharing at transition even more problematic.

"So what is the information needed to support young people?

- ▲ the core information on attainment, attendance, behaviour, learning aspirations and needs
- ▲ the risk information about the child, friends and family (including for example from YOT, police)
- ▲ the support information – which agencies are working with the child or family.

"If we are to support the young person, and manage risk within the school, it is clear that partners are going to have to work even harder at transition as service reductions occur. If we get this right we also effectively mitigate against the costs of dealing with the consequences of getting it wrong in every sense."

Graham Robb – Board Member – Youth Justice Board

Recommendation six: Safer Learners – local problems, local solutions

Schools and colleges of all types and phase have a pivotal role to play in their communities. The locality based work started by the LSYVB should be pursued on a wider scale in London on the basis of a flexible, locally-shaped Safer Learner approach.

- ▲ *The Greater London Authority, with the Metropolitan Police Service and other partners, should define and promote the Safer Learners Framework, to schools and colleges as a way of describing effective partnership solutions to keep young people safe.*
- ▲ *Pan-London partners with local authorities should build on the LSYVB pilot work to offer focused support and challenge to priority schools and colleges (a) as defined by analysis on serious youth violence; and (b) in response to specific requests from local partners.*

The LSYVB journey

The origin of this workstream was the fact that Metropolitan Police Service data indicated that SYV has over a number of years continued to be concentrated in a small number of wards (distributed disproportionately in certain London boroughs). These 'hotspot' wards are categorised as town centres, transport hubs or predominantly residential localities – although the distinctions are not precise and in many cases a ward is two and sometimes all three of these categories. This work focused on the secondary school in the ward in question.

The school, in many instances, may not have particular serious youth violence 'issues' – indeed it is a place where young people are typically very safe. But because of the unique position it occupies in its locality, the school is key to identifying sustainable solutions for the community more generally. For example, secondary schools have strong links with families, with feeder primaries, Pupil Referral Units (PRUs) and Further Education (FE) colleges around the key transition points; with other local children's support services; with the Metropolitan Police, generally through Safer Schools Officers; and with faith, voluntary and community organisations.

As the work developed, it became clear that schools across London – of all types and phase – and indeed FE colleges, had an important contribution to make, whether or not they were physically located in a ‘hotspot’ ward. There were two main reasons for this. First, the often chaotic and unpredictable nature of SYV – illustrated by the homicide in Victoria Station in March 2010, which took place away from the ‘home’ borough of the students and schools concerned, and which generally involved young people who would not have been regarded by the authorities as at risk of becoming involved in SYV. And second, because of complex admissions patterns in and across London – particularly at post-16.

The Safer Learner approach therefore developed, in response to discussion with local partners, into a model which seeks to deliver locally shaped, owned and sustained solutions to secure a safer environment for young learners. It applies (a) in school, but perhaps even more importantly, outside school; (b) travel to and from school; and (c) in the communities around schools – at weekends and school holidays, as well as during term time. For the purposes of simplicity, ‘school’ is used here as shorthand for schools of all type and phase, PRUs, academies – and also FE colleges. Indeed, at the core of Safer Learners is the intention that the model would focus on a community/locality with the school at its heart.

The approach builds on and develops existing practice – it does not attempt to impose a

particular model on local partners – including schools, colleges and local authorities. Feedback has clearly indicated that imposition is neither desirable nor in fact practicable given the degree of decentralisation and local autonomy. This is not, therefore, simply another initiative. Local participation would be entirely voluntary and the upfront ‘cost’ of participation is negligible. Crucially the approach sets out a way to help local partners develop priorities, agree a local action plan and take the work forward.

Who needs to drive this recommendation?

Local authorities and local statutory partnerships (for example, CSPs) - To offer focused support and challenge to priority schools and colleges at locality level as defined by a) data analysis on SYV; and b) response to requests by schools.

School and college heads and principals

(including those not maintained by local authorities) - to consider how this approach can help in terms of student safety, but also as a means of helping some of the most vulnerable young people to achieve.

Greater London Authority, Metropolitan Police, Association of London Directors of Children Services and other partners - To build on the LSYVB locality pilots, by pursuing the Safer Learner initiative – with partnership solutions based on the school/college at the heart of the community.



Case study: LSYVB Safer Learner Session

An example of a Safer Learner session, led and facilitated by the at an inner London secondary school towards the end of 2010

This session focused on:

- ▲ The importance of **shared understanding** of information about trends, risks in the locality - ward, neighbourhood or cross-border.
- ▲ How to improve **quick time information-sharing** on threats to young people's success in learning.
- ▲ How to support the **school/college improvement** priorities in leadership, curriculum, pupil support or risk management - for example, making available specialist teaching resources as part of an early intervention package to prevent crime.
- ▲ How support from police and council services can most effectively and cost-effectively be deployed to take prevention, challenge and enforcement steps with **individuals, groups and families** – including safeguarding steps.
- ▲ How to build better support at **key transitions** (e.g. primary to secondary school or to post-16).
- ▲ Ensuring and celebrating the **positive engagement of young people** in the process - especially those most at risk of harm.
- ▲ How most effectively to access and involve the contribution from the **community**.
- ▲ Steps to provide **reassurance** to learners and communities by agreed **visible policing** of the school and travel routes.
- ▲ The provision of support and advice to local partners around how to mount a coherent, proportionate, rapid and effective **critical incident** response to (a) an incident; or (b) to an anticipated incident.

A practitioner's view of this recommendation

"The session at Lambeth Academy was timely, helping us to focus on solutions in response to recent incidents in the locality - these were not related to the school, but inevitably had an impact on the community and therefore on our students.

The session enabled us to refine a localised approach with a wide range of partners - and identified practical and inexpensive offers of support from unlikely sources, including faith and voluntary groups. In particular it has led to a conference led by young people in the school and the local college - which we believe will have concrete benefits not only so far as personal safety for our students (and the wider community) is concerned, but also in terms of student attainment.

There is no doubt that a safer learning environment supports improved outcomes. This is an approach I would recommend all schools (and colleges) to consider."

Stephen Potter – Principal, Lambeth Academy



Recommendation seven: Exclusion and the role of Pupil Referral Units

Partners should recognise that the decision to exclude or move a pupil into a pupil referral units may present risks, so personal safety must be of paramount consideration alongside learning objectives in deciding a placement. In addition, pupil referral units (and schools more generally) should consider using restorative approaches to achieve measured improvement in pupils behaviour, and teach young people ways to manage conflict without causing harm to others.

- ▲ Partners should recognise that exclusion from mainstream school is characteristic of the experience of many young people involved as perpetrators and/or victims of serious youth violence (SYV). This suggests that Pupil Referral Units (PRUs) have a crucial role to play.
- ▲ Whilst in PRUs, students will come into contact with young people who have been subject to similarly challenging (and often chaotic) circumstances and who may be from schools and localities that themselves present tensions and rivalries.
- ▲ PRUs are therefore key links in the system and it is essential that they continue to have high aspirations for students; and are helped to manage transitions into and out of school and alternative provision.
- ▲ Young people should be taught skills and strategies to manage and minimise conflict while in PRUs. Overall, safeguarding should be a primary concern when considering whether and where to refer.



The LSYVB journey

The Board's work has brought it into contact with many PRUs and many young people with experience of a PRU education. There is little doubt that PRUs have a pivotal role in the often chaotic and challenging lives of some of the most vulnerable young people in society.

Young people we spoke to indicated that their experience was sometimes that referral to a PRU had a stigmatising and demoralising effect – that it was an indication that the system and the adults within the system had given up on them. Equally, it has been clear that young people tended to respond positively and constructively where PRUs continued demonstrably to have high aspirations on their behalf – and that they were being helped and challenged to attend, achieve and attain. Just as significant, perhaps, is the message of how important young people feel it is that their voice should be listened to and respected – that they are made to feel that they have some degree of control over their futures (which in other parts of their lives has possibly been missing).

The overwhelming impression from the practitioners we have engaged with is that these positive elements of the student/PRU relationship are what characterises the educational offer.

The combination of both sides of this engagement suggests that:

- ▲ All partners need to continue to recognise pupils in PRUs as likely to be vulnerable to SYV – both as victims and perpetrators.
- ▲ PRUs should continue to have an unremitting focus on pupil achievement.
- ▲ It is important that PRUs and those schools which exclude the pupils maintain accountability for pupil safety and learning outcomes and planning and arranging appropriate progression to employment, learning or training.
- ▲ Processes on transitions into and out of PRU/alternative provision should be refined especially with a focus on safeguarding.
- ▲ Pupils should be taught skills and strategies to minimise conflict, and to find solutions.

- ▲ The emerging success in terms of pupil outcomes of restorative approaches should be considered strongly.
- ▲ Local partnerships should continue to place multi-agency support around PRUs.

Who needs to drive this recommendation?

School and PRU heads - To ensure that the personal safety of young people is the first consideration when considering exclusion.

Central government - To recognise the key preventative role of PRUs in prevention of youth crime and the risks posed by admission to PRUs.

Greater London Authority - In its development of the Safer Learners work to focus in particular on the PRU angle – and to explore how local decision-making can minimise exclusions and manage transfers in a way which mitigates risks.

A practitioner's view of this recommendation

"The work of PRUs is extremely influential in highlighting to vulnerable young people their potential and personal worth, despite the initial trauma of receiving a permanent exclusion with its resulting dislocation from a mainstream school environment.

"The relentless emphasis on a first-class education which promotes independence, further training and employability alongside the restorative work around peer, adult and community relationships has the potential to minimise conflict, reduce the risk of offending and promote learning as a route to future work.

"The essential focus on safeguarding young people and finding suitable partners and mentors to ensure their re-engagement with learning cannot be overlooked. The recommendation of the LSYVB endorses the potential of PRUs to offer a powerful educational solution for some young people."

*Thelma Bartlett – formerly PRU Executive Head,
London Borough of Islington*

Case study: Croydon Pupil Referral Unit

Who was involved?

A Year 10 girl and several Year 10 boys

What was the issue?

Persistent hurtful comments by the boys, predominantly accusing her of being a 'jezzy'. Angry reactions by the girl including throwing furniture at the boys.

What action was taken?

After several punitive measures had failed, permission was obtained to try a restorative approach. Restorative interviews were conducted with the girl and one of the boys, and one of the other boys agreed to talk. The meeting with the boy was extremely productive. He had not realised the full significance of the term 'jezzy', in fact he had no reason to believe that there was any evidence that the accusation was true. He decided that he had only been using the term because he had heard others doing so. He had also not realised just how much distress he had been causing.

What impact has this had (so far)?

The problems diminished and then ceased soon after the restorative interviews, and all of the pupils decided that a restorative meeting was not needed as the issue had been resolved. A firm friendship emerged between the girl and two of the boys.

How did the above action help to embed anti-bullying work in your area?

The use of restorative approaches in the situation achieved far more in a much shorter space of time than sanctions could have achieved and provides us with a model for student led conflict resolution which can be applied in any similar situations in the future.

Recommendation eight: The role of further education colleges

Colleges and their partners (e.g. youth offending teams) need to be helped to build on the best of existing practice in monitoring attendance and sharing information – in a way that is manageable and realistic, but which at the same time protects students and (as a result) supports better outcomes. A new finding of LSYVB was that a significant proportion of perpetrators/victims of SYV have been enrolled on a course at college but were not attending at the time of the incident.

While recognising some of the unique features of college establishments – for example in terms of scale, multi-site layout, and complex and market driven admissions patterns - colleges nevertheless have an important role to play in tackling serious youth violence. In particular, this could be achieved by having a clearer focus on the importance of transition management and attendance issues.

The LSYVB journey

This recommendation emerged as a result of a number of separate Board pieces of work highlighting the important role for colleges. One example is that of borough-based research carried out by the LSYVB Secretariat with particular assistance from Dean Woodward (Assistant Director, Children and Young People's Service, Lambeth). Thirty-nine victim and perpetrator cases of serious youth violence from inner and outer London boroughs were compared against serious youth violence risk factors developed by Professor Betsy Stanko of the MPS (see Annex B). One of the key findings was that 41 per cent of the individual cases showed a history of truancy or poor attendance at college.

Two of the particular concerns this research raised were that, firstly, in some instances the poor attendance was not known to statutory agencies, such as the youth offending team, until the investigation following the serious incident. Secondly, practitioners highlighted the differences between colleges and schools that, for example, retain a sixth form where the general school attendance system will quickly pick up absenteeism.

Additionally, the Board's school-based data driven pilot projects (a local problem-solving approach to serious youth violence, recognising that while the individual school may not directly have a SYV issue they are the one universally accessible service at the heart of an affected community) further reinforced the importance local partners gave to attendance at college and the potential impact on tackling serious youth violence.

Moreover, the attendance at college issue is seen as part of a wider flexible Safer Learner environment that the LSYVB helped to develop together with the Mayor of London's Time for Action team (see the Safer Learners recommendation).

These elements were tested and essentially confirmed in discussions with the Association of (London) Colleges (AOC) and a number of college representatives from inner and outer London. Those discussions revealed the following:

Attendance

- ▲ Information-sharing relationships between colleges and statutory bodies (including youth offending services) are patchy. In certain cases they are very effective and built on mutual trust, but too often they depend on personal relationships and are insufficiently systematic. This is compounded by the fact that colleges admit students from very large numbers of schools and across many boroughs – so even in individual cases, the effectiveness of information-sharing between a particular colleges and its 'client' boroughs can differ markedly.
- ▲ There was a consensus that AOC should develop and share a simple template. This would make practical suggestions and raise a number of questions to enable colleges to build on any existing practice/protocols and help make their approaches and relationships more effective.

Transition

- ▲ This is a significant challenge – mainly because of the complexity of admissions patterns post-16. Nevertheless, there was a consensus that AOC examine how examples of good practice, for example related to learner self-disclosure and admission processes, might be made more

generally available to help colleges manage this key 'break point' in a more targeted and effective way.

Who needs to drive this recommendation?

Association of (London) Colleges - Build upon AOC engagement to build Safer College Partnerships (based upon experience of the Safer Schools Partnership model but taking into account the unique features and complexities of colleges). Also, by taking forward the actions detailed above in terms of attendance and transition.

Safer Learners pan-London partnership - Build the learning from the LSYVB's data-driven pilot project work with schools into the Safer Learners pan-London partnership and Framework to ensure they are made available within the college environment.

College principals - College principals to work with AOC in pulling together good practice that can be used to meet the above actions related to attendance and transition and to consider adoption of resulting guidance.

Metropolitan Police - The MPS to recognise the key role colleges have to play and to consider opportunities for extending Safer Schools resources to colleges.

Case study: Croydon College

1. Promotion of a safer college (by having a focus on good transition management/risk management).

The college has a designated manager who works on a daily basis managing incidents that occur on college premises or within the close vicinity.

The designated manager's job is to oversee the college disciplinary policy and procedures and manage risks along with the college health and safety officer - and to handle conflicts between parties.

All incidents are recorded and where necessary the college works closely with the college Met Police liaison officers to assess risk by sharing appropriate information where there may be a risk of SYV taking place at the time or at a later date as a repercussion of the incident originally recorded.

Parents, carers, foster carers, key workers, social workers and next of kin are all informed as appropriate under the college's responsibility for safeguarding children 14-18 years. Where a student is a cause for concern the college maintains contact with registered next of kin up to the student's 19th birthday.

Cross college services such as welfare advice and guidance are employed as appropriate to support the process. There is professionally qualified staff on hand to deal with anger/violence related issues

and assessment is made by these staff with regards to any external referrals that may be needed.

2. Tracking of attendance

As a result of the above, the student profile is assessed using the college Education Business Systems (EBS) system. Academic performance - which includes the monitoring of attendance, college disciplinary record and recorded contacts (with the student and registered next of kin or external agency staff) - are all examined along with any Learning Difficulty and Disability (LDD) needs the student may have registered with the college learning support manager.

Student attendance is tracked via the register system and monitored by tutors and admin staff. The college has an internal referral system where a student who is believed to be a cause for concern can be referred if it is thought there is a relationship between their poor attendance and poor behaviour.

To reiterate the importance of this factor, out of 28 students who have been suspended for violent or aggressive behaviour, 24 displayed poor attendance based on the college target of 80 per cent. One particular case referred to the MPS had student attendance rates of 40 per cent, 52 per cent and 50 per cent respectively over the first three terms.

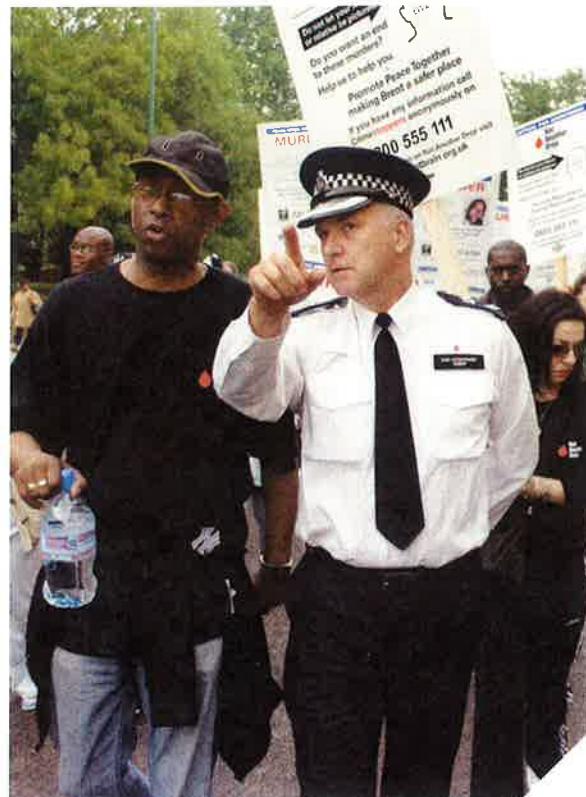
A practitioner's view of this recommendation

"The recognition in the report of the different role colleges play in the education system in London is welcomed, and that working with colleges to tackle serious youth violence is a key success factor.

"The recommendation is welcomed as it recognises the role of colleges and the complexity of relationships that colleges need to maintain, often across the Metropolitan Police and other services, e.g. youth justice, organisational and geographical boundaries. This places a great deal of responsibility on colleges to follow good practice in the interests of their learners and to make linkages with the key agencies.

"The recommendation should help us to move towards greater prevention of serious youth violence and away from just reacting when it occurs at or in the vicinity of colleges. At the core of this is an approach based on what can and should we do together in the interests of young people rather than allowing the boundaries to get in the way."

Paul Head - Principal and Chief Executive, the College of Haringey, Enfield and North East London



Recommendation nine: Disproportionality

A significantly disproportionate number of victims and perpetrators continue to be young black African-Caribbean males. All partners need to recognise that fact, adopting holistic approaches that mitigate against identified risk factors and support and promote protective factors.

- ▲ *It should be openly recognised that young black African-Caribbean males are disproportionately affected by serious youth violence as both victims and perpetrators.*
- ▲ *Also, that to make an impact, there should be a focus on prevention and intervention techniques (or protective factors) that deal with issues of stability, victimisation and addressing issues of trust.*

The LSYVB journey

Young black African-Caribbean males in London are more likely to be victims and perpetrators of serious youth violence (and typically both); in 2007 and 2008, 90 per cent of teenage homicide victims were from Black and Minority Ethnic communities, as were 77 per cent of perpetrators.

These figures are also reflected in:

- ▲ The Board's London Narrative (see Annex A) which highlighted key challenges for London:
 - there is disproportionality of Black/Black British young people involved with the criminal justice system but also as victims; and
 - that serious youth violence is still concentrated in often deprived areas of London.
- ▲ The Board's borough-based research (available on the Board's website, www.lsyvb.org.uk) looked at 39 cases of serious youth violence. Twenty-six of the victims and perpetrators were black African-Caribbean. Eighteen (46 per cent) had indicators of living in a deprived household or were unemployed.
- ▲ A report from Race on the Agenda (ROTA) commissioned by the Board (and also available

on the Board's website). The report attempts to shed more light on the pattern of disproportionality by identifying factors which may increase or reduce the likelihood of an individual becoming involved in serious youth violence – described by ROTA as risk factors and protective factors.

Risk factors are experiences or conditions of an individual's life that increase the likelihood of that person's involvement in SYV. For example, unemployment and the associated lack of financial security and daily routine increase the appeal and opportunity to be involved in criminality.

In another example, taken from the ROTA report (available on the Board's website www.lsyyvb.org.uk), it is suggested that "the similarities and correlations between being a victim of violent crime and being a suspect in similar violent crimes is too common to ignore. The fact there is such an over-representation of black victims of violent crime provides correlated support for the view that experiences of violence increase the need and willingness to protect oneself through violent responses." The Board's borough-based research found that 11 (28 per cent) of the victims/perpetrators had themselves been previous victims of serious youth violence.

Also, rates of the 16-19 age groups not in education, employment or training (the NEET category) are not generally higher for the black population than the white population. However, where they are higher there is an increased likelihood of violent offending. This indicates that unemployment in young age groups is important as a risk indicator of serious youth violence.

Protective factors are those that improve the resilience of an individual to the appeal of involvement in serious youth violence and have potential synergy with safeguarding and early intervention agendas. For example, employment is a protective factor for an individual as they are financially secure and have a stable structure to their daily routine. Therefore the appeal and opportunity to be involved in criminality is reduced compared to those that are unemployed.

The ROTA report suggests that while there may be "no specifically direct relationship where a higher employment rate guarantees a lower likelihood of

violence, it is clearly an important part in the environmental indicators of deprivation. There seems to be a level of 60 per cent employment where this indicative tendency occurs towards more stable or reduced levels of violence." Attainment in education is also an important protective factor. Black attainment is marginally lower in the boroughs with generally high attainment, but where attainment in the black population is higher the likelihood of serious youth violence is reduced. This is specific to the black population. The LSYVB borough-based research found that one third of the 39 individuals had been considered low achievers at school.

The ROTA report also suggests: "With the black group there is a general trend that as attainment rises then violence drops off, with trend lines indicating this inverse relationship. But when compared with the white group, the decrease in violent offences can be seen as a lot more marked for black youth. There is a distinct downward trend which increases as attainment increases. This is compared with the white group whose committing of offences remains very stable whether boroughs have high attainment or not."

The most effective way of breaking the pattern of disproportionality seems to be through interventions which increase the protective elements and reduce the risk. Indeed, many of the interventions and projects highlighted via the Board's Next Practice seminar series offer a potentially good pointer towards those that support and promote protective factors and may form a helpful focus around which future strategic leads can shape and influence policy and direction. For example, those operating gang exit strategies, those that are taking forward a restorative justice approach to conflict within pupil referral units, to innovative programmes that attempt to get young people to confront their own behavioural issues in order to address offending patterns and to mitigate risk issues in their lives.

Other examples include agencies sharing information in a way that supports the opportunity for early intervention and looks at the whole family unit. Additionally, the Board's Locality-based, school-focused work brought out the potential and willingness of local church groups to take a lead in helping to bridge the parent/carer and young learner divide. Indeed, a common

feature of many of these examples is that they are community-based and seek to empower young people (i.e. XLP, Brathay Trust, Fairbridge, The Peace Alliance and community football club trusts).

Who needs to drive this recommendation?

Local partnerships – To recognise the cross-cutting nature of disproportionality and the potential value of a holistic approach that promotes specific interventions to support those protective factors that are most pertinent locally.

Voluntary sector – Working with local partnerships particularly through organisations who have demonstrated effectively their capacity to build trust and confidence in providing protection against victimisation.

Greater London Authority – Under Project ORACLE (the development of the repository of good practice) signpost to effective local partnerships practice that will support them in a holistic approach.

A practitioner's view of this recommendation

"From 18 years experience, XLP believe there is rarely one factor working in isolation that will steer an individual down the path of getting involved in SYV or gangs.

"It is unlikely that just because a young person has a difficult home life they will turn to SYV. If they truant or misbehave, again it will not automatically push them towards a gang. A child can grow up in poverty and not see drug dealing or robbery as the answer. That said, all these factors play a part and when they are combined they can have a powerful and sometimes overwhelming affect on a young person. That's why XLP support any holistic strategies to overcome this issue.

"Effective strategies need to include early intervention, creating accessible role models, working with communities and not just doing things to them. Getting young people to stay in education so they can go into good employment is absolutely key to giving them a future that does not involve SYV. Education is one way to level an uneven playing field.

"Creating stability, tackling victimisation and addressing issues of trust are crucial if we are to see change in this area."

Patrick Regan - CEO of XLP and author of 'Fighting Chance - Tackling Britain's Gang Culture'.

Case study: XLP

Ian and Tim are two young people who have been working with XLP for the last three years and attend a comprehensive school in South East London. Ian's home life is fairly stable living with both his parents. He has engaged in school life with a normal level of attainment.

Tim is from the same area and is in the majority of the same classes as Ian, however his family life is chaotic living with aunts and many other extended family members. He has had an increase in violent behaviour over the last two years which have consequently led to numerous fixed term exclusions and he is generally disengaged with school.

Both of these young people have grown up in the same area, attended the same primary and secondary schools, but the different levels of stability in their lives have lead to negative cultures within their communities having very different effects.

Recommendation ten: Victim advocacy and youth MARAC

That Black and Minority Ethnic victims of serious youth violence, in particular young black African-Caribbean males, would benefit from access to an independent advocacy service, in recognition of the risk of further victimisation and the increased risk of becoming a perpetrator. National and local partners also need to recognise the value of approaches like youth MARAC (multi-agency risk assessment conference)

An advocacy service of the type recommended - addressing amongst other things issues related to trust - which is able to feed into a local Youth MARAC (Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference), similar to that of the Lewisham Borough model, would make a powerful impact.

The LSYVB journey

From the Board's outset it was acutely aware of the work of Professor Betsy Stanko which clearly indicated Black and Minority Ethnic communities and, in particular, young black African-Caribbean males were disproportionately more likely to be affected by serious youth violence, as both victim and perpetrator (in 2007 and 2008, 90 per cent of teenage homicide victims were from Black and Minority Ethnic communities, as were 77 per cent of perpetrators).

The 'Priority areas' workstream that took this issue forward was further informed by an additional two pieces of research. The first examined confidence factors affecting the likelihood of young black people reporting being victims of serious youth violence and the second examined real cases of SYV against 24 known risk factors developed by Professor Stanko (see Annex B).

The first piece of research, *Confidants and Confidants* by Bland and Campbell, can be found on the LSYVB website (www.lsyvb.org.uk). One of its key recommendations was, "To develop an 'independent advocacy' service for young black people using learning from the success of independent domestic violence advocates. This service could be commissioned from voluntary sector organisations as part of a 're-tailoring' of

some existing projects. The service should be open to providing parents with advice and support. It is suggested this may be piloted in one or two boroughs where MARAC conferencing for young victims is being developed, with built in evaluation."

Such a pilot was commissioned and evaluated in Lewisham. The independent advocacy was undertaken by Victim Support and fed into the local youth MARAC process. Some of the key evaluation findings were:

- The cost for supporting each victim represents good value, especially when the high costs to the State of young people being re-victimised are taken into account. The project could potentially save the criminal justice system and the health service £378,000 by preventing just one case of wounding. Furthermore, by reducing repeat victimisation over the long-term, the costs savings of the project could increase exponentially.
- It reduced the number of incidents of serious youth violence in local communities, with none of the Black and Minority Ethnic victims supported having been re-victimised.
- The project had a significant impact on young victims' feelings of safety, security, confidence and self-esteem.
- It is likely that the project increased young Black and Minority Ethnic victims' confidence in agencies such as the police, and increased their understanding, and accessing of the services available to them. Specifically the project has led to increased numbers of young people engaging with the police and reporting crimes.

The full report can be found on the LSYVB website.

It is also important to highlight the potential synergy and learning that these findings have for the safeguarding and early intervention agendas.

The second piece of research was carried out by the LSYVB Secretariat with particular assistance from Dean Woodward (Assistant Director, Children and Young People's Service, Lambeth). Thirty-nine cases from inner and outer London boroughs were compared against Professor Stanko's serious youth violence 24 risk factors. 28 per cent of the

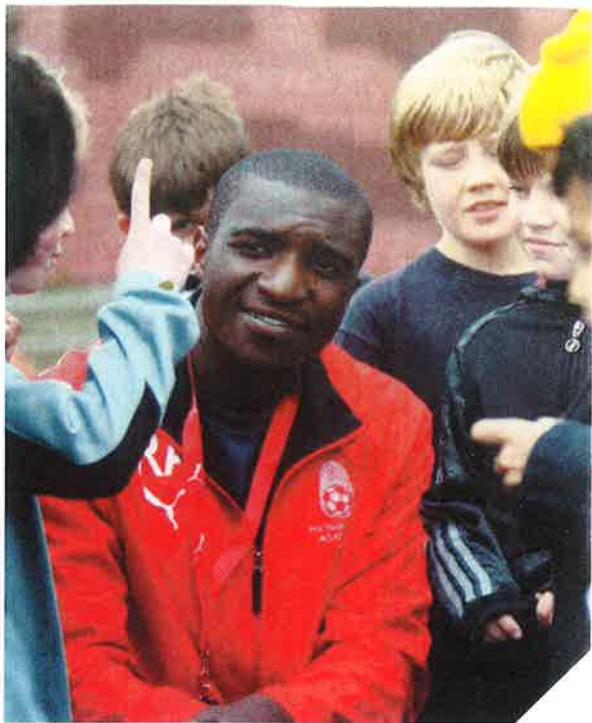
individual cases studied showed that either a victim or perpetrator had been a previous victim of serious youth violence. These key findings reinforced the need for this recommendation.

Who needs to drive this recommendation?

Local partnerships - To consider establishing local schemes in recognition of how approaches like victim advocacy, Youth MARAC and FIP can achieve measurable results and produce significant cost savings

Strategic bodies - To recognise the underlying pattern, understand and if necessary evaluate what is driving it – and publish simple and concise guidance for all partners to help them respond to it

Victim Support (England and Wales) – Building upon its long-established tradition and experience of working with victims to become a champion of the advocacy approach.



Case study: Young Victims' MARAC

Taken from the independent and youth MARAC evaluation report

'C' came to the attention of the Young Victims' MARAC after becoming a victim of robbery. C was home alone when the attack took place. Two perpetrators forced entry to her house and assaulted her. This included her head being smashed into a wall and stair banister before she was dragged by her hair around the house in an attempt to find where any valuables were kept.

When the Victim Support Youth Advocate first met with her, C was extremely tearful about the situation and was experiencing the beginnings of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). She was suffering from flashbacks, panic attacks, was not sleeping at all for fear of the incident occurring again and was rarely attending school.

C was also suffering from paranoia and had begun to view all young men she came across as potentially being the perpetrators. The Young Victims' MARAC and associated support started to address her emotional needs and C was referred onto a free counselling service.

The project also provided supporting letters to C's housing association with regards to them moving C

and her family from the house due to negative associations; a move which was approved and is now taking place.

C also built up the courage to give a statement to the police and was willing to participate in a photo fit identification procedure. She was referred to the Second Wave Youth Arts project to help address her confidence and social needs. C is now attending school fully. Furthermore, she is no longer suffering from panic attacks and other PTSD symptoms.

Further comments by young victims who had worked with the advocate underline the value of the approach taken by the MARAC.

"I'm usually quite shy anyway, and since that time [the incident] I haven't been doing anything. But since I agreed to engage with the MARAC and you set me up with Second Wave I feel like I'm getting my confidence back, I'm not fully back to normal but now it's like I'm getting there."

"The way how I see it... if I didn't know about this conference thing (the Young Victims' MARAC) I'd probably still be hiding out from them (the perpetrators)."

A practitioner's view of this recommendation

"Young victims of crime need far better support at their first point of victimisation.

"The fact that many young people who commit SYV have previously been victims themselves - in some cases many years before, suggests there is a compelling argument for agencies to come together and improve how we support young victims; to have a positive impact on their confidence in the support agencies, help reduce their risk of repeat victimisation, and to reduce the risk of 'victim turning offender' too. The case for a bespoke approach to supporting young black men at risk of SYV is just as compelling, and must not be shied away from.

"My team in Lewisham have been involved in the development of this pilot since its conception back in the 2008. Victim Support provides the youth advocate who works directly with the young victims referred to the MARAC.

"The MARAC is a monthly meeting where professionals meet to share information on high and very high risk cases around victims of SYV. Information about the risks faced by those victims, the actions needed to ensure safety, and the resources available locally are discussed and used to create a victim-based risk management plan involving all agencies. By sharing risk-related information, within a multi-agency framework, agencies get a clearer picture of the victim's situation and current risk levels and any additional safeguard issues that may have arisen. This facilitates the development of responses that are tailored to the needs of individual victims and their families.

"Safe information-sharing through a revised Information-sharing Protocol agreement allows agencies to manage both the victim and the perpetrator in ways that aim to reduce the future risk of harm. Each partner service is also set up with a secure network link in order to keep information strictly confidential. Currently, over 30 services are involved in, and regularly refer to the MARAC.

"A panel has also now been established consisting of the youth offending service/police/community safety team and Victim Support in order to review all referrals and to formally agree all MARAC cases eligible for the panel, or to redirect through to Victim Support dependant on threshold levels. The panel also formally reviews and agrees all case closures on a monthly basis.

"The youth advocate acts as a 'connecting agent' between the young people, the MARAC and the range of services available to young victims of crime. The youth advocate attends every MARAC to act as the voice of the victim, providing details about the victim's situation and what might influence their safety. The youth advocate also keeps the victim informed of any decisions made by the different agencies involved, and works to make sure that the other agencies fulfil their responsibilities to the victim.

"One of the major benefits of the Lewisham MARAC has been its success in identifying many young victims who had not previously reported their victimisation to the police. These referrals were forwarded to the advocate who is then able to work directly with the young victims addressing their fears of reprisal from the perpetrator. The increased confidence that victims derive from the service is evident in the number who subsequently come forward to give evidence, who had previously been reluctant to do so.

"As the new Chief Executive of Victim Support in England and Wales, I wholeheartedly endorse the recommendation to expand the local youth MARAC's. Victim Support is ready to work with any funding agency to plan and implement this most worthwhile scheme."

Javed Khan - Chief Executive, Victim Support (England and Wales)

Recommendation eleven: The hidden impact of SYV on girls and young women

The impact of serious youth violence on girls and young women may often be hidden. As a result, the scale of the problem is difficult to gauge, and the response is often piecemeal and taken up by determined and committed (but small and localised) community groups. More could and should be done to identify the scale of the problem and the effectiveness of particular interventions. Meanwhile, the challenges and solutions could and should be considered at school and college level as part of Safer Learner activity.

- ▲ National, pan-London and local partners could and should invest resource in shedding more light on the scale of what is often a hidden problem, as well as the effectiveness of particular interventions.
- ▲ The challenges and solutions around this problem could and should be considered at local level as part of the Safer Learner approach. This would be as much about helping boys to understand and develop appropriate relationships and behaviours as identifying and seeking to tackle this challenge as a predominantly girl 'problem'.

The LSYVB journey

The decision to have a specific focus on the impact of SYV on girls and young women was strengthened by the work of Race on the Agenda, and in particular the publication in February 2010 of the ROTA report '*Female Voice in Violence*'. This report underlined the extent to which this impact is often hidden – and the fact that many of the key elements in the system tend to cater for boys rather than girls.

This phenomenon has been echoed in a good deal of the Board's work more generally – and in particular the locality-based work focusing on schools. It is not that there are no interventions or support for girls and young women – but it is often piecemeal and taken up by determined and committed (but small and localised) community groups.

Indeed, one of the challenges is almost certainly the availability of reliable data and evidence – on the size and scale of the problem (as for a variety of reasons, incidents too often remain unreported and off the radar), but also on the effectiveness of existing support and intervention programmes.

Nevertheless, this strand has emerged as a cross-cutting element right across the Board's programme – including the positive role model campaign (where girls have featured prominently and positively), and as the subject of one of the Next Practice seminars. This highlighted a number of issues and challenges, including:

- ▲ The need for early intervention so far as education is concerned, but the appropriateness of airing some of these issues with children in Year 6 or below.
- ▲ The sometimes contradictory messages girls (and boys) are given (through music and the media for example) where sexualised behaviour features prominently – but in other aspects of their life where sex and sexual relationships are inappropriate or even taboo subjects for discussion.
- ▲ The dynamics of relationships with boys and the extent to which young people of both sexes have a genuine understanding of consent and coercion – and even where they do, the extent to which they might feel comfortable about taking informed decisions.

The Board has also been keen to test its Safer Learner approach on a girls' secondary school.

Who needs to drive this recommendation?

Greater London Authority and London Crime Reduction Board - To ensure that the challenges and solutions are further explored through the Safer Learner approach, including seeking to identify which local interventions are proving effective.

National and local government – To ensure that the response going forward supports girls and young women just as it does young males.

Case study: Safe Choices

Safe Choices is a unique service which seeks to reduce and prevent young women's violent offending. It is targeted at young women who perpetrate violence, are gang associated and/or who experience sexual violence in the context of groups and gangs. Young women are referred into the service based on being involved in, or at risk of involvement in:

- ▲ Individual or group violent offending
- ▲ Gangs or gang culture
- ▲ Sexual exploitation or sexual violence in the context of gangs and groups.

The young women are offered either an eight-week group work programme or six-month intensive one-to-one support. All programmes are adaptable to meet the needs of the young woman who may be both offender and victim in the context of gang and group violence. The programme is delivered by The Nia Project in partnership with The Children's Society and workers address the following issues: gangs, girls and risk; healthy and non-healthy relationships; sexual violence and exploitation in the context of gangs and groups; identity; anger; and aspirations and support.

Safe Choices takes a Narrative Therapy approach to working with young people. The narrative approach focuses on identifying and building strengths in order to develop and reinforce resilience (Ungar:

2001). We look for young people's stories that go beyond the narratives of violence, anger and offending that have often come to define them. Our work is participatory and rights based, and set within a framework that addresses both risk and protective factors (Hicks & Stein: 2010).

Safe Choices workers take on an advocacy and trusted adult role that is underpinned by the defining characteristics of youth work (Davies: 2005), whereby they support young people to 'render their world understandable and hence manageable' (Lindstrom: 2001). They value young people's knowledge of their own lives, and in pursuit of resilience create a platform that allows for the development of self worth and aspirations, despite adversity and against the odds (Hicks & Stein 2010).

The work is delivered in spaces that are safe and appropriate for young women, and referring agents are asked to provide a safe space where possible.

Following the programme the aim is that young woman will have: increased awareness of risks for young women and how to stay safe; increased engagement in mainstream services (e.g. education); reduced levels of anger and violence; and increased understanding of healthy and non-healthy relationships.

A practitioner's view of this recommendation

"It will be really important, beyond the life of the LSYVB, for partners across London to recognise the way in which we believe girls and young women may be involved. The fact that the scale of the challenge is not clear is a particular issue.

"I believe that taking forward the Safer Learners approach, in a variety of environments, including those where the risks to girls are not apparent (and perhaps including the primary sector so that we can genuinely get to grips with early intervention) may shed more light on what interventions and support are adding real value,

and how local partnerships can take forward a coherent response.

"Against that background, I support the approach set out in this recommendation".

Karen Benton – Headteacher, Westwood Girls' College for Languages and Arts, London Borough of Croydon

Recommendation twelve: Involving young people in the decision-making process

Local and regional partners should continue to find ways to promote the voice of young people as sustainable solutions to serious youth violence are unlikely to emerge unless they reflect the priorities, energy and commitment of local communities, and in particular the voice of the young people who live in those communities.

Based on the experience of the London Serious Youth Violence Board and its work with young people, it is recommended that statutory and non-statutory organisations and agencies should commit themselves to establishing, and demonstrating, clearly identifiable and accessible means for young people to directly feedback and influence on issues and decision making that impact upon them.

The LSYVB journey

One of the earliest agreements that the LSYVB reached was that in any discussion of measures to try and tackle serious youth violence the voice of young people was essential. Equally important was the Board's commitment to actually reflect the voice of young people in its works.

Throughout the life of the Board, in addition to being able to call on a practitioner forum through which additional views, comments and feedback could be sought, there has also been a Youth Advisory Board (YAB, a youth-led pilot initiative to enable the voice of young people to be heard on policy and practice relating to preventing serious youth violence in London) operating as a 'reality check' and providing a young people's perspective on various workstreams and projects.

As part of the LSYVB'S commitment to exploring the relationship of how young people are represented in the media and the impact on young people, a media roundtable discussion was held. Indeed, the voice and influence of young people were integral to the holding of the event. Similarly, and breaking with standard practice, the YAB were commissioned to set the agenda, chair the discussion and draw up the findings.

Additionally, the Board has called on young people to develop key strands of work. *The Young Londoner's Manifesto for a Safer London* was drawn up from the direct input of young people drawn together from establishments all over London including schools, Pupil Referral Units and Young Offender Institutions.

As detailed in the public perception recommendation, young people were integral in directing the Board's attention towards this area of concern and frustration. Moreover, having raised attention, young people through groups including the YAB, the Peace Alliance Young Peace Champions and Young London Mayors, helped to influence, design and build the Board's '99 per cent' campaign.

This campaign, designated a LSYVB legacy project, will continue beyond the life of the Board, being solely run by young people through the Youth Advisory Board (under the mentoring of Independent Academic Research Studies - IARS).

Other examples highlighting the impact of involving young people in developing solutions or responses to these complex serious youth violence issues include the YAB's research findings into youth violence on public transport and their report on the impact of social media networks on the occurrence of youth violence at unlicensed gatherings of young people. Findings from the former highlighted the importance of equipping parents and carers of young people with the skills necessary to be able to intervene on behalf of young people in issues that are of concern to them.

The YAB's report into the role of social networking in contributing towards violence at unlicensed youth events highlighted that such events tended to be more prevalent among younger secondary school aged people and perhaps also more common in girls' schools. It was concluded that whether there is violence at a party depends on the type of person hosting it – for example, whether they are willing and able to manage such an event. House parties were identified as places that young people can go to find a specific person who they have problems with to start violence.

Who needs to drive this recommendation?

Local authorities – Good working models of local youth parliaments and young elected Mayor's should be rolled out across London boroughs.

Local statutory and non-statutory agencies and organisations – As part of their public facing consultation processes, the voice of young people should be considered an essential element, for example, in court user groups and ward policing priority discussions.

Members of Parliament, GLA Assembly members
– As part of their local soundings MPs could consider having easily accessible (and sufficiently publicised) means of attracting feedback and comment from local young people.

Youth support organisations – Should take the lead in volunteering to help agencies and organisations to establish the necessary processes

and structures to enable young people to have their voice listened to and reflected.



Case study: Youth Advisory Board

In 2010, Independent Academic Research Studies (IARS), a youth-led social policy think-tank established the Youth Advisory Board (YAB) of the LSYVB. The main aim of the YAB project was to pilot an approach whereby young people would be enabled to gather intelligence to feed into the Board's work on serious youth violence. Consisting of young people aged between 16 and 24, from across London and from a range of backgrounds, the YAB were tasked by the LSYVB with investigating a specific issue relating to youth violence after school hours. This focus reflected the prevalence of youth violence between the hours of 3pm and 6pm.

As a social policy think-tank that specialises in enabling young people to lead on their own research projects, IARS facilitated sessions with the YAB to support the development of their investigation. The YAB were keen to explore youth violence on buses and at transport hubs after school hours, identifying this as a particularly pertinent issue of youth violence during the stated time period. The Met Police Safer Transport Command worked closely with the YAB providing valuable intelligence and on-going support which enabled them to establish a geographic focus to

their project; Elephant and Castle and West Croydon transport hubs.

The YAB received a tailored research methods training session from IARS, which provided them with the skills to design and develop their own research tools. The YAB drew on their new skills through in-depth interviews with stakeholders and young people, and facilitating the response to questionnaires with young people from across both transport hubs.

This research has generated new evidence regarding youth violence on public transport; in particular it has created an evidence base of effective approaches to tackling this problem. Such findings complement the evidence the MPS already has, as well as shedding new light on the causes of youth violence. Specific recommendations from this research have also been made to the Safer Transport Command. These relate to responding to young people's concerns about safety at transport hubs and on buses and to building upon existing strategies that tackle the root causes of youth violence, such as building close working relationships, with local schools.

A practitioner's view of this recommendation

"The issue of meaningfully involving young people in policies and practices affecting them has come over so many times in the policy tables that I sit on. Despite the statutory 'duty to involve' and several attempts by community organisations to encourage a culture within public services that sees the views of young people as a necessary process, this is yet to be achieved.

"Over the past year we have coordinated the Youth Advisory Board (YAB) that has demonstrated the capabilities of young people when given the responsibility to lead on their own project. They have contributed reliable and important evidence to statutory organisations on issues relevant to them. The YAB has been a success, not only in terms of the valuable contributions they have made to statutory agencies, but also in terms of the benefits they provided to all young people involved. Members of the YAB, who come from a range of backgrounds, have developed a range of important skills, from research methods to communication skills and team working. All young people who have participated in the YAB's work have enjoyed the sense of knowing their voice is being listened to and that their opinions are valid in the eyes of policy-makers and service deliverers. They remain engaged and responsible citizens as a consequence of their involvement.

"In 2008, the Home Affairs Select Committee Inquiry report on Young Black People in the Criminal Justice system, recommended that in drawing a strategy for addressing serious youth violence involving Black and Minority Ethnic groups. The government needs to ensure young people themselves are consulted and that local and national organisations ensure young people's views are systematically taken into account in forming and evaluating policy" (para. 211).

Although IARS does not focus on any particular ethnic group, and therefore the YAB was inclusive, care was taken to test the Select Committee's recommendation. The YAB has proved that the impact can be extremely positive, resulting in practices grounded in the reality of the young people they aim to reach.

We believe it is important that this recommendation is accepted and rolled out by all agencies who should commit to establishing clearly identifiable and accessible means for young people to feed their ideas into decisions that affect them. We welcome and encourage a move to greater and genuine inclusion of young people in decision-making processes that impact on their lives."

Dr. Theo Gavrielides – Director of Independent Academic Research Studies (IARS)



Recommendation thirteen: Public perceptions and young people

All partners need to understand that negative stereotyping, in the media in particular, can have a damaging effect on public perceptions but also on young people themselves, so far as limiting aspirations and life chances are concerned. All partners should ensure they promote a proportionate approach, whilst at the same time acknowledging that the vast majority of young people in London contribute actively and constructively to their schools and local communities.

There should be further recognition of the importance of positive role models, especially those young people who come from the same areas and backgrounds and have faced and overcome similar challenges to other young people at risk of serious youth violence.

The LSYVB journey

The LSYVB found in the course of its research, discussions with practitioners and the third sector, and in dialogue generated during Next Practice seminars, a real concern at the lack of positive opportunities and role models available to young people. The Board also heard a significant amount of anecdotal evidence about how damaging stereotyping, most often negative in nature, young people could be, particularly in terms of limiting life chances.

This, in part, was reflected at the Board's summit in December 2009 when groups of young people from all over London (from schools, pupil referral units and young offender institutions) were asked to develop a *Young Londoners' Manifesto for a Safer London*. The final manifesto (which can be found on the Board's website www.lsyvb.org.uk) contained powerful messages from young people who wanted "To be known as individuals – not just labelled".

Additionally, during a question and answer session with a media representative within the summit itself, young people articulately expressed their frustrations at how they felt they were represented in the media (see the report on the Summit on the Board's website).

In response to the challenges raised, the LSYVB commissioned a London-wide public attitude and perception towards young people survey. Nearly half (45 per cent) of the 1,000 respondents said they did not feel safe around teenagers in the capital. Underpinning this fear was a mistaken perception of the numbers of numbers of young people involved in serious youth violence (SYV).

When asked for their perception of the proportion of young people involved in SYV, over two thirds of Londoners answered with figures ranging from five per cent to over 50 per cent; the most popular answer was between five and 20 per cent. In reality, only one per cent of young people are involved in serious youth violence.

The survey revealed one of the likely causes for this misunderstanding being the portrayal of young people in the media. Seventy per cent of Londoners believed the media portrayed teenagers negatively, and less than a fifth thought the media portrayed teenagers in a balanced way.

With the help of numerous young people focus groups (covering a wide range of ages, backgrounds, areas and experiences) the Board developed and launched the 99 per cent campaign (www.99percent.org.uk). The campaign has aimed to:

- ▲ Address the disproportionate fear of serious youth violence
- ▲ Challenge some of the negative perceptions of young people
- ▲ Promote young London positive role models who have overcome challenging backgrounds to positively contribute to society
- ▲ Generate and promote positive opportunities for young Londoners
- ▲ Highlight the on-going positive contribution of young Londoners to their communities.

Throughout the Board's work we have welcomed the support of the Youth Advisory Board (YAB) (supported by Independent Academic Research Studies). Indeed, the YAB were commissioned by the Board to host a roundtable discussion with senior media representatives to determine if there were any key messages that could be shared with individuals, agencies and organisations to help positively promote young people.

Some of their suggestions included:

- ↳ involving young people in the editorial process with regard to stories related to young people
- ↳ including more positive news items about young people
- ↳ greater use of the 99 per cent campaign logo particularly where there are negative stories in circulation regarding young people
- ↳ encouraging young people to respond to news items they feel are not balanced or promote negative stereotypes
- ↳ encouraging young people to capitalise on their knowledge and use of new media types/networks to get their stories heard by the public.

Who needs to drive this recommendation?

Organisations that speak about or on behalf of young people - Recognition of the role authorities can play in challenging negative stereotyping and the importance of the provision of positive opportunities to young people. Some guidance on how, when speaking about young people to the media, they can attempt to influence the subsequent reporting and promoting and supporting local positive role models.

Schools and colleges – By actively celebrating and promoting the positive contributions of their young people.

Young people – By being proactive in challenging the media and promoting their positive contribution as well as capitalising on their knowledge of new media types/networks.

Case study: 99 per cent

99 per cent ambassador – Ray Ansah

Ray experienced the consequences of perception and attitude from an early age, "When I was growing up, it was always just me and mum. When she started suffering from bad health, our small family unit took a big knock. Mum tried her level best to bring me up alone but it was so tough.

"Growing up in an area where few people work can disillusion you. Kids think 'what's the point; I might collect benefits or commit crime.'

Ray only found stability in local gangs. Early involvement in low-level criminality ultimately led to him failing college and being sent to prison for a short time.

Ray was angry at the world and set on that path until his resettlement course two weeks before his release when his eyes were opened to some real positive alternatives, including The Prince's Trust. He left prison determined to change his life but found obstacles linked to perception and attitude at every corner. Having a criminal record and no legitimate work experience made it hard for Ray to get a job.

Ray went to The Prince's Trust for support to find a career and boost his confidence. He was referred on to the Get Started with Football programme.

The scheme uses football to motivate unemployed 16- to 25-year-olds giving them life skills and increased confidence.

Having gained coaching qualifications, Ray is now volunteering as a coach for a local youth organisation called Pro Touch Soccer Academy, who provide support and mentoring opportunities for young volunteers wanting to make a career in youth and sports development and obtained a grant from The Prince's Trust to set up football coaching sessions for children during the summer.

He is using his skills and experience in football coaching to support himself while at university studying sport science.

Ray said: "The way life chances and opportunities can be affected by how others perceive you, without really knowing you, can be an extremely negative influence even from a very early age.

"I think that at as young as 11 children make the decision between the path of study or crime, I would like to be able to help them make the right choice. I would love to be able to provide them with the positive male role model I never benefited from having."

Media organisations and representatives/media training institutions – Provide opportunities for young people to contribute to the editorial process. Reflect on the negative impact that stereotyping young people can have on them and the power of positive role models and news items.

A practitioner's view of this recommendation

"Acknowledging the problems that stereotyping of young people can create is an important step in making more youngsters feel they are a welcome and valuable part of society as a whole."

"Perhaps even more important than that, though, is the difference organisations can make by reaching out to and engaging with this group, and encouraging others to do the same."

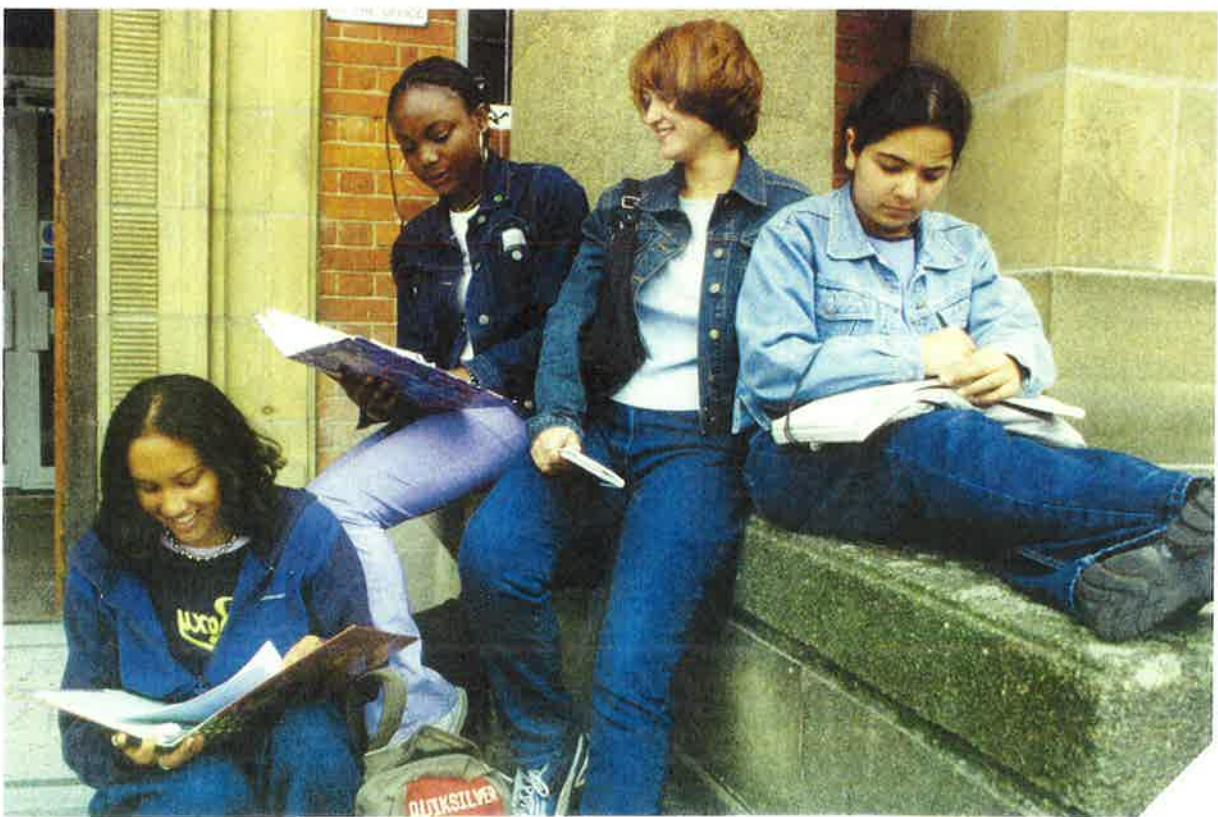
"In this respect, LSYVB's work has been particularly valuable for both the young people it works with – giving them an adult platform on which to speak their minds – and for those adults who have engaged with the Board."

"If you don't talk to these young people, you'll not know what they think, you'll not know what their strengths are and you'll not be part of the solution to their problems."

"It follows that, for any campaign to be successful, it must reach out to both young people and adults, to ensure the opportunity for real communication is not missed. The 99 per cent campaign, for example, worked when both young people and adults acknowledged the message it was promoting, even if the aim was originally to educate adults."

"The recommendations being made by the LSYVB are sensible, and reflect the concerns of young people I have spoken with. The next step may well be to set much more specific targets on engagement with young people to ensure the Board's conclusions are the beginning of a process, and not the end."

Kenny Campbell – Editor, Metro Newspaper



The picture of Serious Youth Violence, London and the Board

This is the statistical picture of SYV in London:

- ▲ In 2007 there were 27 teenage homicides
- ▲ In 2008 there were 29 teenage homicides
- ▲ In 2009 there were 15 teenage homicides
- ▲ In 2010 there were 20 teenage homicides
- ▲ In 2010 there were 6,722 young victims of serious youth violence (SYV)¹, an increase of 3 per cent on the previous year.



"When an individual is affected by homicide the impact on them is immense. Emotionally they are devastated. Most will need some kind of trauma counselling, as receiving the initial news is such a shock."

The following testimonies are perhaps a better reflection of the human reality of SYV in London.

"Over the last ten years, I've had the great misfortune of burying young people and supporting families, who have been victims of SYV. The scars that this has left on our communities run deep, and its impact demands a response that can bring both hope and healing."

Families must feel that there is robust support and constructive engagement with identified 'at risk' groups, spanning young people, parents and communities at large.

Whilst the LSYVB, along with many other organisations and individuals, have made and are making positive steps to address and tackle the issue, there is still an urgent need for collaborative working, which both restores and reinforces the values of life."

Reverend Nims Obunge – Peace Alliance

Family relationships are put under tremendous strain as each family member tries to come to terms with the loss. Self medicating (drink/drugs) can also be an issue. Debt is often seen as people struggle to work, and forget or just stop bothering to pay bills. Jobs that have been held and loved for years are lost. Individuals who have never been part of a benefit system find it impossible to navigate it, leading to further debt.

Younger individuals who were leading good, productive lives before their loss sometimes become involved in crime, either due to substance abuse, or newly developed anger issues.

The effects of homicide on individuals are life changing, and it can take many years for them to learn to live with the damage it does to them and those around them."

Lyn Costello – Mothers Against Murder And Aggression

¹ We defined serious youth violence as those incidents which result in "murder, attempted murder, grievous bodily harm and weapon-enabled violent crime committed by and against young people less than 20 years of age".

The London Serious Youth Violence Board (LSYVB) brought together senior representatives of key agencies including central and local government, the Greater London Authority, Metropolitan Police, London Criminal Justice Partnership and the voluntary and community sectors specifically to seek a practical response to both the human and statistical reality.

The crux of our partnership approach was to attempt to understand the causes underlying serious youth violence while acknowledging the London context: locations of long-standing and persistent disadvantage; multi-layered governance arrangements; a highly mobile population; and educational provision that cuts across borough boundaries, all often reliant on the interplay with London's various transport systems.

Also, doing so by recognising that each incident has behind it a complex set of issues and often a personal history for the offender and the victim, that can bring us to question not only the choices made by those concerned and those close to them, but the contribution made by a wide range of relevant public services. For example, schools, primary health care, children's centres, youth services, benefits teams, housing strategies, community safety teams, connexions, transport plans, youth offending teams, community engagement, drugs action teams, third sector organisations - alongside the police - all have a key part to play in helping deflect or redirect those young people that are on the road to serious youth violence.

Harnessing the contribution of the above services was crucial to an approach characterised by early intervention and prevention, alongside enforcement.

An example: Integrated and broad-based approach to reduce the number of young people involved in youth violence in Greenwich.

The borough is involved in preventative work, alongside highly effective targeted enforcement activity and focused problem-solving. This approach has provided innovative changes to processes to ensure appropriate responses to both groups and individual young people who come to the attention of partner agencies. There are a number of strands to the work including:

- Support Through Early Intervention Panel (STEIP) – panel to provide early intervention and diversion for groups of young people through the targeting of detached youth support and/or additional youth provision.
- Involvement of the Youth Crime Prevention Panel (YCPP) – multi-agency panel to challenge and support individual young people involved or at risk of crime and ASB.
- Involvement Violent and Organised Crime Unit (VOCU) – Investment of £1 million in the VOCU, an intelligence-led policing unit that targets known gang members and specifically those gang members who are identified as the most serious offenders.

Other ingredients essential in terms of sustainability and future-proofing:

- listening to young people.
- responding to what communities want.
- local inclusive partnerships coming together in a constructive and enduring way and being locally led.
- being clear that 'more of the same' was not enough, that it was worth listening to new and innovative approaches that might be effective – in particular where practitioners (statutory, non-statutory and voluntary) believe that such an approach is having an impact on the ground.
- and the value of testing such promising innovations and projects in practitioner-led forums.

These were and will continue to be particularly relevant in the present and future context of diminishing resources, especially when set against the potential social return on investment that can be achieved (see the ‘Multi-agency information-sharing’ and ‘Violence as part of the public health agenda’ recommendations for examples of potential returns).

Certainly, a feature of our work has been to invite practitioners to share innovative approaches they believe are making a positive impact. We called these our ‘Next Practice’ seminars. Each one has been written up into a case study format that can be accessed via the LSYVB website (www.lsyvb.org.uk).

The particular strength of the Next Practice approach was to not only enable a wide peer audience to learn from promising practice but also to encourage critical peer review, to sharpen lines of argument and to receive feedback for further development.

Looking to the future, the Mayor of London’s Time for Action Team has been able to build upon this model as part of its drive to create a repository of evaluated practice that can help tackle SYV (Project ORACLE).

The Board’s confidence in the essential elements identified above, for the present and moving into the future is illustrated by our ward-based project work. The approach focused on the secondary school at the heart of the local community, and (whether or not the school itself faced SYV problems) the pivotal role the school plays in that community. Within the context of rich, real-time data, the pilots were an opportunity for local partners to understand the problems and issues around SYV in the local area.

In particular, through the development of an action plan the projects were an opportunity to identify a sustainable and affordable response to those issues – including early intervention and prevention – on the basis of a collaborative, neighbourhood approach, involving all relevant local agencies and stakeholders.

The collective partners focused on a range of key, locally identified, but in many cases universally

acknowledged issues, drivers and barriers such as attendance, exclusions and relationships with PRUs, transition, safeguarding, family support and engagement, and the impact of SYV on girls, travel to and from school, and the disproportionate impact SYV has on young people from black and minority ethnic backgrounds (and related to this the importance of positive role models). The agenda reflected local priorities, for instance, behaviour improvement:

An example: the Board’s London Narrative indicates that 25 per cent of young people in London report they have experienced bullying in 2009/10; a significant reduction compared to 2008/09, and better than the national average of 29 per cent. Nevertheless, given what we know about the impact of bullying on individuals and on later offending behaviour, this is an important issue. Indeed, the fact that 25 per cent of young people in London report that they have experienced bullying would seem unacceptable, despite any comparisons

And in some cases the focus covered travel to and from school:

An example: the Narrative indicates that while 83 per cent of young Londoners say they feel safe in their local neighbourhood (up from 77 per cent in 2004), concerns for their own safety do increase as young people venture from their neighbourhood into the wider city.

However, a valuable lesson that certainly reinforces the importance of localism moving forward beyond the life of the LSYVB, was the Board’s initial decision to encourage boroughs to develop pan-borough strategies for tackling SYV. Rather than boroughs adopting a specific template, the Board subsequently, and more successfully, invited boroughs to utilise a model framework as the basis for discussion, for example, between the Children’s Trust and the community safety partnership teams, jointly agreeing a strategic approach that fed into their local strategic partnerships.

An example: U-turn 1 is a project in the London Borough of Bexley that has achieved notable success in turning around the lives of young people who are moving away from education and into crime. It targets students with Acceptable Behavioural Contracts, permanent exclusions from schools and those with weapon or knife-related convictions.

The need for this programme was identified in 2009 following partnership discussions between Healthy Schools, the Behaviour Federation, Neighbourhood Services and the Integrated Youth Service. There had been a number of permanent exclusions of young people for carrying knives.

The week long programme was based on the Home Office Knife Crime Prevention Programme. It included sport, art classes and educational sessions related to crime and behaviour. Students were not paid to attend, yet all achieved 100 per cent attendance. It had a significant impact on all 13 young people, which still continues today. For example:

As a legacy lesson for future work in the field, the Board often found that separate strands of work would frequently highlight common themes, including educational transition, information-sharing and disproportionality.

Transition management came to be viewed as a factor that could potentially be effective in helping to prevent SYV. The Board has arguably added value to the debate in that while the importance of transition from Year 6 to 7 is extensively covered in academic and professional texts, the Board's examination and highlighting of the importance of transition from secondary school to FE college has had less focus.

The Board has made links with other important work - such as the safeguarding guidance of Bichard, Laming and Munroe - in stressing the importance of effective information-sharing. While recognising the complexities involved, the LSYVB has nevertheless been able to highlight the work, through the Next Practice seminar series, of the City of Westminster's multi-agency Family Recovery Programme. Moreover, the LSYVB has

Girl 'A' lived rough, estranged from her mother. The project repaired family relationships and she returned home. She attended the pupil referral unit following the programme, gained 5 GCSEs, and is now at college. On joining the programme she was well known to anti-social behaviour services and had an ASBO. She is now a police cadet.

The overall progress of the young people will be tracked from the end of the programme until they leave school. Monitoring includes whether they go on to further education, training or employment. The benefits of U-turn 1 are clear. Young people involved with the youth offending team, or at high risk of involvement, benefit directly along with their families.

This programme is likely to have had some impact on a number of local priorities such as making Bexley safer, but this will be evaluated as young people are tracked over the coming years.

"Transition is a critical part on a young person's development. It is a time which can make or break young people in terms of them developing into young adults.

I would support any recommendation which relates to making transition a priority in every school."

Jo Shuter, headteacher, Quintin Kynaston School

benefited from the Board membership of Alan Wood (Director of the Learning Trust, Hackney) who has taken a leading role, under the new pan-London Anti Violence Partnership, for joint agency information-sharing hubs based in part upon the experience of Hackney's own working model, but also taking into account other borough examples.

One of the fundamental issues the Board had to grapple with is the fact that there are particular groups that are disproportionately represented

both as perpetrators and victims of SYV. The over representation of young African-Caribbean men is an issue too few people – including commentators, politicians, communities (and much less statutory agencies) – are comfortable speaking about.

The Board, strengthened by its partnership, tackled this reality. It explicitly covered it in its London Narrative (see Annex A) where a key finding was the disproportionate number of African-Caribbean young males involved with the criminal justice system, but also as victims. At the LSYVB's December 2009 SYV Summit, disproportionality was the central discussion theme, facilitated by Reverend Nims Obunge (Peace Alliance). The resultant material was integral to shaping the direction of the Board's work in association with key partners in the third sector, including ROTA (Race on the Agenda). Direct outcomes included influencing the nature of much of the content of the Board's Next Practice seminars, how the Board engaged and consulted with the third sector, the scope of the focus group activity to help the LSYVB develop the '99 per cent' campaign, as well as reinforcing the importance of information-sharing principles.

An example: The Narrative highlights that a key challenge for London is the disproportionality of Black/Black British young people involved with the criminal justice system as victims as well as perpetrators.

An example: Cross-border working in North/Central London

Rates of SYV in Hackney, Islington, Haringey and Camden are all higher than the London average.

In these boroughs, Gangs Prevention Teams have a cross-borough forum that meets on a bi-monthly basis. The purpose of the CBGP (Cross-Borough Gangs Prevention) meeting is to:

- ▲ facilitate, monitor and evaluate effective information-sharing, to enable appropriate actions to be taken and facilitate interventions to reduce the number of young people at risk of offending, or of becoming victims;
- ▲ share resources and good practice;
- ▲ identify cross-border tensions;
- ▲ enhance partnership working;
- ▲ identify 'gaps' within the neighbouring boroughs.

Islington Gangs Disruption Team and Camden Youth Disorder and Engagement Team are working in partnership to deliver targeted gangs prevention work in Westminster Kingsway College to young people identified as at risk of gang/group offending/serious youth violence.

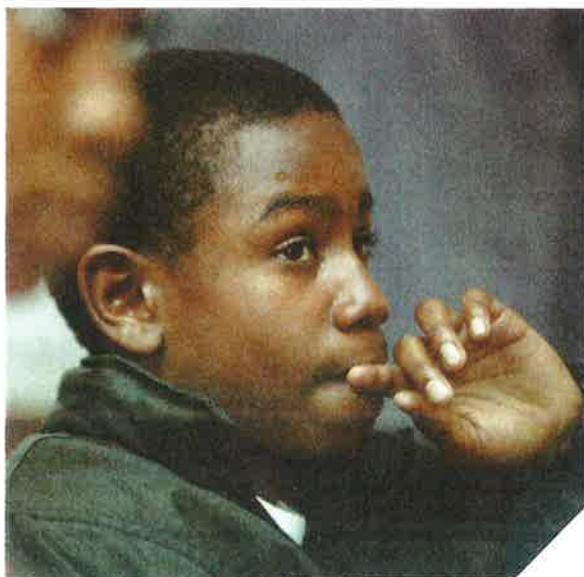
Islington Gangs Prevention Team is working with Hackney Mobile Intervention Team to deliver an in-house gangs prevention/serious youth violence awareness programme to a number of schools in Islington within the PSHE curriculum. The programme is aimed at Year 8 and involves the delivery of four workshop sessions around the consequences of youth violence/gangs/group offending, making positive choices and the law around knife/gun crime. A targeted programme developed jointly by Islington and Hackney is being rolled out in pupil referral units.



99PERCENT.ORG.UK

The Board was also influenced by academic work on the disproportionality issue, including *Confidence and Confidants* by Bland and Campbell (this can be found at: www.lsyyvb.org.uk). One of its key recommendations was: "To develop an 'independent advocacy' service for young black people using learning from the success of independent domestic violence advocates. This service could be commissioned from voluntary sector organisations as part of a 're-tailoring' of some existing projects. The service should also provide parents with advice and support. It is suggested this may be piloted in one or two boroughs where MARAC conferencing for young victims is being developed, with built in evaluation."

Such a pilot was commissioned and evaluated in Lewisham. The independent advocacy was undertaken by Victim Support and fed into the local youth MARAC process. Some of the key evaluation findings can be found on the Board's victim advocacy recommendation. The practitioner testimony from Javed Khan (Chief Executive of Victim Support England and Wales), that in part details how this recommendation is being taken forward as Board legacy, is a good example of the way in which the LSYYVB has attempted to not only investigate complex problems, identify promising practice or innovative solutions, but also ensure that there are material outcomes that have a legacy beyond the life of the Board.



An example: SERVE Programme in Southwark

- ▲ SERVE – a programme to move individuals and family members out of the borough into housing association accommodation, to help them move on in their lives and away from conflict.
- ▲ Community advocates – identified and trained community-based advocates to work on a one-to-one basis with individuals caught up in serious violence.
- ▲ Home visits were carried out with individuals who are emerging as potential victims or offenders on serious youth violence. Home visits are with the person and their family, offering support and advocacy to move away from a violent lifestyle.
- ▲ Gang ASBOs were taken out on a known gang, targeting their behaviour and day-to-day activity.

One of the essential elements for the future and central to the Board's work has been the belief that any solution to SYV must reflect the views and opinions of young people. This was illustrated in the production and publication of the Young Londoners' Manifesto for a Safer London. The final draft contained powerful messages from young people who wanted "To be known as individuals – not just labelled".

They also wanted agencies and organisations to:

- ▲ Challenge negative views of young people in the local press
- ▲ Celebrate what young people do to help communities in London
- ▲ Provide role models for how we can act safely and resolve conflict.

This articulation by young people of their frustration at how they were perceived by the general public and portrayed by the media, led the Board to develop, with the active participation of young people, a potential response.

By the Young People, for the Young People

"We do not believe enough thought has been embedded into the running of schools. Life skills are not taught to young people allowing them to fall into social programming, which doesn't allow them to see the opportunities in life, if any are available to them. Another issue within society is the unseen pressure the government places on public sector funding, which has directly affected the amount of opportunities aimed at young people. The media shines a light on every bad that has ever been done by youth and leaves out all the achievements and the positives that could drive and push others to do more."

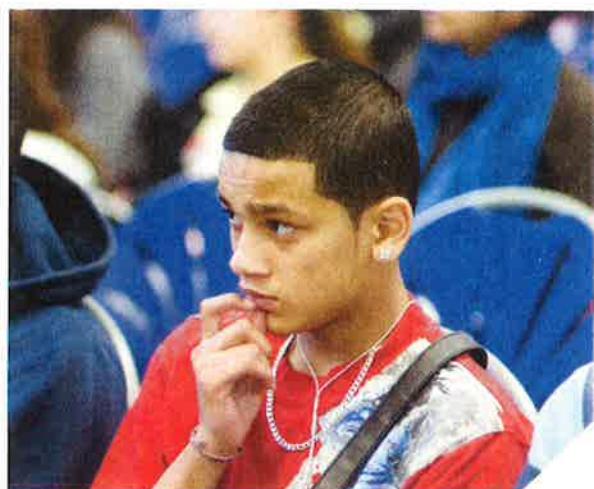
Written by the Young Peace Champions (The Peace Alliance)

Also significant has been the '99 per cent' campaign (www.99percent.org.uk), based on the realisation that less than one percent of young Londoners are involved in committing serious youth violence. This has set out with high ambitions to try to:

- ▲ Reduce the fear of SYV.
- ▲ Challenge the one per cent and support the 99 per cent by promoting positive young role models who come from similar backgrounds and areas, and who have had to overcome similar challenges.
- ▲ The campaign appears to have strongly resonated with key partners, the public and young people, and will live on beyond the LSYVB as a legacy project run and administered by young people themselves.
- ▲ Address the misperceptions the wider public has of young people.
- ▲ Promote the good work of young people.
- ▲ Open up and promote the positive opportunities that exist for young people.

For example: the Board's London Narrative indicates that one in four young people are worried about knife crime, whilst one in five fears being mugged or attacked. Yet, the numbers of young people saying they have actually been a victim of these types of violent crime is however much lower – one per cent report having been a victim of knife crime whilst five per cent say they have experienced mugging or physical attack. Two thirds (67 per cent) of young people said that they had not been a victim of any kind of crime.

For example: the Board's London Narrative indicates that opportunities for over-16s for involvement in education, employment and training are better in London than elsewhere.



"We take this issue seriously and Sue Berelowitz, Deputy Children's Commissioner, sits on the London Serious Violence Board. This research adds to the growing body of evidence which supports my continued assertion for the need for a more balanced debate about today's young people."

"The gap is still too wide between adults' perception and the reality of the very real contribution to society made by the millions of young people in England."

Maggie Atkinson, Children's Commissioner for England

In moving towards a conclusion, at the Board's December 2009 Summit, it was suggested that the Board should have aimed, by its end, to have made the following differences:

- ▲ Helping lead a 'cultural shift' in the development of joint working to tackle SYV

The reality is that the fully partnership-led approach of the LSYVB has been accepted as the model of good practice for London. This is exemplified in the London Crime Reduction Board and Anti Violence Partnership approach.

- ▲ Developing a better understanding and knowledge of the data on serious youth violence

The Board's London Narrative has been a leading light in this regard at a pan-London level. However, perhaps equally successful has been the local dimension to data that the Board's ward-based or 'Safer Learners' project work has led on.

- ▲ Being clearer on what works and what doesn't; the reasons why; and the lessons learnt - to be shared widely

Our Next Practice Seminar series have been instrumental in this regard and will now be taken up through the Mayor of London's Project ORACLE.

- ▲ Ensuring a focus on local solutions for local places

The ward-based project work has been at the forefront of shaping the response to this challenge and its success as a local problem-solving tool has been demonstrated by its inclusion within the Mayor of London's Safer Learner Framework

- ▲ Taking key messages on what needs to be done differently to Whitehall

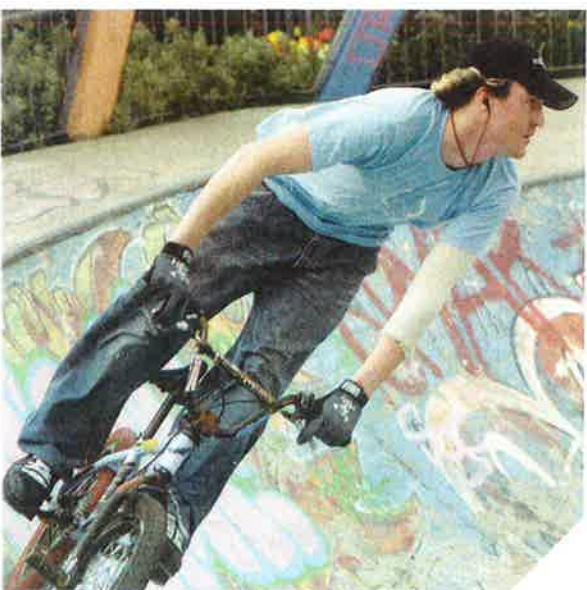
This report is the culmination of this approach, but has been going on throughout the life of the Board. Ministerial support has been received through successive administrations and is testament to the importance that all fully attach to tackling an issue as important as serious youth violence.

The work of the LSYVB may perhaps come to be viewed as an important stage in the progress towards sustainable and achievable reductions in serious youth violence across London. Certainly, the Board's experience has helped shape the value of the partnership approach; the promotion of the concept of a shared agenda; the importance of sharing the practitioner viewpoint on what appears to be working; a new locally owned and driven approach to SYV hotspots; the impact of listening to and working with young people and; perhaps most vitally; the reality of disproportionality and some potential indicators to start addressing it.

Additionally, the Board has demonstrated that any solution to serious youth violence has to be characterised by recognition of the three dimensional approach of:

- ▲ early intervention and
- ▲ prevention
- ▲ (alongside) enforcement.

SYV must continue to remain a shared priority because the impact on individuals, families, friends and communities is too great to choose to ignore, and simply doing more of the same, or accepting the diminishing resources situation as an end game scenario, is not enough or acceptable.



"Our son Jimmy Mizen was murdered the day after his 16th birthday in May 2008. Our many hours and days of reflection since, have led us to work for change in our society and communities, to try to get clear vision and leadership to combat the many issues that now affect us all.

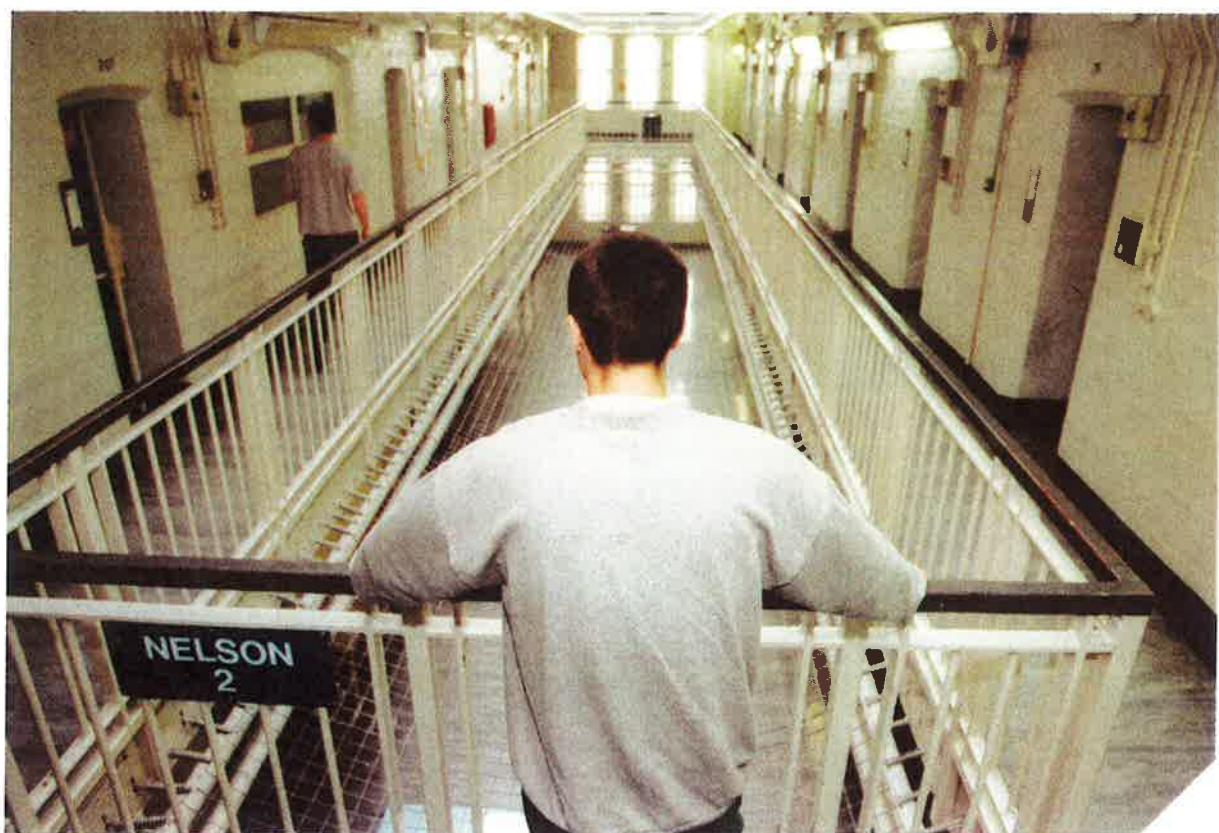
Complacency is a real danger; we ignore the ongoing violence at our peril. We visit schools and prisons to share Jimmy's story and to talk of the consequences of uncontrolled anger and the use of weapons of any sort. We are also able to talk of our own response to the death of our son and the immense damage that can be inflicted on us if we hold a grudge and seek revenge.

All too often there is so much collateral damage, and a ripple effect, following a violent death, that extends far beyond the immediate family. Vindictiveness and seeking revenge is a poison for the person feeling it and we work to help others let go of this for their own good.

We believe that one of the most effective ways of bringing change is for early intervention into young people's lives to be taken more seriously than at present. We are, as a society, allowing some children to grow into the serious risk they become to others and need to address this urgently; it is too late to call for ever harsher penalties after they have committed serious crimes - although the passion is understandable, it should have been used five, 10, 15 years before.

There are young people right now at risk to themselves and each other, and for their sake and ours we need to come together and work for change. We are fully supportive of the work of the LSYVB and the conclusions and recommendations they offer."

(Barry Mizen – The Jimmy Mizen Foundation and FamiliesUnited)





Annexes

Annex A – Updated London Narrative

Purpose of the data set

The purpose of the data set is to inform Londoners of how agencies are working on improving services and outcomes for young people across London concerning key data. The intention is to highlight progress across London over time.

The key aim is to move away from the negative connotations of young people and provide a richer, more balanced picture through a series of key selected data across relevant issues of concern affecting young people. The data brings together, for the first time, a wide range of selective and

informative data, already publicly available, to help Londoners get an overview of how agencies and services are performing against the indicators selected. It is hoped that the data set will also add value above and beyond what can be achieved through existing performance management systems and arrangements.

It is intended that the data and narratives are reviewed on at least a yearly basis (the first one was published in December 2009), enabling a more focused debate about how we support the prevention of youth violence in London.

Summary

The aim of this data set is to provide a richer, more balanced picture of young people through a series of key selected indicators across relevant issues of concern affecting young people. Some key findings include:

- 83 per cent of London's young people say they feel safe in their neighbourhoods, according to the GLA's most recent survey (2009)
- When speaking of feeling unsafe, bullying is a key contributor
- One in four young people say they are worried about knife crime in London
- Very few young people report having been a victim of crime, yet say they would like more police presence on the streets of London
- Youth violence in London had fallen by two per cent in the 12 months to October 2010
- At the end of November 2008 there had been 30 youth homicide victims. At the same point in 2010 there have been 18³
- When comparing young Londoners with their peers nationally, they:
 - Are less likely to enjoy good relationships with friends and family;
 - Are just as likely as their peers to participate in group activities outside of school hours;
 - Are less likely to engage in substance misuse than any other region of the country;
 - Are less likely to be persistent absentees at school than any other region of the country;
 - Have higher, and consistently improving educational attainment.
- Opportunities for the over-16s for involvement in education, employment and training are better in London than elsewhere
- Involvement with the justice system shows that there is a mixed picture with:
 - A falling number of first-time entrants to the criminal justice system, but with;
 - More young people likely to receive a custodial sentence in London once they are convicted in court.
- A key challenge for London is that:
 - there is disproportionality of Black/Black British young people involved with the criminal justice system, but also as victims
 - Serious youth violence is still concentrated in often deprived areas of London.

³ 17 of these homicides are recorded as homicides occurring in the MPS jurisdiction; one homicide is recorded by British Transport Police.

1. Setting the context: what young people say about safety in London

The work of the London Serious Youth Violence Board aims to support London's efforts in the prevention of serious youth violence. The public alarm about the rise in youth homicide in 2007 led to the mobilisation of many of London's public services. There has been progress in subsequent years.

The conversation about the safety of London's youth best starts with London youth themselves. The recently published GLA Young Londoners Survey paints a largely positive picture of how young Londoners (11-16 year olds) feel about their lives in the capital. It is worth including a summary of these findings, highlighting what young people say about their safety.

▲ Levels of 'feeling safe' are high – 83 per cent of young Londoners say they feel safe in their local neighbourhood, up from 77 per cent in 2004. There is however a striking level of concern about young Londoners' own safety, particularly with relation to violent crime and their own peer groups (22 per cent feel unsafe because of teenagers hanging around on the streets).

Young people are asking for more police to improve their feelings of safety.

▲ Young Londoners generally feel safe in their neighbourhood, and indeed safer now than they did in 2004. Concerns for their own safety do (naturally) increase as young people venture from their neighbourhood into the wider city, but it is still true that a strong majority (64 per cent) feel safe wherever they are in the capital.

▲ However, one in four is worried about knife crime, whilst one in five fears being mugged or attacked. The numbers of young people saying they have actually been a victim of these types of violent crime is however much lower – 1 per cent report having been a victim of knife crime whilst 5 per cent say they have experienced mugging or physical attack.

▲ While those who live in inner London are more likely than their outer London counterparts to cite a number of reasons why they feel unsafe – in the case of knife crime, gun crime, and people using or dealing drugs, more than twice as likely – there is no corresponding difference between inner and outer Londoners when it comes to actually having been a victim of crime.⁴

When asked what was driving their worries about safety, the GLA survey noted the top reasons reported by young people, the top three of which were knife crime, mugging and physical attack, and (fellow) teenagers hanging around on the streets. Two thirds (67 per cent) of young people said that they had not been a victim of any kind of crime.

What London's young people say about their expectations and aspirations

This survey tapped young people's attitudes towards the future, and explored the link between these attitudes and support. Pupils identified a number of different aspects to success in life, such as: "making money"; "being a celebrity"; "having a family"; and "having a job you want to do". Underpinning this understanding of success was both a personal sense of achievement and also that others recognise and respect you for it. However, notions of success at school were more limited and tended to focus around high achievement in exams.

The vast majority (93 per cent) of young people agreed that working hard at school/aiming to do the best you can would help their future success in life. A similar proportion thought that being confident (92 per cent); being able to read and write well (92 per cent); and having good qualifications/exam results (91 per cent) would help their future success.

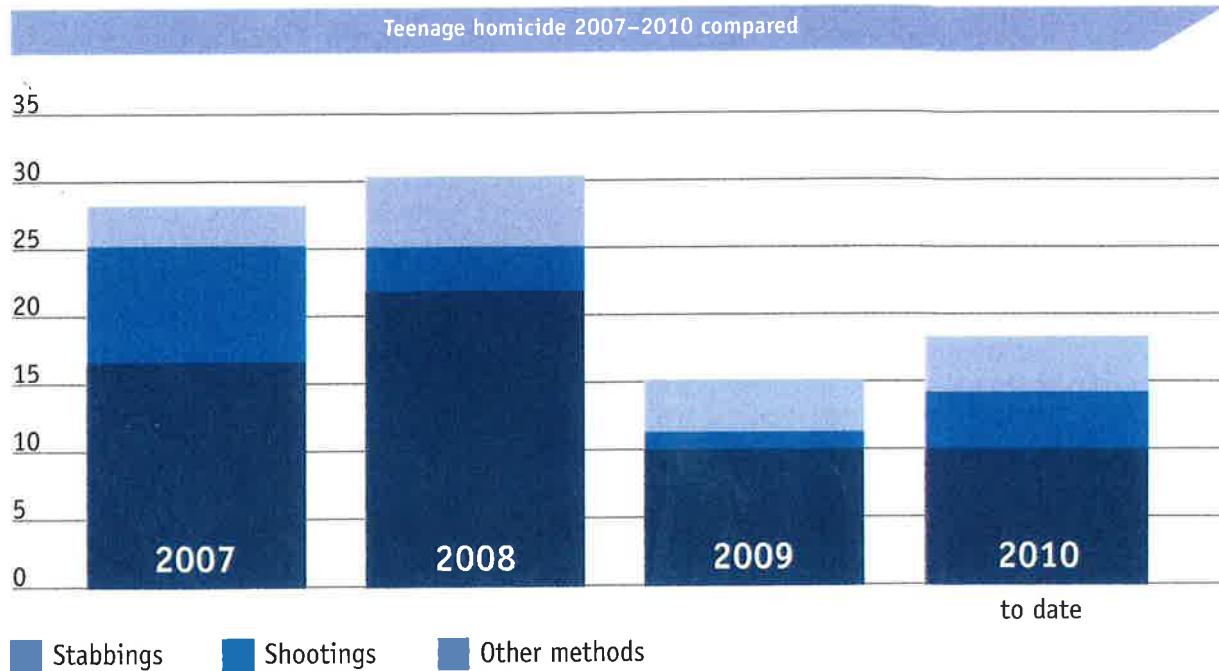
Personal factors, including family background and gender were also rated as significant (by 11 per cent) in terms of what will make it more difficult for them to succeed in life, while 16 per cent said their ethnic background will make it more difficult.

⁴ www.london.gov.uk/mayor/children/docs/young_Londoners_survey

Notably, pupils who were more concerned that they may not achieve very highly in their GCSEs were similarly more cautious when it came to thinking about their future and making long-term plans.

Nevertheless, around seven in 10 (71 per cent) believed themselves very or fairly likely to go to

university in the future. More than four in five (82 per cent) said that they felt positive about their future after Year 11. The one in 10 (11 per cent) who said they did not feel very, or at all positive about their future did, however, highlight their belief for the need for greater support.



Source: Metropolitan Police Service, as of 25 November 2010

2. Homicide of young people in London: The changing picture

The GLA survey interviewed young Londoners after two years of a rise in the number of homicides of those aged 10-19 in London. The current picture of serious youth violence in London is far more positive, showing decreases in police reported serious youth violence across the board. In particular, 2010 police reports of knife-related crime, serious youth violence, and youth homicides are all down.

Up to November 2010 there have been 18 youth homicides compared to 14 at the same point last year. While the numbers remain fairly steady, each homicide serves as a tragic reminder of why it is important to focus on the effect that serious violence and knife crime have on London's communities.

While this current picture is promising, the spotlight on the prevention of youth violence must turn to the promotion of a safe, healthy life for all young people in London. The recent increase in youth homicide, while not to 2008 levels, demonstrates that the tactics used to reduce youth homicide must be seen in the longer term.

3. Promoting safety: Publicly available data to inform progress

The data used to inform the narrative are all derived from publicly available sources and are primarily related to legislation requiring agencies to take responsibility for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of every child, to enable them to be healthy, stay safe, enjoy and achieve, make a positive contribution and achieve economic well-being. This second set of data serves as a benchmark for London on the prevention of serious youth violence.

The reduction in reported youth violence and small yet tragic number of youth homicides shows that action can influence the reported levels of violence to young people. But we know not all young people report violence to the police. So there is responsibility across many agencies in London to promote the well-being of young Londoners. If reported serious youth violence is slowly falling, this must be sustained by improvement to promote health and well-being of young people across all the public sector.

This summary highlights some key areas where a clear focus on improvement could benefit many young Londoners. For instance, bullying (verbal abuse) was named as the most common experience - one in five young Londoners reported an

experience of bullying in the GLA's survey of Young Londoners. Yet less than 40 per cent of young people in London report that their school deals very or quite well with bullying. Improvement in young people's confidence that schools deal well with bullying would add value to young Londoners' feeling of safety.

The summary looks at three areas:

- ▲ Health and Well-being
- ▲ Enterprise and Entrepreneurship
- ▲ Safety, Reassurance and Justice

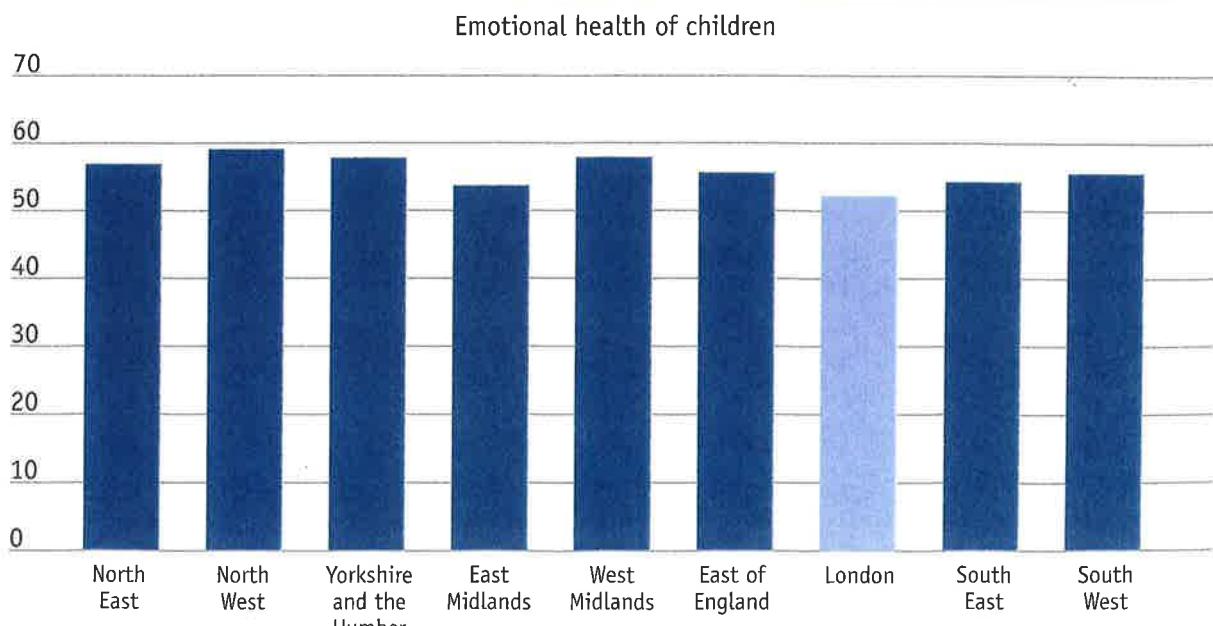
Health and well-being

Health and well-being, as examined here, includes a number of issues such as emotional health and well-being of children, participation in physical activity and substance misuse by young people. Overall, the data highlights a number of problems for young people in London.

Emotional health and well-being

Emotional health and well-being (as measured by the percentage of children who enjoy good relationships with friends and family) is poorer in London than in any other region of England (see Figure 3.1). Indeed, just 53 per cent in 2009/10 report experiencing good relationships, compared to a national average of 56 per cent.

Figure 3.1: Percentage of children who enjoy good relationships with friends or family by region (2009/10)



Participation in positive activities

Figures from the Department for Communities and Local Government show that the percentage of Year 10 school pupils participating in group activities outside of school hours in London in 2009/10 was the same (68 per cent) as the national average.

Substance misuse (defined as: illicit drugs, alcohol or volatile substances)

While other data sets around health and well-being are problematic in London, the picture in relation to substance misuse is more encouraging. Young people in London are less likely to engage in substance misuse than in any other region of the country. Indeed, there are five other regions (North East, North West, Yorkshire and Humber, East Midlands and South West) where the rates of youth substance misuse are at least twice those seen in London.

In London in 2009/10, 6.5 per cent of young people were engaged in substance misuse, compared to 9.8 per cent in England as a whole.

Enterprise and entrepreneurship

A range of data sets have been made available in relation to enterprise and entrepreneurship. However, here we focus on those related specifically to educational performance and preparation for the world of work. These are factors that can have a significant impact on the future life chances of young people in London.

Truancy

The percentage of pupils enrolled in school in London that are persistent absentees stood at 4.4 per cent in 2008/09 (the latest data available). While still too high, the performance in London is better than elsewhere in the country. The rate for England stands at 4.9 per cent and all other regions in the country have higher rates than London.

The rate of decrease of persistent absences in London has now slowed compared with previous years.

In a March 2010 Ipsos MORI survey (*Youth Aspirations in London* commissioned by London Councils), the most common reasons why young people said they truant are:

- ▲ that pupils don't like their teachers (40 per cent);
- ▲ they do not enjoy school (37 per cent);
- ▲ thinking that bunking off is more fun than school (30 per cent);
- ▲ to avoid getting into trouble (21 per cent);
- ▲ and because their friends bunk off (18 per cent).

The research concluded that underlying a lot of these reasons is an avoidance of potentially stressful or difficult situations, such as a test they think they may fail, or a confrontation with a teacher due to not having done their homework or arriving late.

Permanent exclusions

The strong performance in relation to truancy does not appear to be continued in relation to permanent exclusions (latest data available is 2008/9). More London children are permanently excluded from school than in any other region in England, bar the East Midlands (although the differences are quite small). Indeed, while the rate of permanent exclusion in London was 0.11 per cent, it was 0.09 per cent in England as a whole.

Educational attainment

Educational attainment by young people in London exceeds the national average. While 49 per cent of young people nationally achieved five A* to C grade GCSEs in 2008, the comparable figure for London was 54 per cent, and this has improved again on the previous year (2008/09 compared with 2007/08). Obviously, there is a wider debate here, given that half of young people fail to attain what is considered to be a minimum standard. Preliminary data for 2010 suggests that the proportion attaining five A* to C grades has risen further to 57 per cent.

However, nationally the proportion of pupils achieving 5 or more A*-C grades at GCSE or equivalent including English and mathematics GCSEs continues to vary between different ethnic groups.⁵

For example:

- ▲ Pupils of any White background achieved in line with the national level, with 54.8 per cent achieving 5 or more A*-C grades at GCSE or equivalent including English and mathematics GCSEs. This is a consistent pattern with 2008/09. However, in 2005/06, White pupils performed above the national level by 0.4 percentage points.
- ▲ Pupils of any Black background achieved below the national level – a gap of 5.9 percentage points – with 48.9 per cent of Black pupils achieving 5 or more A*-C grades at GCSE or equivalent including English and mathematics GCSEs compared with the national level of 54.8 per cent. This gap has remained relatively stable from 2008/09 but has narrowed by 4.5 percentage points compared to 2005/06.
- ▲ Pupils of any Asian background performed above the national level – a gap of 3.2 percentage points - with 58.0 per cent of Asian pupils achieving 5 or more A*-C grades at GCSE or equivalent including English and mathematics GCSEs compared with the national level of 54.8 per cent. The gap has widened by 0.8 percentage points between 2008/09 and 2009/10 as a result of Asian pupils improving at a higher rate than the national level for all pupils.
- ▲ Chinese pupils are the highest attaining ethnic group. The attainment gap between Chinese pupils and the national level is 20.3 percentage points in 2009/10 compared with 20.9 percentage points in 2008/09. Whilst the proportion of Chinese pupils achieving 5 or more A*-C grades at GCSE or equivalent including English and mathematics GCSEs has increased between 2008/09 and 2009/10, the rate of improvement is slower than that seen nationally.

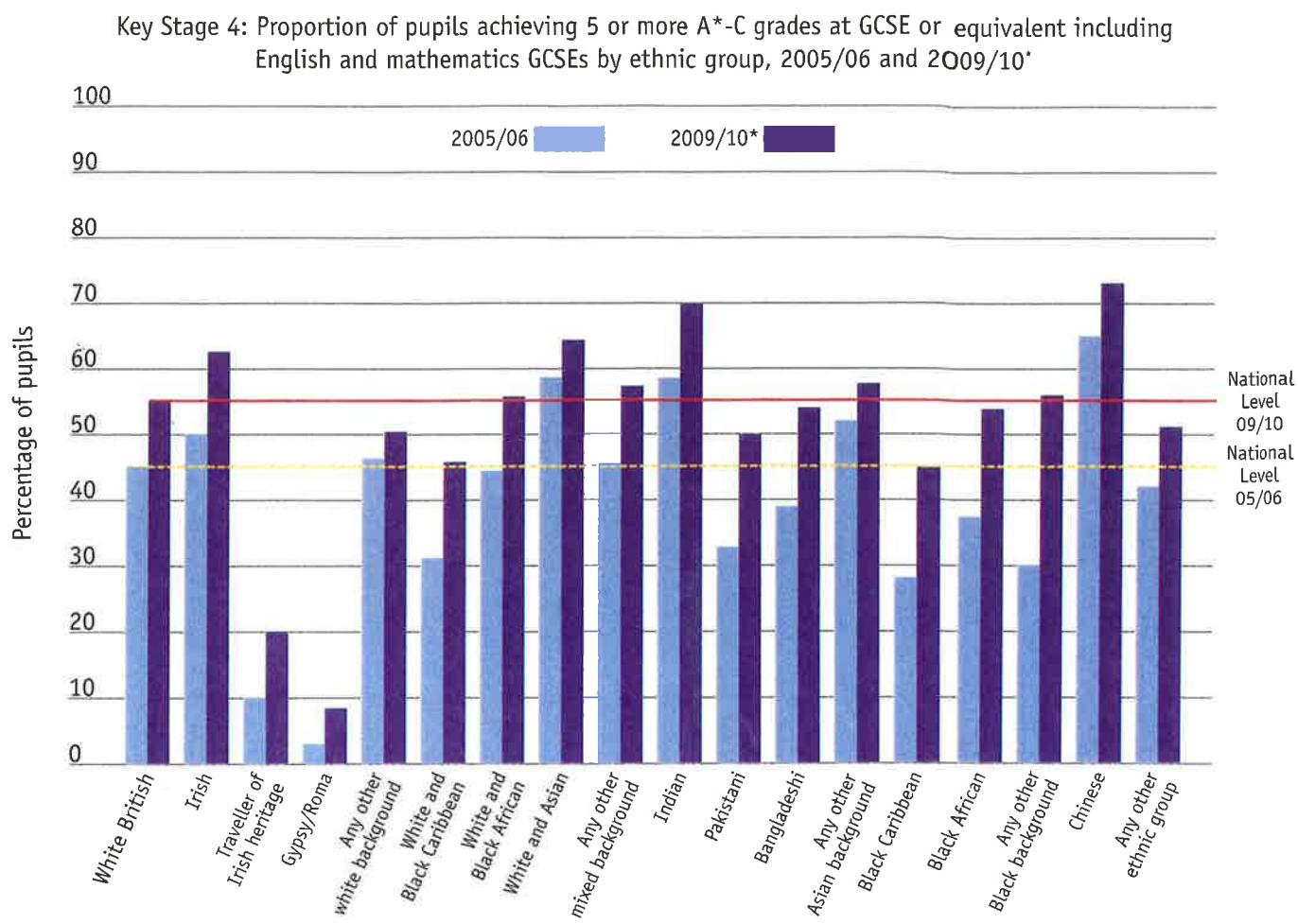
Within each of these broad ethnic groups, the individual ethnic groups show further variability. However, variability is not reflected in terms of gender, with girls consistently and significantly outperforming boys.

Post-16 years involvement in education, employment and training

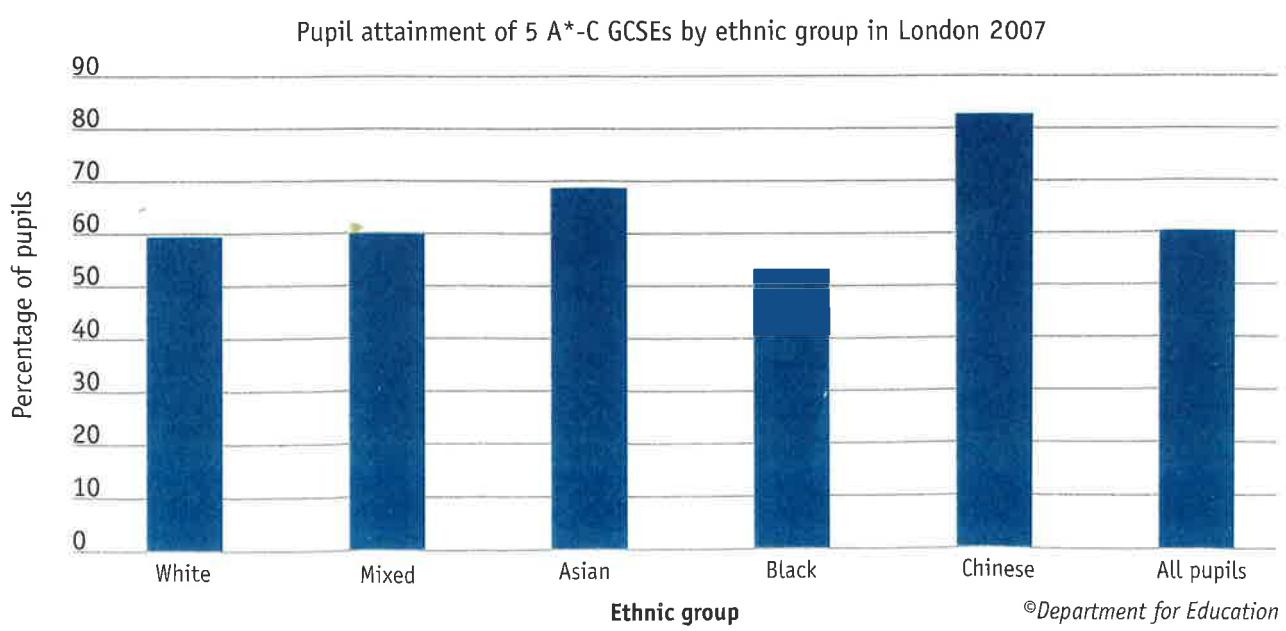
Available data sets suggest that post-16 opportunities for involvement in education, employment and training are better in London than elsewhere. For example, in 2009, the percentage of 16-18 year olds not in education, employment and training is lower in London (5.3 per cent) than in England as a whole (6.6 per cent). The percentage of care leavers in education, employment and training is higher in London (65.2 per cent) than in England (63 per cent); and the percentage of youth offenders engaged in suitable education, employment and training in the first 6 months of 2009/10 is higher in London (75.7 per cent) than in England (72.9 per cent).

Although better than elsewhere, it is important not to lose sight of the fact that around a third of care leavers and a quarter of young offenders are not in education, employment and training. Given the higher risks of (re)offending for these groups, it suggests that further work needs to be done to engage effectively with them.



Figure 3.2: Proportion of pupils achieving five or more A*-C grades by ethnic group nationally

Variability is similarly found between ethnic groups in London:

Figure 3.3: Percentage of pupils in each ethnic group achieving 5 A*-C GCSEs in 2007/08 in London

Safety, reassurance and justice

Rates of violence

Across the National Regeneration Framework boroughs⁶ in London, the rate of violence among young people in the year to October 2010 stood at 14 offences per 1,000 head of population. Six boroughs had a rate higher than this. Serious youth violence stands at 4.8 offences per 1,000 head of population across the National Regeneration Framework boroughs, with 17 boroughs having a rate higher than this.

Involvement in the criminal justice system

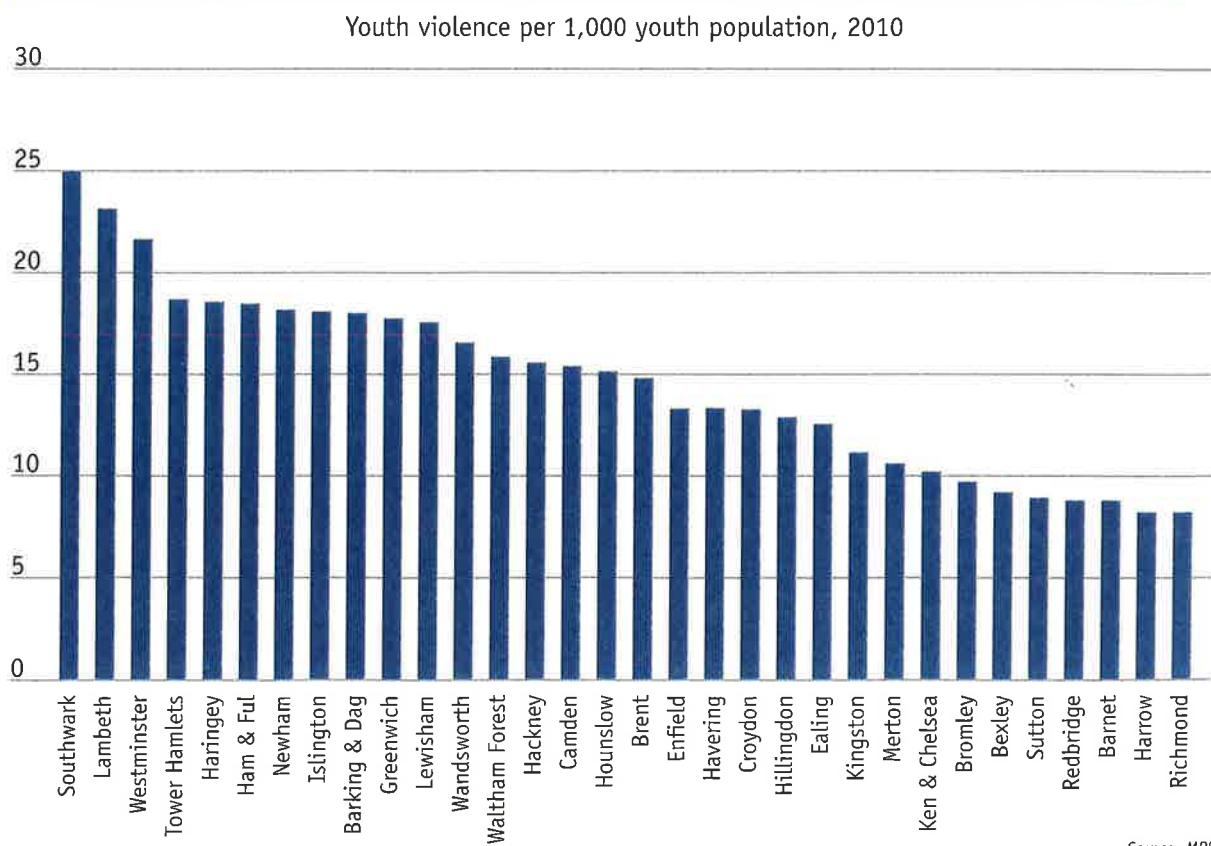
The data available on involvement in the criminal justice system present a mixed picture in London. There are a similar number of young people entering the system and less re-offending than elsewhere. However, those that receive a conviction in court are more likely to go to prison than in other parts of the country.

Where first-time entrants to the criminal justice system are concerned, figures from DfE are encouraging. All regions of England saw a reduction in 2008/9. London has had three consecutive quarters of reductions, with the rate in 2009/10 at 1,044 per 100,000 population. The percentage reduction year on year in London is in line with the UK generally, at 22 per cent, though the North East recorded a 32 per cent reduction in first-time entrants.

With consideration to re-offending among young offenders, the average number of offences committed by young offenders in 2009 in London is 1.01 which is in line with the national average of 1.02.

Young people are more likely to receive a custodial sentence in London. In the fourth quarter (Jan-Mar) of 2009/10, 5.6 per cent of young people in London receiving a conviction in court were given a custodial sentence, compared to 5.0 per cent nationally.

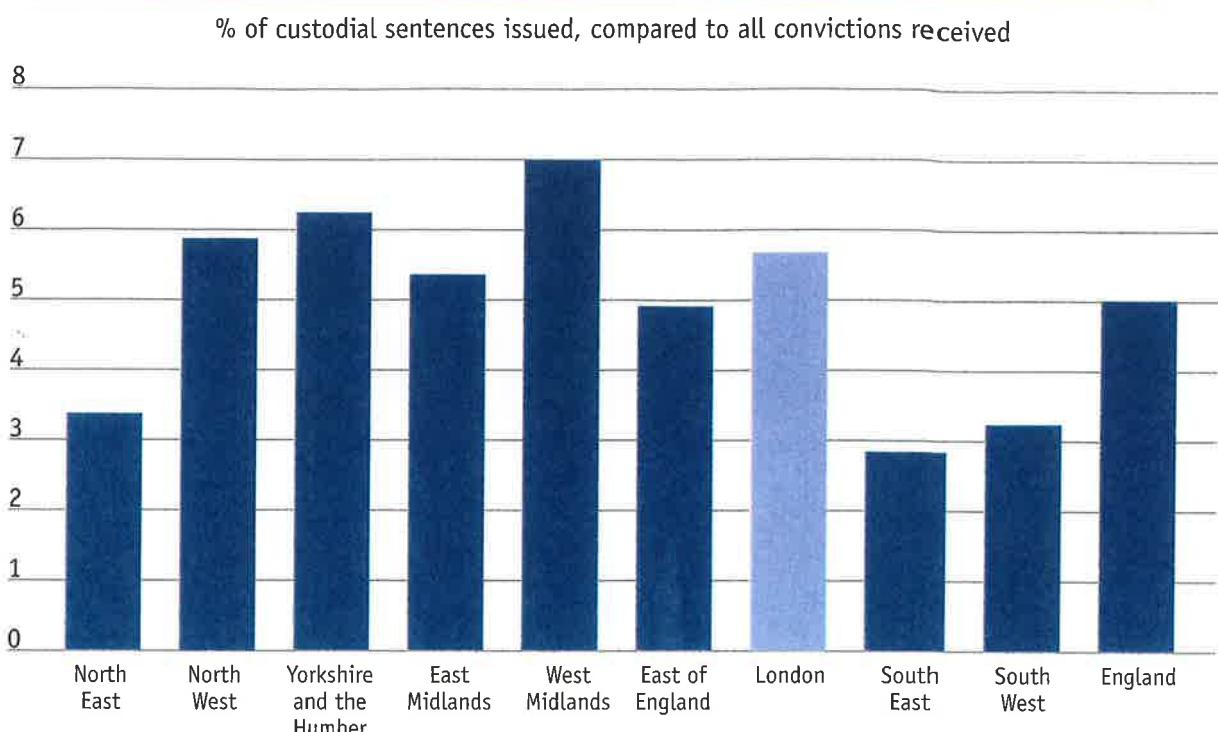
Figure 3.4: Rates of youth violence per 1,000 youth population, year to October 2010 by London borough



Source: MPS

6 There are 19 boroughs that fall into this category.

**Figure 3.5: Percentage of young people receiving a conviction in court who receive a custodial sentence by region
(Quarter 1 2009/10)**



Source: Youth Justice Board, 2009/10

Black/Black British are the most over-represented ethnic group in London in terms of both victimisation and offending. This is a finding as concerning as it is consistent.

Safe and sound

Bullying

Data examining pupil experience of bullying indicates 25 per cent of young people in London report they have experienced bullying in 2009/10; a significant reduction compared to 2008/09, and better than the national average of 29 per cent. Nevertheless, given what we know about the impact of bullying on individuals and on later offending behaviour, this is an important issue. The fact that 25 per cent of young people in London report that they have experienced bullying would seem unacceptable, despite any comparisons.

Professor Betsy Stanko

Head, Strategy, Research and Analysis Unit
Strategy and Improvement Department
Directorate of Resources
Metropolitan Police
2010

Annex B: The 24 risk factors developed by Professor Betsy Stanko (MPS)

- ▲ Being male
- ▲ Teenage pregnancy
- ▲ Deprivation and unemployment
- ▲ Criminal family member
- ▲ Early criminal conviction
- ▲ Truancy
- ▲ Broken/disrupted family lifestyle
- ▲ Unreported criminal behaviour
- ▲ Absences from school
- ▲ Low achievement at school
- ▲ Permanent/temporary school exclusion
- ▲ Onset of hyperactivity at early age
- ▲ Low attention span
- ▲ Disruptive/anti-social behaviour
- ▲ Mixing with offending peers
- ▲ Poor/inconsistent parenting
- ▲ Abusive parent
- ▲ Victim of bullying
- ▲ Poor parental attitudes
- ▲ Taken into the care of local authority
- ▲ Missing person
- ▲ Life of crime
- ▲ Substance misuse
- ▲ Two criminal offending episodes

Annex C: Membership of London Serious Youth Violence Board

Over a two-year period, attendance and membership has inevitably been fluid so, whilst the list below is not exhaustive, it is a fair reflection of the Board's membership:

Will Tuckley – Chair, Chief Executive London Borough of Bexley
Alan Wood - Association of London Directors of Children's Services
Andrew Hillas - London Probation Trust
Andrew McCully - Department for Education
Andrew Morley - London Criminal Justice Partnership
Anne Jackson - Department for Education
Cheryl Coppell - London Safeguarding Children Board
Christian Steenberg - Greater London Authority
Christina Bankes - Home Office
Cindy Butts - Metropolitan Police Authority
Commander David Zinzan - Metropolitan Police Service
Commander Martin Hewitt – Metropolitan Police Service
Commander Stephen Rodhouse - Metropolitan Police Service
Cynthia Davies - Department for Education
Darra Singh - London Borough of Ealing
Debbie Jones – London Borough of Lambeth
Dr Paul Plant - Department of Health
Graham Robb - Youth Justice Board
Hamera Asfa Davey - Metropolitan Police Authority
Hilary Harwood - London Probation Trust
Inspector Mathew Shaer – Metropolitan Police Service (Secretariat to Board)
Isobel Cattermole - Association of London Directors of Children Services
Jackie Harrop – Consultant
Javed Khan - LSYVB Executive Director
Jo Gordon - Government Office for London
John O'Brien - London Councils
Justin Russell - Home Office
Mandy Jones – NSPCC
Mary Durkin - London Borough of Tower Hamlets
Matthew Booth – London Borough of Ealing
Max Galla – Secretariat to Board
Michael Mensah - Secretariat to Board
Michael O'Connor - City of Westminster
Michael Robinson - Government Office for London
Mike Taylor – Metropolitan Police Service
Phyllis Dunipace - London Borough of Lambeth
Rose Fitzpatrick - Metropolitan Police Service
Ron Belgrave - Greater London Authority
Sue Berelowitz – Office of the Children's Commissioner

Annex D: Key contributors to London Serious Youth Violence Board Next Practice Seminar series

City of Westminster Family Recovery Programme

XLP

Peace Alliance

Independent Academic Research Studies

Brathay Trust

Fairbridge

Department of Health

London Borough Lewisham

Victim Support

London Borough of Camden

London Borough of Islington

London Borough of Ealing

Jonathan Asser (Shame Violence Intervention)

One One Five and Eversholt Centre, London Borough of Camden

Young People Matters

Whitney Iles

Metropolitan Police Service

A note on the images: Apart from those supplied by the LSYVB, the images included in this report are taken from image libraries and are used for illustrative purposes only.

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