

die another day



**A practitioner's review with
recommendations for preventing gang and
weapon violence in London in 2008**

Jonathon Toy

Foreword

I met Jonathan Toy a few years ago at a London 'Tackling Youth Violence' Practitioners forum. It was clear from the start that Jonathan has a strong and grounded sense of commitment to challenging the damage of violence to young people.

Too often, the voice of practitioners is ignored in the formula when considering policy or its direction. Treated as stakeholders, or a constituency to be 'trained', practitioners in the field of youth offending accumulate an understanding of social problems – here serious youth violence – on a day to day basis.

Jonathan Toy – one such experienced practitioner – has written this document, inspired to record his own learning from working in community safety arena in London. When he found that recent Metropolitan Police Service's research exploring homicides showed similar observations about the nature of so called 'gangs' and 'urban street groups' in London, he brought his own learning to bear on the dialogue and how best to challenge serious youth violence in London.

This document is a testimony to his persistence in this London conversation about the prevention of harm to young people in London.

Professor Betsy Stanko

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Jonathon Toy

Jonathon has been working in the field of community safety for the past 10 years. He has worked in a number of London boroughs, originally as one of London's first anti-social behaviour co-ordinators in Hackney. As the Head of Community Safety in 2005 for the London Borough of Lambeth he was instrumental in establishing a multi agency model to address street crime in and around the Brixton area, which saw significant and sustained reductions over a two year period. Now at Southwark Council, Jonathon is heading up one of the largest local authority community safety teams in the country, which has established a number of cutting edge initiatives in preventing crime and anti-social behaviour such as a multi-agency tasking and co-ordinating process.

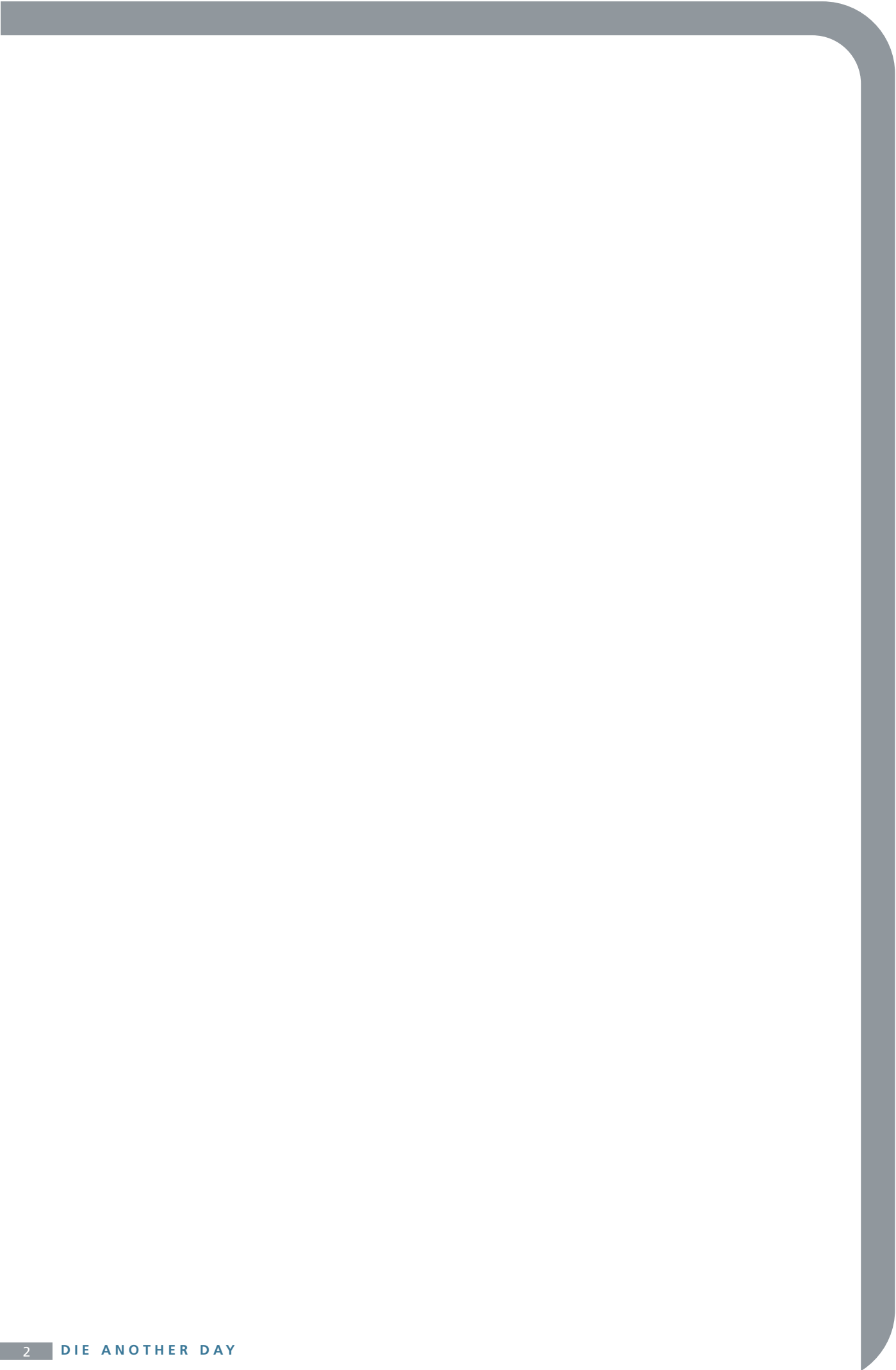
Jonathon has become one of the leading national practitioners in developing effective measures to address gang and weapon violence. He was one of the founders of and also chaired the London Gangs, Guns and Weapons Practitioners Forum and helped establish the Five Boroughs' Alliance, a cross border initiative in South London, set up to tackle gang violence. He also acts as a government adviser on gang and weapon violence and serious youth violence.

So why the title?

Gunst (2003) wrote a chilling socio-economic study on the rise and establishment of gang and gun crime in Jamaica from the 1930s to early 1990s. The book describes the emergence of gang rivalry fuelled by the illegal drug markets. However, the backdrop to this rise was the political power struggle that used social and economic inequalities to breed generations of violent behaviour and as a result, generations of violent gangs.

The title of the book "Born Fi' Dead", defines the consequence of a young man's life in the ghettos of Jamaica and in particular Kingston. Gangs in the area were often named after violent movies or a particular actor, to increase their local status. The illegal drug markets and the close association with the US and Jamaica as a supply route for illegal drugs, contraband and firearms is linked to the rise in organised drug gangs in the US. The impact of crack cocaine in particular, had a devastating effect on crime in the US in the 1980s and '90s.

Violent crime, in particular gang and weapon violence is a major concern for the UK, and we are often compared to the US both in terms of trends and solutions. However, that need not be the case. Our social structures, legislative frameworks and cultural backgrounds are different. We do not need to follow the American path, instead we should look to our partnership and community infrastructure to learn lessons and prevent weapon violence embedding itself into our society. To die another day; to stop another loss to our community... not today.



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Executive Summary

Whilst this issue of gang and weapon violence is nothing new, the changing dynamics of gang and weapon violence, in particular the involvement of younger offenders and victims, has made this one of the key priorities facing statutory and voluntary agencies. Most importantly it is at the heart of the fear of crime in our communities and is dictating the behaviour of individuals, families and the interpersonal relationships of some young people, particularly in the key age range of 14-25.

Unlike recent research on the issue of gang and weapon violence, this is a practitioner led review with resulting recommendations rather than an academic piece of research. It draws on the experiences of frontline practitioners, families and community members who are dealing with individuals involved in gang and weapon violence every day. The review tests the hypothesis that the current definitions of gangs do not reflect the current structure of serious gang violence.

The review makes a number of recommendations that if implemented would make a significant difference in addressing gang and weapon violence. Locally, regionally and nationally the paper draws on the latest analytical evidence and academic research.

Recent analytical research indicated that there are three dominant factors related to serious violence, in particular homicide.

- Illegal economy – linked to organisational gangs, illegal drug markets, fraudulent goods, trafficking.
- Personal conflict – dispute led or heated arguments.
- Feuds – territory based assertion, respect and retribution.

Based on the analytical findings, combined with the practitioners' knowledge, the review identifies a polarisation of group led violent behaviour. The review identifies the key motivational factors or influencers which create the interrelationships between urban street groups and organisational gangs. It describes how these influencers can impact upon an individual and their behaviour, particularly when combined with the personal or psychological factors from early years development and through violent experiences or the lack of empathy. We also discuss the important dynamic that women and families play for both organisational gang members and those involved in urban street groups.

Most importantly we highlight the motivational factors for change for those involved in urban street groups and organisational gangs. The review highlights that although the overall strategic framework for delivering interventions may be the same, different approaches need to be adopted to achieve the successful outcomes.

This review describes the importance of a co-ordinated risk based methodology and concludes with a series of key recommendations that will make significant advancements in tackling gang and weapon violence.

Key recommendations are:

- To change the current adopted national definition of gangs to focus on two categories alone. These are:
 - Organisational Gangs
 - Urban Street Groups
- To increase the focus on intensive support programmes for 18-24 year olds to exit gang lifestyles.
- To improve the current multi-agency risk based assessment processes to ensure that they are both consistent and provide for early identification of offending and emotional assessments as key indicators of future risk of violent behaviour.
- To establish a range of mentoring or advocacy support programmes that can sit alongside intervention projects. The advocates can be targeted to a specific geographical area, school, group or gang, dependent upon the local issues. The advocates can work on three levels:
 - Community based advocates working at a local level to provide 121 support and links to local intervention programmes.
 - Family advocacy support or family intervention but specifically designed for families whose siblings are becoming affiliated to gang violence.
 - Intensive advocacy support for gang members exiting prison, particularly in the 18-24 year old age range.
- To develop and deliver an alternative, short term accommodation programme for individuals and families who are threatened with retribution violence. To be funded on a national basis and using a range of housing stock.

Chapter 1

Setting the Scene

Introduction

Over the past ten years I have worked as a practitioner in the field of prevention and enforcement to reduce gangs, guns and weapon violence. During that time I have been privileged to have worked with families and community members, as well as front line agencies, voluntary organisations and local and central governments' departments to explore avenues for preventing gang and weapon violence. The underlying feature of all of the individuals involved in tackling this issue is the indomitable passion to prevent gang and weapon violence against the person. The personal commitment I have witnessed, in some cases at their own personal or financial detriment, has been inspiring.

During the past ten years I have seen a wide range of research carried out on gang and weapon crime, both in the UK and internationally. The vast majority of that research has been academically led and has made a major contribution to this agenda. However, it has become increasingly clear that the current thinking around a long term preventative strategy to tackling gang and weapon crime does not reflect the changing landscape on the streets of our metropolitan cities and suburbs. In order to understand that, this practitioner's study starts with the hypothesis that the current definition of "gangs" no longer reflects the current street based culture of violence in London and other major UK cities.

The aim of this practitioner's study is to:

"review the current definition by identifying the motivational influences behind gang and weapon violence. Furthermore, to identify the key motivational factors that can prevent the violent lifestyle continuing and recommend key interventions which will have a long term sustainable impact on tackling gang and weapon violence"

In order to meet this aim, the study that I have carried out:

- Draws on a range of analytical research that helps to identify the underlying trends that are influencing gang and weapon violence.
- Reviews how the analytical trends impacts on our current definition of gangs to see if they are fit for purpose for the next decade.
- Uses a range of national and international information to identify the underlying influencers that are driving the trends.
- Combines the trend analysis with other academic and practitioner research to identify the key influences in gang and weapon violence.
- Uses the wide range of practitioners' knowledge to identify the key motivational factors for change.
- Recommends a new simpler definition of gangs based on the current analytical trends and practitioners' knowledge of the influences of the current street based serious violence.

- Identifies and proposes a number of key recommendations that will provide a local, regional and national delivery framework for reducing gang and weapon violence and prevent the potential escalation of gang driven violence over the next decade that many of our urban cities face.

The study has been designed in a series of chapters, each of which builds on our current knowledge and understanding of gang and weapon violence. A substantial part of that knowledge comes from practitioners who work every day with gang members, or those young people identified as gang members themselves.

The paper sets out some of the issues facing practitioners. It attempts to translate the reality of the issues for practitioners working to address gang and weapon violence. Most importantly it challenges some of the current misconceptions of the individuals, friends and families who are involved in “gang” violence, and further provides a practitioner’s perspective on the best way of providing a supportive and preventative framework to reduce and address the risks that they face.

Trends in the 21st century

The issue of gang and weapon violence is nothing new. Violent street gangs existed in the times of Shakespeare and beyond. Post war Britain has a catalogue of criminal gangs that controlled areas of Britain’s major cities. In Jamaica, gangs became synonymous with the country’s two political parties as early as the 1930s and extended their influence through organised criminality into mainland Britain in the 1970s. The civil wars in Africa had a similar effect in the 1990s, and the experiences of violence that some young people came face to face with in their home countries have had devastating consequences in the UK including serious violent behaviour and homicide.

Statistically the first decade of the 21st century has seen our capital city recording one of the lowest levels of homicide compared to other major international cities. In 2000 London recorded 183 homicides. By 2007 this number had fallen to 160 and detection rates of homicides had increased to 88.8% in 2007 compared with 82% in 2007.

There is a current focus on the American comparables, however recent analysis by Povey (2005, p2) indicates that London has:

- One third of the homicide rates compared to New York (496), and 2.2 murders per 100,000 population against 6.0 per 100,000 population for New York (for 2007).
- Los Angeles recorded 392 homicides in 2007 which equates to 10.2 homicides per 100,000 population.
- Compared to other major European cities such as Paris or Berlin, London has the lowest homicide rates.

Chapter 2

Trends in 2007 and 2008

Whilst the statistical picture is that London is getting safer, there are clear trends over the last 18 months that indicate a greatly changing landscape in term of gangs and weapon crime. Chapters 2 and 3 of this paper focus on research conducted by Stanko et al (2008) who looked at homicide rates in London in 2007.

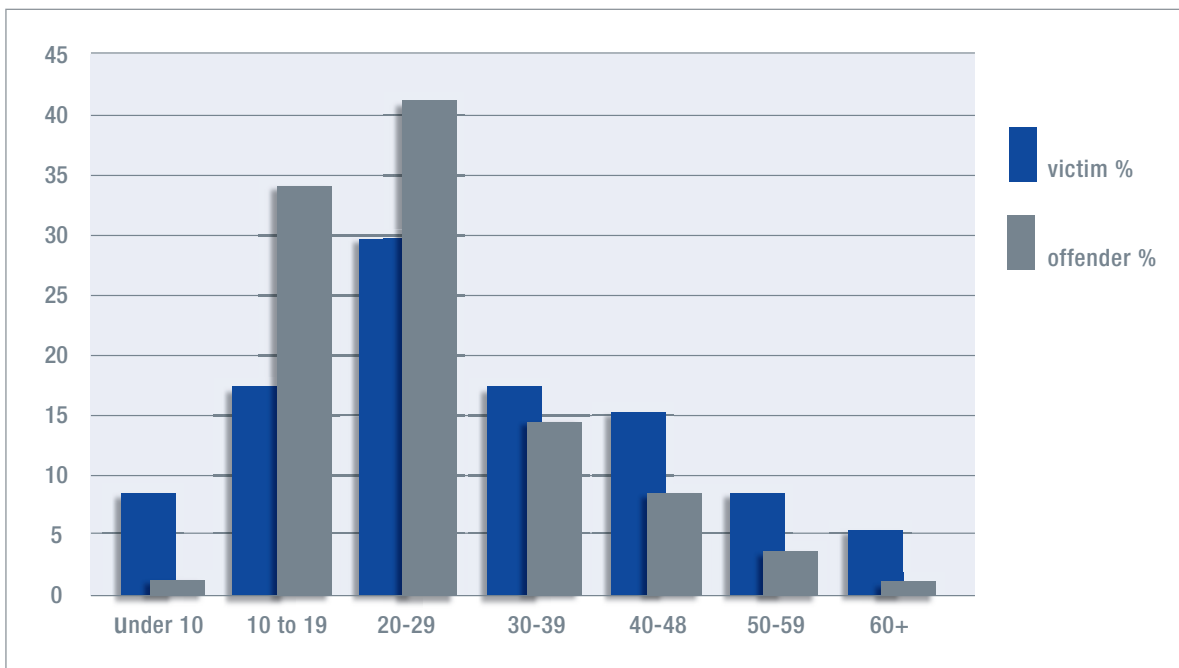
Victims and offenders

Stanko's analysis of homicide in 2007 indicates that 80% of victims are male and 93% of suspects are recorded as male. However, the statistics show marked differences between the age and ethnicity of victims and offenders.

Age

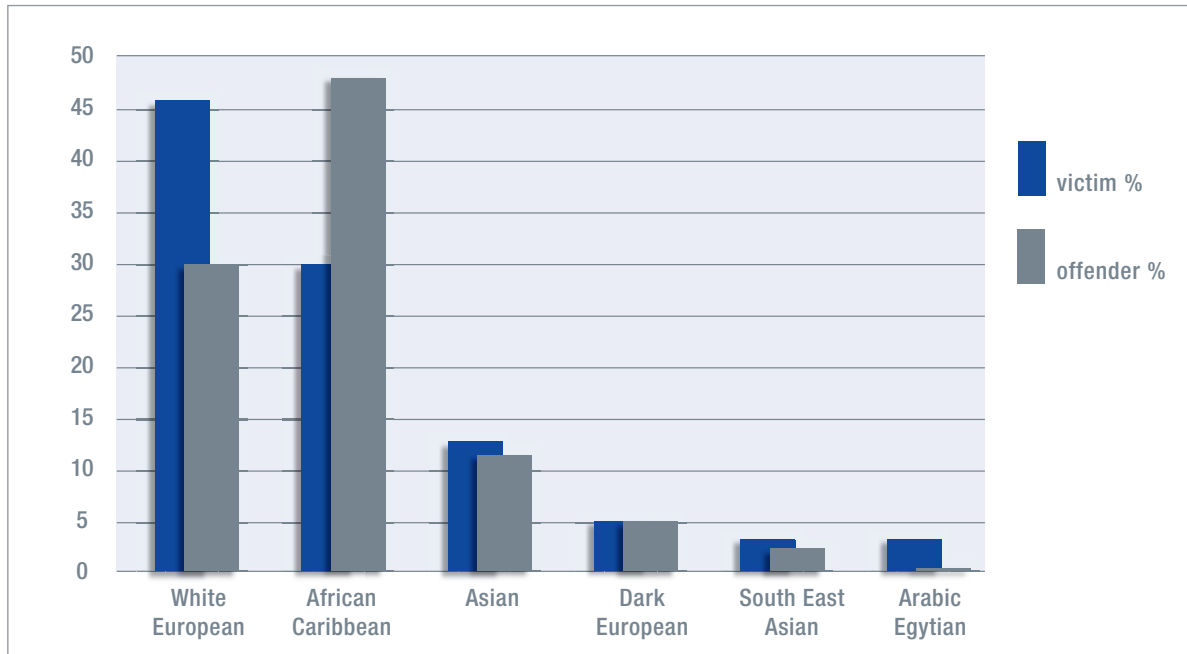
The following chart illustrates the ages of the victims and offenders of homicides in 2007. Whilst the victims tend to be the highest between the ages of 20-29, the age of the suspects is dominated between the two age brackets of 10-19 and 20-29.

Chart 1: Victim and offender profile for homicides in London in 2007



Ethnicity

The chart below sets out the ethnicity of the victims of homicide in 2007. Whilst the highest percentage of victim ethnicity is recorded as white, the offender profile is at its highest amongst the African-Caribbean community. Offenders from black and minority ethnic (BME) groups represent 64% (168) of the total which is twice the proportion of BME groups in London.

Chart 2: Ethnicity of homicides in London in 2007

Country of origin

A further analysis of the country of origin of the victims and offenders of homicides in 2007 also shows a marked difference. Whilst only 52% of victims were categorised as British born, 65% of offenders were recorded in this category.

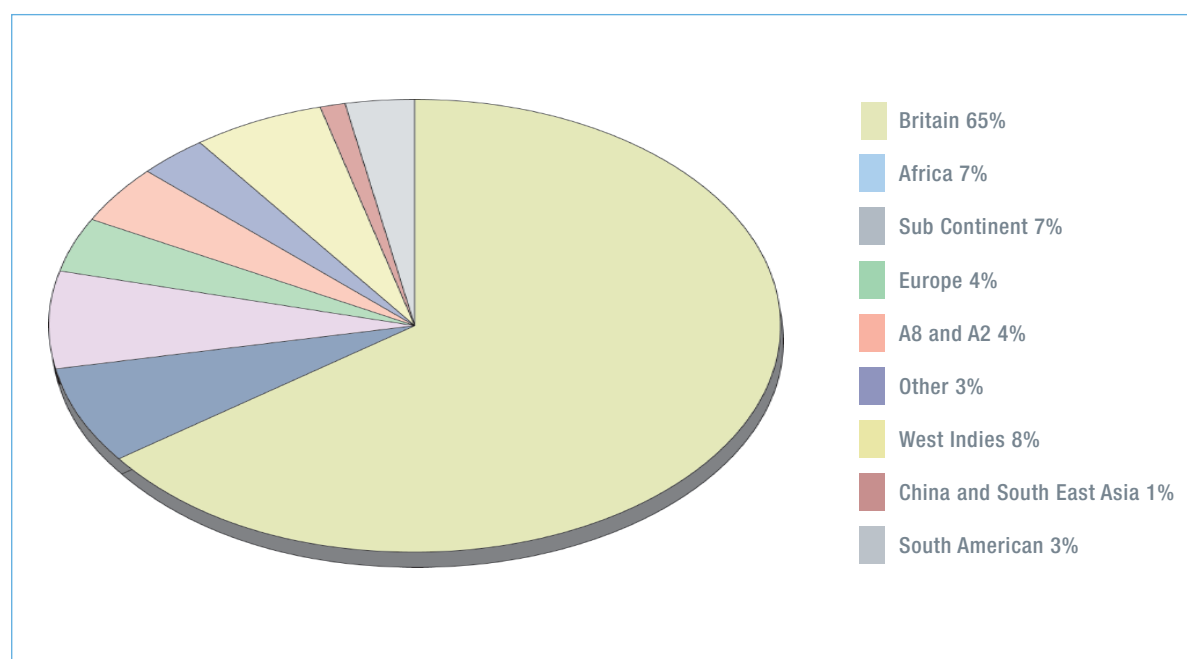
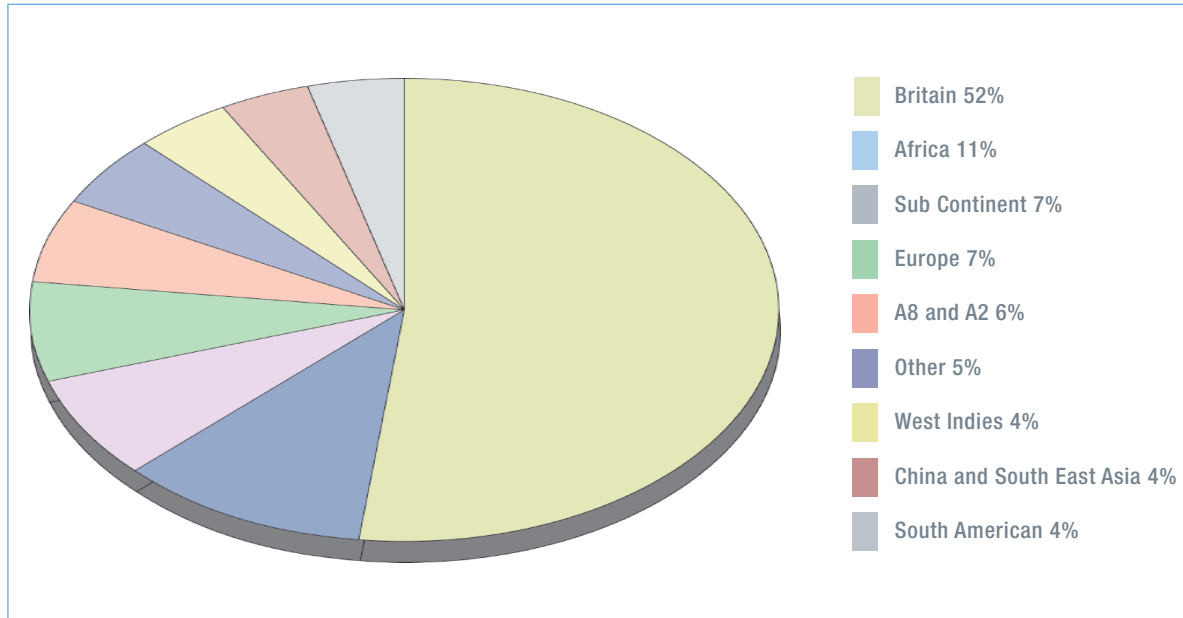
Chart 3: Nationality of offenders of homicides in London in 2007

Chart 4: Nationality of victims of homicides in London in 2007

Chapter 3

Defining the Trends

However, to fully understand the current trends in relation to homicides in London we need to look at some of the common factors in the above cases.

- In 25% of the homicide cases, the use or sale of illegal drugs was present.
- In 25% of cases, alcohol had been consumed by either the victim or offender.
- Domestic violence related homicides were attributed to 22% of cases.
- Gangs and criminal networks were evident in 22% of cases.
- In 66% of cases a weapon was used with the highest proportion (43%) being a knife.
- A fifth (20%) of victims were shot and 15% were beaten to death.
- Whilst there still remains a cluster of homicides in inner London boroughs with clusters around areas such as Newham, Lambeth and Southwark there is also a greater spread across London.

However, the most interesting recent analysis that has been undertaken is the marked variances between child, youth and adult homicides.

Child homicides (0-10 years of age)

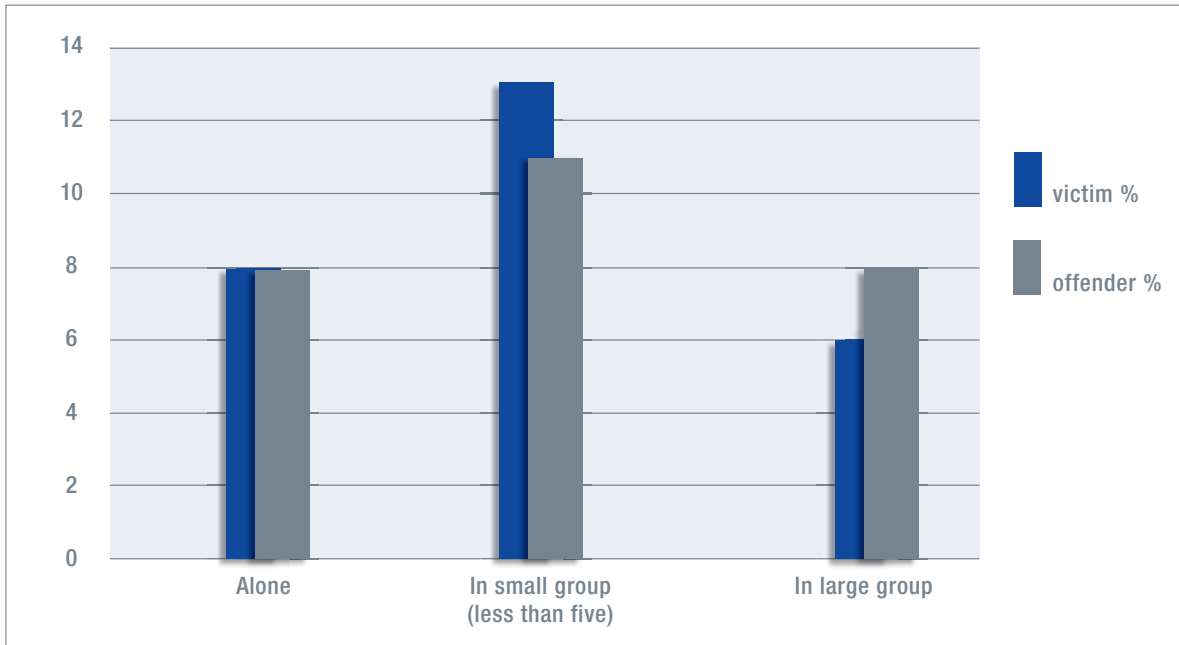
In 2007 there were 13 victims of child homicides. Whilst this is three times the number in 2006 (4), the number is too small to make any significant trend analysis. However, there are some factors which are worthy of highlight:

- In six of the 13 cases the offender had mental health issues.
- Of the 15 recorded offenders seven had a recorded history of offending.
- Of the 13 victims only two were killed by British offenders.

Youth homicides (10-19 years of age)

There were 27 homicides in 2007 where the victim was 10-19 years of age. Of these 90% were male victims. There is however a marked difference in the ethnic breakdown of youth victims of homicide compared with overall homicide. 78% of victims and 76% of offenders were described as African-Caribbean, compared to 36% of overall homicide victims and 51% of offenders.

Two thirds of the homicides in London in 2007 were committed by British born youths.

Chart 5: Youth homicides in London in 2007

Only eight of the 27 victims were alone when they were attacked. In three cases multiple offenders attacked a lone victim and in a further three cases the opposite was true. The research carried out highlights that youth homicide offences arise from more “chaotic” encounters and highlights that being “safer” in a group or gang is not supported by the facts about homicide.

The analysis of youth homicides in 2007 indicates that the majority of both youth victims and offenders have a history of offending. In addition, the information indicates that 14 of the victims and 12 of the offenders were attending school or college.

“Young people who are victimised by gang violence will often join gangs themselves in order to protect themselves, and fear and victimisation can play a significant role in a young person’s decision to carry a knife or gun. Young victims of violence are three to five times more likely to have offended than other young people”

UCL Jill Dando Institute of Crime Science, (2005), Rationalisation of current research on guns, gangs and other weapons: Phase 1.

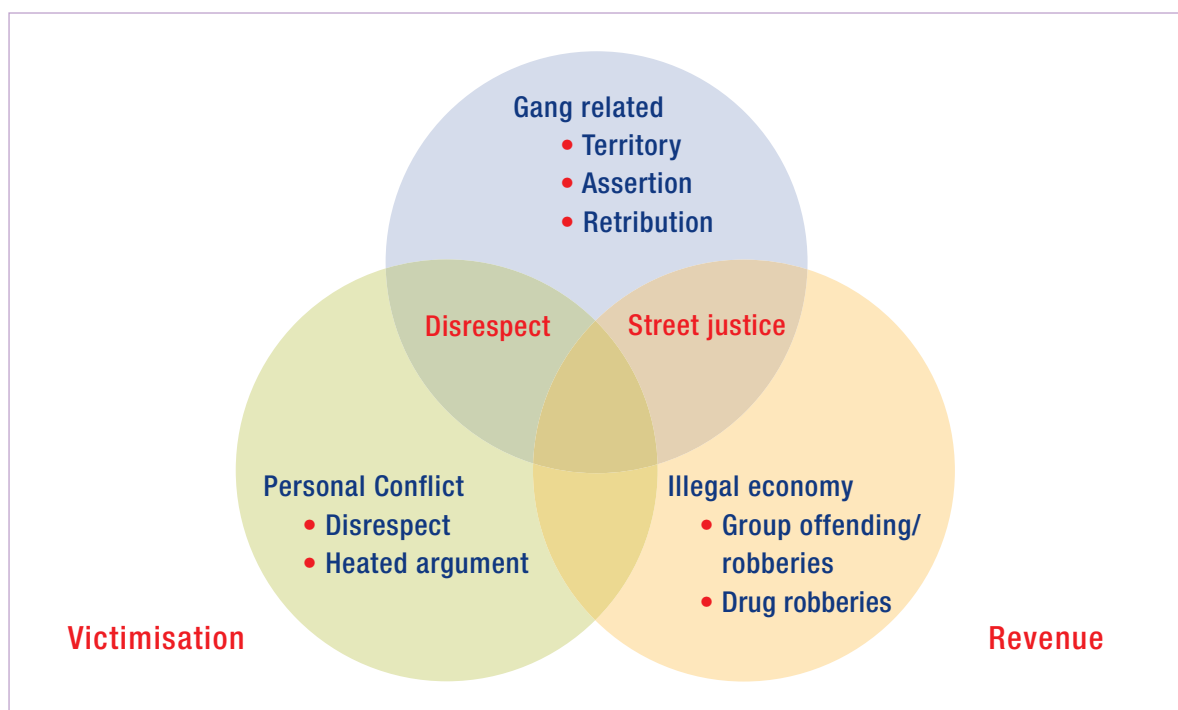
The location of youth homicides is highly concentrated in inner London boroughs and tends to be in areas of high deprivation. However, more importantly the research indicates that there is a strong link between the illegal economy, particularly drugs, in these areas.

Of the youth homicides in 2007 the following information is known:

- 52% were gang related.
- 43% of the gang related homicides were shot.
- 57% of victims of gang related homicides had previous offending history.
- 57% of offenders of gang related homicides also had a previous offending history.
- In 50% of recorded cases both the victim and offender of gang related homicides had a previous offending history.
- 33% were clearly linked to the illegal economy.
- 44% related to personal conflicts.

The following diagram illustrates the three dominant factors based on the case analysis of youth homicides in 2007.

Diagram 1: Youth homicides in 2007 (10-19 year olds)



Key features

As highlighted in the above Venn diagram, the analysis of youth homicides in 2007 raised a number of pertinent features.

Feuds: the issue of youth “gang” related homicides focuses on the different aspect of group on group feuds. Feuds can be defined as conflict caused by a need to control. That control can be based on a range of issues such as:

- Territory: for young people the issue of territory, defending the “endz” is a key feature. Nine of the 14 “gang” related homicides related to issues around territory, or gang space. The current issues affecting some schools relate to perceived territory based conflict from neighbouring estates or neighbouring boroughs.
- Retribution: for young people the case analysis indicates that retribution is related to territory (infringing on a gang’s space), ethnicity or country of origin. It can also relate to other more basic issues such as girlfriends and the role that young women play is a key factor in understanding the current dynamics in serious violence. This is explored further in this chapter. The case study below highlights.
- Assertion: recent research (Hales 2007, Pitts’ Reluctant Gangsters 2007 and An American Dream, Prof. Rick Rosenfeld 2006) highlights that organised criminal networks or “organisational gangs” use serious violence over street groups/gangs as a way of controlling their territory ensuring those groups observe their boundaries. This includes controlling the drug market territories and demonstrating supremacy and control over this lucrative market and its connected illegal economy.

Hales (2007, p8)

“It was suggested that to some extent violence within the borough may be minimised because most of the dealer networks know their position in relation to each other and as a result a form of relatively peaceful co-existence is possible – although this is periodically disrupted and violence occurs... The Probation respondents generally referred to the existence of a “general rule of the road” as part of which rivals observed territorial limits and thereby avoided conflict. By contrast, individuals and groups looking to expand into new markets will encounter rivals about whom they have no prior knowledge or history and it is suggested that this may make violence more likely”.

CASE STUDY 1

AZ was in his late teens when he died in a revenge killing by an ethnic gang following tensions and fights with a black youths from a local area. There were some local events that lead up to the incidents including several stabbings over a few days. However AZ was from a different area entirely.

On the day of the incident he was visiting friends when he as approached by two persons who asked where he was from. When he and the friends he was with said that they were from another area, shots were fired at them, fatally wounding AZ.

Although AZ was known to the police in relation to a previous serious incident there was no evidence connecting his murder to that incident.

Other academic research (Pitts' Reluctant Gangsters 2007) in recent years also highlights the developing trend of drug markets and local territory based conflict. Senior criminals who manage and operate "organisational gangs" use a range of control measures to conduct drug related activity. These control measures are explored in more detail in Chapter 6. The evidence of the homicides in 2007 supports this research whereby some of the 10-17 year old victims were killed purely as a result of their affiliation to a group or individual.

Pitts (2007, p8)

"this commitment to territory appears to have had its origins in the constraints imposed by the geography of the drugs markets. However, increasingly, territory is described as a postcode, and the antagonisms generated are London-wide..."

...rival gangs perceive residence on an estate controlled by gangs as affiliation. Moreover, resistance to, or disaffiliation from, the local gang is often regarded as an indication of disrespect or disloyalty. This situation ... produces ... involuntary affiliation.

The feature of assertion and control of drug markets and the illegal economy is evident in 4 of the 14 youth homicides. Of particular note is the manner in which senior gang members, those associated with organisational gangs, use street justice as a control measure.

CASE STUDY 2

BX was in his mid teens when he was shot at his home. It is believed that he was killed over a conflict relating to drugs and money.

BX had a history of offending ranging from shop lifting to burglary and drug dealing. He is believed to have an association to the person who shot him and a local gang.

The data analysis of youth homicides in 2007 indicates that there is a growing chaotic nature of serious youth violence caused by personal conflict and territory based feuds, fuelled by illegal drugs markets and robbery.

Homicides of 20-50 year olds

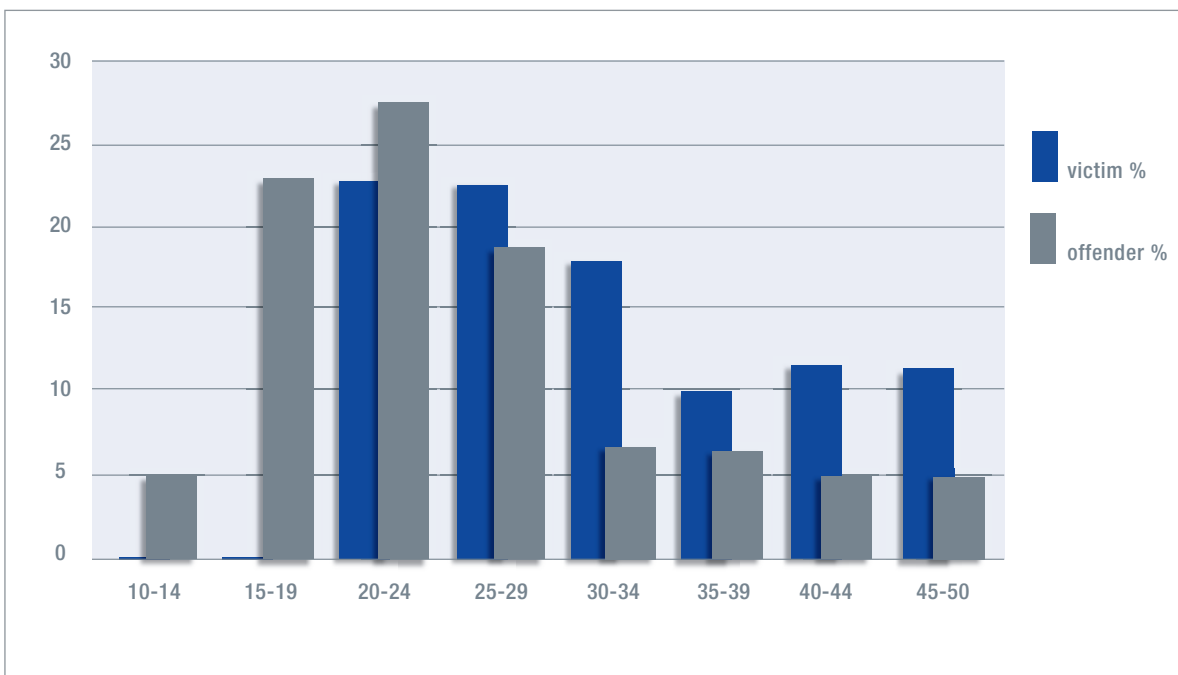
In 2007 there were 97 homicide victims and 113 known offenders were in the age bracket of 20-50 year olds. Some key points are:

- 84% of victims are male.
- 97% of offenders are male.
- 46% of victims had an offending history with 32 (33%) having a history of violent offending.
- 78 of 113 known offenders have a history of violence.
- 61% of victims knew their offender prior to the incident.
- Stabbing was the most common cause of death of 44% of the victims.
- In 21 cases (22%) the victim was shot. The overwhelming majority of these are linked to drug markets and drug dealer disputes, or the illegal economy.

Age comparable

The following bar chart illustrates the age comparable between victim and offenders of homicides where the victim is between the ages of 20-50. As can be seen, whilst 66% of victims are between the ages of 20-34, 24% of offenders are aged 15-19 and in total, 71% of known offenders are between 15-29 years old.

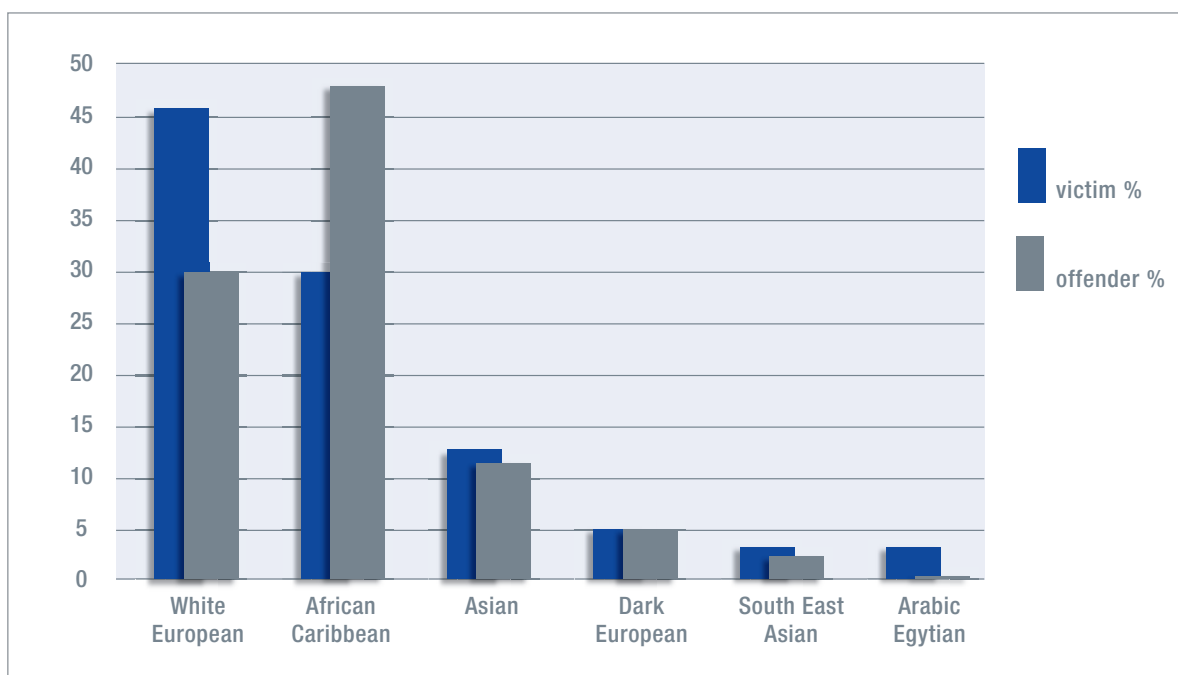
Chart 6: Age of victims and offenders for London homicides 2007 where victim is 20-50 years of age



Ethnicity comparable

Whilst the vast majority of victims of homicides are white Europeans, this is an under-representation of the demographics of the capital city. However, conversely there is a disproportionate number of London's African-Caribbean community of both victims (28) and offenders (27). (See bar chart below.) However, the vast majority of victims are British born.

Chart 7: Ethnicity of homicides in London where the victim is 20-50 years of age



Common/motivational factors of homicides for 20-50 year old victims

The following Venn diagram (Diagram 2) illustrates the common or motivational factors that contribute to homicides in this age category, according to Stanko's analytical assessment of homicides.

Alcohol and drug consumption

In stark contrast to youth homicides, alcohol can be seen as a key influencing factor in 32 of the 97 cases. However, if the illegal economy, including drug related disputes, are totalled together then this would be the highest motivational factor. The research supports the view that the illegal economy, particularly the illegal drugs economy, is a major contributor to homicide in London.

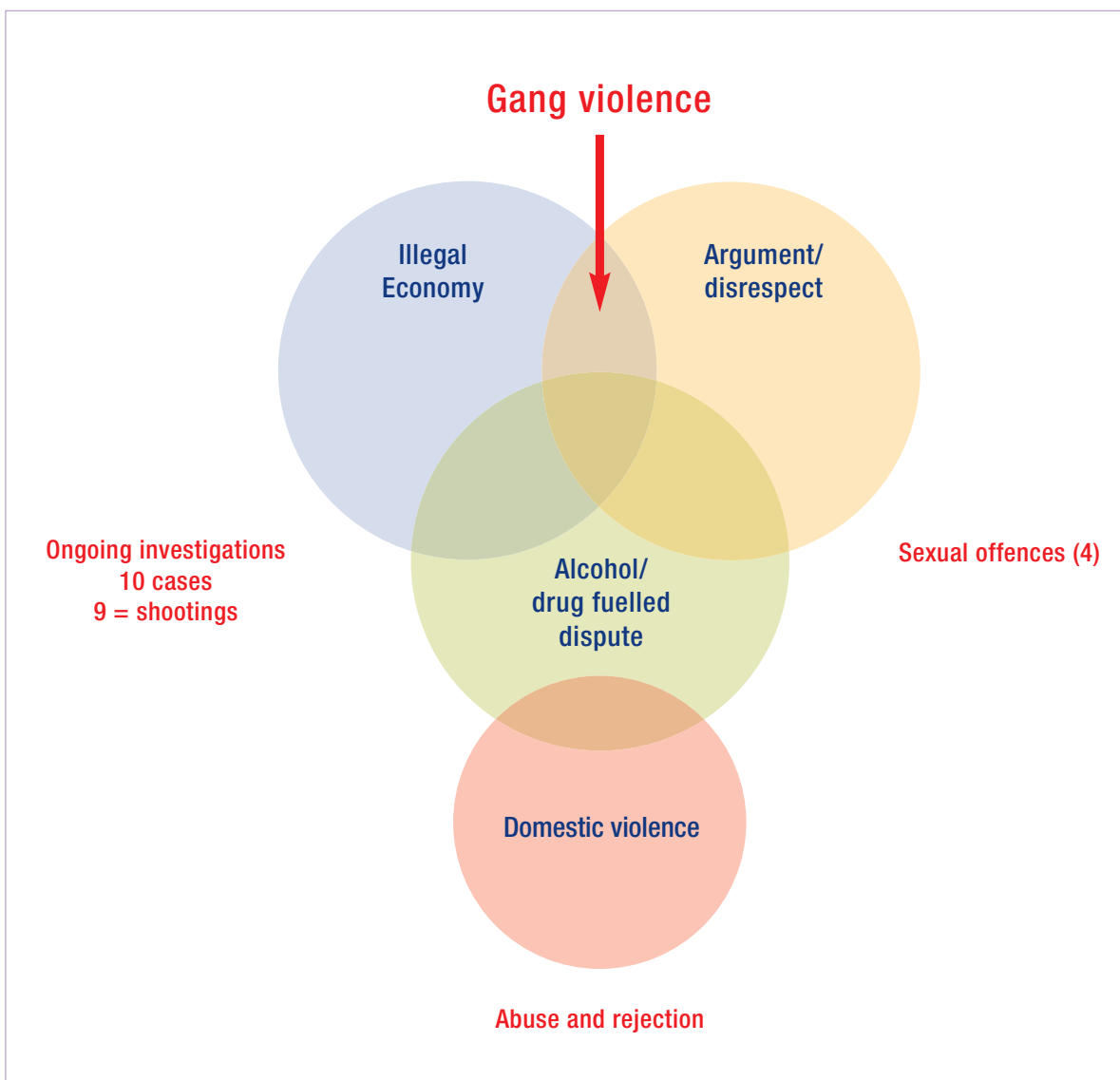
Another significant difference between the youth 10-19 year old homicides and the adult 20-50 year old homicides relates to drug consumption. In terms of youths, the illegal drugs economy was the major influencer, for adults drugs consumption was a motivational factor and in 55% of the drug related homicides the offender had consumed drugs before the killing took place.

The illegal economy

At least 31 of the 97 homicides last year where the victim was between 20-50 years of age were directly linked to the illegal economy. 50% of these were disputes between drug dealers or the drug market. However, there remain a number of cases where the investigations are outstanding and are linked to the illegal economy which would raise the figure to 41 cases. In nine of the other cases the victims were killed as part of robberies and three other cases were as a result of gang criminality.

The following Venn diagram illustrates the connections between the motivational factors in the 20-50 year old homicides. Whilst domestic violence sits slightly aside as a motivational factor, the analysis shows a clear interconnectivity between the illegal economy and drugs. 52 of the offenders have a recorded history of violent offending, including all of those in the category of gang violence and 18 of the 31 cases linked to the illegal economy.

Diagram 2: 2007 homicide key factors



Summary

The picture of homicides in 2007 shows some distinctive features.

- There are clear distinctions between territorial based violent offenders and those that are motivated by the illegal economy.
- As a result, distinctive territory based interventions, as opposed to individual risk based interventions, need to be developed. This includes conflict resolution programmes which can mediate and resolve potential feuds, retaliation and revenge attacks.
- The illegal economy and illegal drugs markets account for nearly a quarter of all homicides in 2007.
- Territory based, or respect homicides, account for 11%.

It is clear from the research in 2007 that the current focus on knife crime and the potential over use of gangs is masking the motivational factors of the illegal economy and personal conflict/disrespect. Alcohol and drug misuse and domestic violence is a further motivational factor in adult homicides.

The picture in 2008

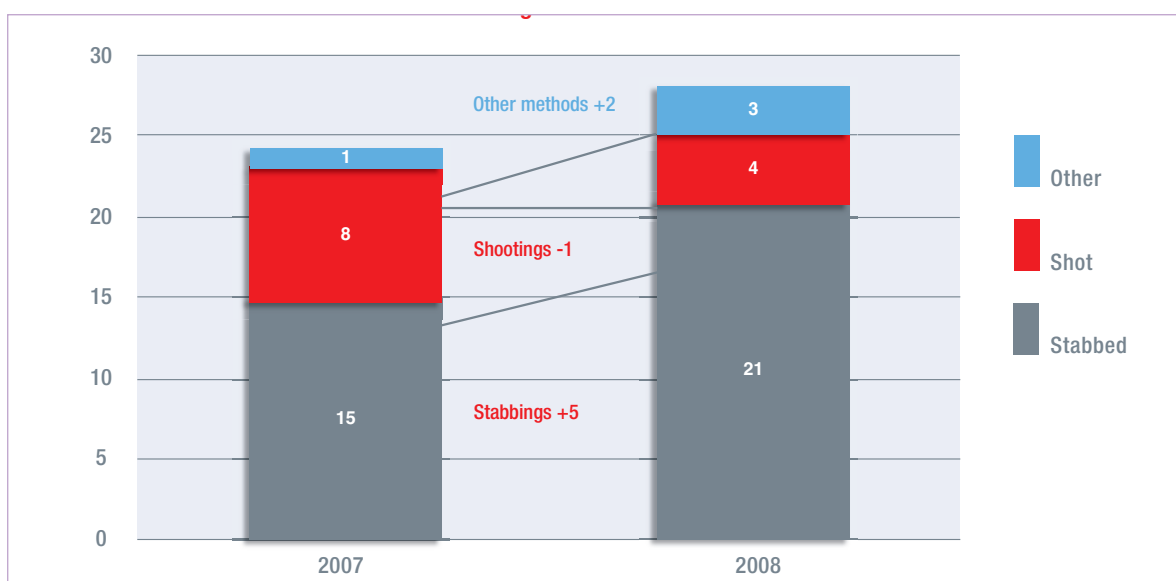
Having looked at the analysis for 2007 has the picture changed in 2008?

Firstly we have looked at the homicides in London in 2008 to date. (January – November 2008.)

The first key issue that the data highlights is that whilst the number of teenage homicides where a gun shot was the cause has dropped by 50% (eight cases compared to four), the number of stabbings has increased by 40% (15 cases compared to 21).

Overall the number of teenage homicides has increased by 17% from 24 to 28.

Diagram 3: teenage homicides 2007 and 2008



It has not been possible to case study all of the 28 youth homicides (10-19) at the time of publishing. However, of the 26 cases reviewed we know that:

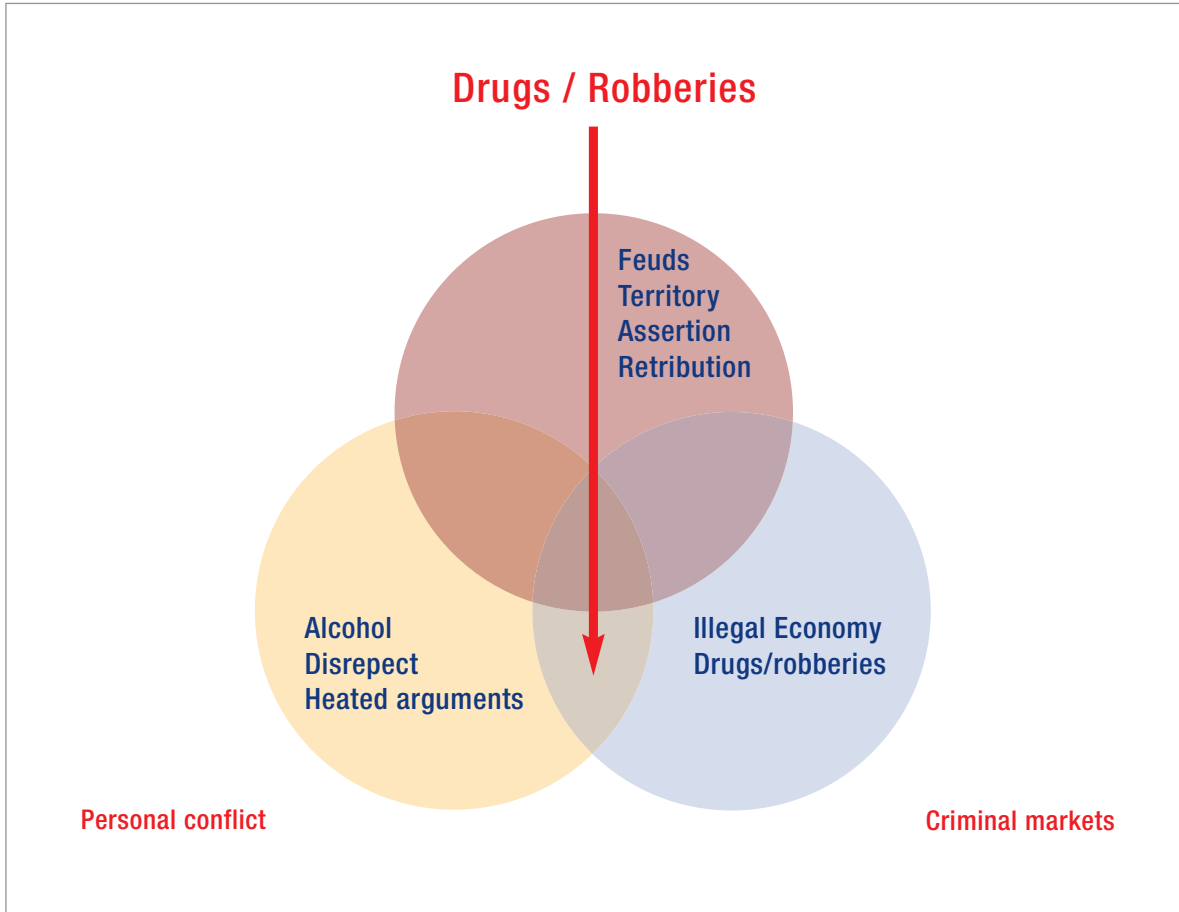
- Eight of the victims have had an offending history (31%).
- Nine of the cases related to personal conflict or heated argument (35%).
- Five of the cases related to feuds or territory based disputes (19%).
- Three of the victims were shot (12%).

The cross over between the illegal economy, feuds and personal conflict is centred around drug markets and robbery.

The following Venn diagram illustrates the current interconnectivity between the three dominant influencers of youth homicides in London in 2008, which are the same three dominant influencers in 2007.

Our initial analysis of the London wide 2008 data supports the theory that there is a growing chaotic nature to serious youth violence caused by personal conflict and territory based feuds, fuelled by illegal drugs markets and robbery.

Diagram 4: Venn diagram – youth homicides 2008



At the time of publishing this practitioner's study, it is difficult to assess the full picture across London. However, in order to make an initial snap shot assessment, we have looked at the homicides in **one specific borough, (Borough X)**, between January 2008 and March 2009, (15 months).

During this time there were:

- 14 homicides.
- 9 of the victims were male, 5 were female.
- Of the 20 offenders accused to date, 19 are male.
- 15 (75%) of the accused offenders are aged between 14-24 years.
- In two of the homicides the victim was under 18 years. In both cases the weapon used was a knife.
- In both of these the motivational factor appeared to be related to personal conflict/disrespect.
- In 10 of the 14 cases the suspect was already known to the police.
- There were 4 homicides where a firearm was the weapon. All 4 were directly related to the illegal economy. In one case the victim was innocent and involved in a drive by shooting.
- 3 homicides related directly to issues of disrespect. In these cases there was no direct evidence of a link to the illegal economy at the time of publication.
- There were 3 incidents which related to domestic disputes.
- There were two recorded homicides where the offenders were in a group of three or more.

Chart 8: Age of victims and offenders for homicides in Borough X Jan 2008 to March 2009

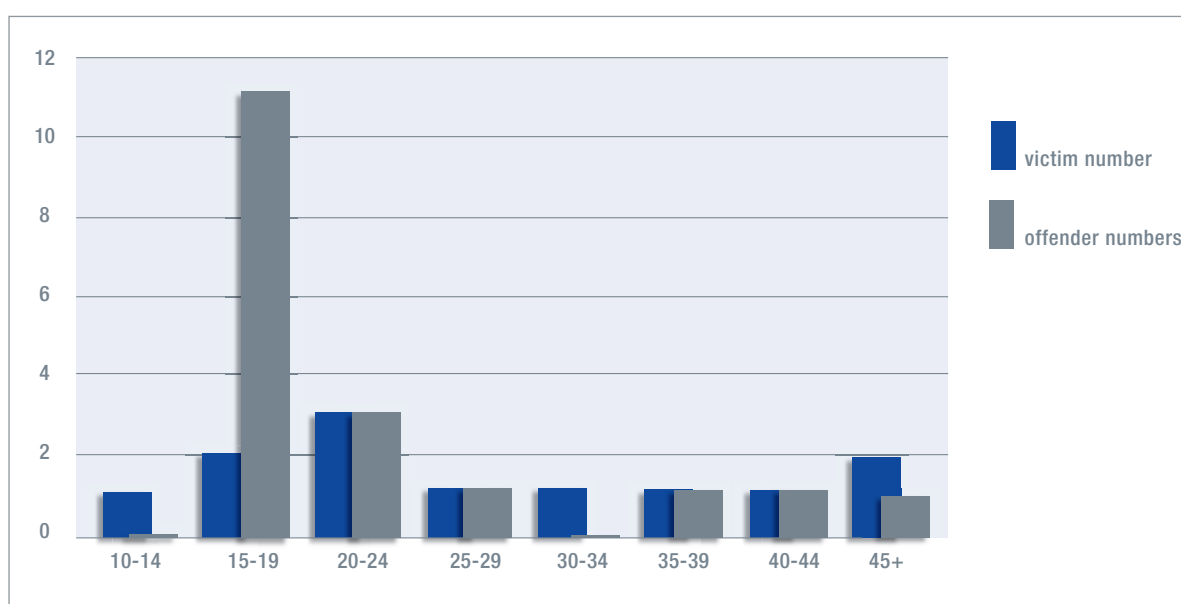


Diagram 5: Identified motivational factors amongst Borough X homicides, January to October 2008

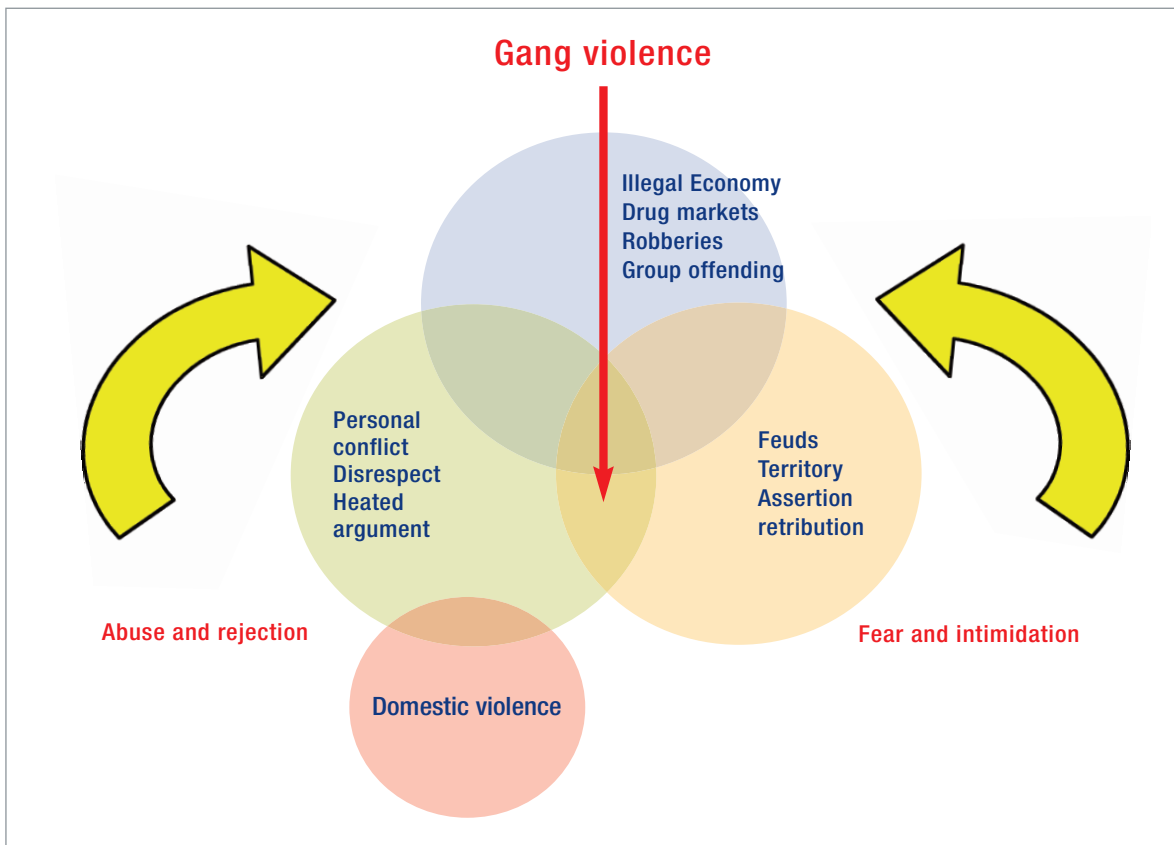


Diagram 5, above, illustrates the connectivity between the motivational factors of the illegal economy, profit making drugs markets, territory based feuds and personal conflict. In other words the motivational trends that we have seen in the London wide picture from the 2007 homicide data is mirrored and strengthened in terms of this data. Indeed an analysis would indicate:

- The illegal economy is strengthening its hold, and those involved in gangs who control the illegal economy will use gun violence to exert control over their business rivals.
- There is a swifter escalation of violence in relation to resolving both personal disputes and territory based feuds. This is borne out by both of the under 18 homicides and two of the four female homicides.

Messner and Rosenfeld 1997

“A common theme ... is an economic dispute that is settled by the use of violent means. The disputes arise from economic problems that are quite conventional in origin (faulty or fraudulent merchandise, payments overdue, bad debts, common thefts. However, none of these problems or the resulting disputes can be settled through conventional (that is legal) means, because they all involved illegal activities suggesting that this may make violence more likely”

The next question to answer is whether the above motivational factors are sudden, in terms of their appearance, or ones that have been building over time.

In an attempt to answer this question, let's look at other supporting data from Borough X.

Other supporting data

We will look at two key data sets for Borough X covering 2007-8:

- Prison data: This will show the wider offending trends for convicted crimes as compared to homicides.
- Victim support: This will show if the self referral cases of victims of gun and knife injuries is consistent with the analysis of the Police data.

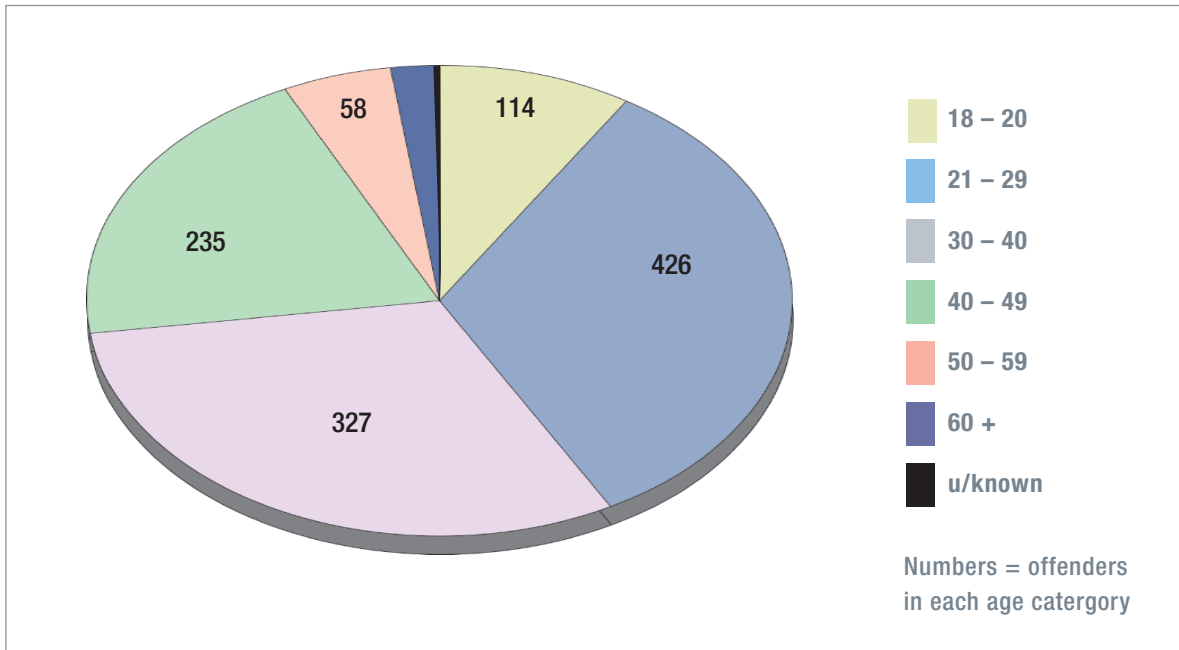
Prison data analysis 2007-08

In 2007-08 there were 1,197 offenders in prison who had Borough X addresses at the time of offending. This included prisoners on short term sentences.

The recorded crime that they committed is highest in the categories of Theft in General (30%) and Violence Against the person (21%). Once again, the prison data confirms that the offenders, particularly those involved in violent offences have a previous history of offending.

In 50% of violence against the person, homicide, serious wounding and sexual offending crime types, the offences were committed by an offender with a previous conviction. This correlates with the findings of the 20-50 year old homicide data above.

In terms of the age profile the following pie chart illustrates the age of offenders in custody. Again the age profile of 18-29 dominates the offender profile with 46% of adult offenders being in this age category. Once again this ties in with the 2007 homicide offender age profile which is dominated by the 18-29 year old age categories.

Chart 9: Age of Prisoners in 2007-8

Victim Support

During 2008 Victim Support has been providing a dedicated support service for victims of knife woundings through an Accident and Emergency. (Victim Support Data 2008.)

Of the 13 victim referrals between April and June 2008:

- Two were females, 11 were males.
- Five were under 18 years of age.
- Three of the under 18 incidents were carried out by one person in an attack.
- Six of the victims are described as African Caribbean (46%).
- Five of the victims were attacked by a group of offenders (more than one suspect).

The sample is relatively small, and the description from the case synopsis does not give sufficient detail to ascertain the motives behind all of the attacks. However, the outline of the cases revealed that:

- Three of the cases related to the illegal economy.
- Four of the cases were retribution/territory based attacks.
- Three of the assaults appear to be caused by personal conflict/disrespect.

In summary, the analysis would indicate that the breakdown of victim support referral cases is consistent with the motivational factors of homicides.

Summary

Although the research analysis of data in 2008 is only a snapshot it shows clear similarities to the pattern of territory based, retribution and illegal economy offending. The drug market still dominates the illegal economy. However, the evidence does indicate that personal conflict or disrespect issues are being resolved by more violent offending behaviour.

The evidence reinforces the summation that the resolution of the motivational factors needs to be different in terms of resolving territory based violence compared to the drug driven illegal economy factors. This will be explored further in Chapter 7. The recommendations from the analysis are:

- Re-define gangs and gang profiles; Chapter 4 provides a more up-to-date definition.
- Review the current assessment processes to focus on 'at risk' offenders, using an early offender scorecard approach. The scorecard would be based on trigger offences, linked to other social and personal risk factors. Based on the above analysis we would suggest that the trigger offences be, stopped or charged for:
 - Robbery
 - Violence against the person
 - Drugs
 - Association or affiliation with known organisational gang nominals
- Design and deliver early intervention programmes delivered through existing social settings, at school, at home, health services or social venues which work with individuals who are showing early signs of offending.
- Specific targeted interventions for the age ranges of 15-19 and 19-24 year olds. The programmes will need to be different and should include, but not separate victim and offender elements. Resolving personal conflict needs to be at the heart of these programmes.
- There needs to be direct ethnicity based support programmes based on the ethnic and cultural inequalities that are evident from the data analysis.
- Enforcement interventions need to focus on the illegal economy and in particular addressing the illegal drugs markets.
- Tougher criminal justice outcomes, particularly in terms of trigger offences, possession and use of a knife need to be given through the courts. There needs to be stricter guidelines in terms of bail and remand for these types of cases.
- Establish a Priority and Prolific offender programme for organisational gang members, with a premium criminal justice process which will encompass the transitional age range of 15-24.
- Restorative justice outcomes need to be delivered, particularly where a person has come before the courts on numerous occasions. These restorative justice programmes need to include a call-in style process conducted by the courts. The community court programme provides a useful framework for this.

Chapter 4

Defining Gang and Weapon Violence

There are two main definitions of a gang used in the four Tackling Gang Activity Programme areas – the first from Simon Hallsworth and Tara Young and the second from Manchester Multi Agency Gangs Service.

Hallsworth and Young

The Hallsworth and Young (2004) definition argues that there are three types of groups commonly referred to as gangs.

- **Peer groups:** relatively small, unorganised and transient entities that come together in public spaces. Delinquency and criminal activity are not integral to such a group's identity or practice. Offending is periodic, spontaneous, intermittent and opportunistic. Offences are often low-level nuisance or anti-social, with little to no engagement in serious assault or acquisitive crime.
- **Street gangs:** relatively durable, street-based groups who see themselves and are seen by others as a group for whom crime and violence are essential to group practice and solidarity. Crime, especially violent crime, is instrumental as well as expressive, as it involves a distinctive form of culture and masculinity.
- **Organised crime groups:** composed principally of individuals for whom involvement in criminal activity is an occupation and a business venture. In economic terms, organised crime groups exercise disproportionate control over the illegal means and forces of crime production.

The Manchester Multi Agency Gang Service

MMAGS is a multi agency team established in 2007, dedicated to eradicating gang violence in Manchester. Within three years it has adopted the following definition:

- **A gang:** a group of three or more people who have a distinct identity (e.g. a name or badge/emblem) and commit general criminal or anti-social behaviour as part of that identity. This group uses (or is reasonably suspected of using) firearms, or the threat of firearms, when carrying out these offences.
- **A gang member:** someone who has identified themselves as being a member of a gang (as above), e.g. through verbal statements, tattoos, correspondence or graffiti. This identity is corroborated by police, partner agencies or community information.
- **A gang associate:** someone who offends with gang members (as above); or who is associated – by police, partner agencies or community information – with gang members. It also includes someone who has displayed, through conduct or behaviour, a specific desire or intent to become a member of a gang.

The above definitions have been useful in establishing an initial starting point in understanding the different levels and interrelationships between individuals involved in gang related violence and how groups and gangs operate.

However, there has been a clear polarisation of gangs over the last two years which has meant that both definitions need to be reviewed.

This polarisation is due to two significant factors.

- **Organisational climate:** Organised criminality and in particular the illegal drugs market has tightened its influence over gang activity. The fluidity of the drugs market, the increased supply routes through West and North Africa and Europe, the changing dynamics of middle drug markets from localised to regional supply chains has meant that organised criminal networks have become synonymous with strong well structured gangs.
- **In essence the UK is facing the most challenging period** as at one level gangs are now the fabric that binds organised criminality.
- **Fear and Glamour:** the current spiralling of street based violence is due to two dominant factors. The first is the localised fear by some young people that, if they do not have the protective network of being in a “gang”, they face the prospect of becoming a victim of violence. At present the ability to show strength, retain respect and take retribution for disrespect is the wallpaper of daily life for many young people. In addition the glamorisation of “gangs” in the press, media, through website, computer games and music expounds the “bad boy” gangster lifestyle which then increases the street level fear and as a result the need to retain and build stronger protective networks.

It is clear from a practitioner’s perspective that the current definitions cloud the urban street group violence and gang violence landscape. Those persons involved in a group behave in a very different way to how they behave as individuals. For many young people being part of the street culture, having “peeps”, having a street identity not a “government” identity and defending your space is part of the journey from adolescence to adulthood. It is clear from the evidence that the violence that is associated with this urban street culture is different from that of organised, drugs and illegal economy driven gangs.

(Marshall, Webb, Tiley 2005)

There is strong social science research literature which shows that individuals in groups behave very differently than they do when they are alone. They take more risks, they feel pressure to conform with the majority, and they feel less personal responsibility. It is however the group processes that are important rather than gang membership per se ... disrupting gangs may not have the desired effect on criminality if individuals hang around in groups which may not be conceived as gangs.

This polarisation is supported by the current analysis which is set out in Chapters 5 and 6. The analysis indicates that the illegal economy, driven by the drug markets is a key motivational factor for the homicides in 2007 and the snapshot analysis for 2008. Serious violence caused by territory, retribution and assertion is far more prevalent in street based groups. However, the more detailed case analysis indicates that those involved in these groups do not necessarily define themselves as members of gangs.

Definition of gangs 2008 and beyond

The recommendation is that the definitions of gangs should be adopted as follows:

Definition of "gangs" 2008 and beyond

Organisational gangs – a well structured business organisation with a distinctive brand. Organisational gangs have a defined territory which is not geographical but based on highly profitable criminal activity such as drug markets.

Organisational gangs will have clearly defined positions within its structure and will use a range of recruitment methods, including coaching, fostering and head hunting to ensure stability for the business and longevity of the gang.

Organisational gangs carry out specific acts of serious violence to protect their business. Members of organisational gangs are influencers often held in high esteem amongst urban street groups.

Urban street groups – a group of three or more individuals who have developed a close association through the area they have grown up in, the school they have attended, family or other community based networks. They have a defined identity and commit a range of anti-social behaviour and criminal activity. The street group will have a geographical territory (endz). They are chaotic in nature often carrying out acts of serious violence due to respect or retribution. Street groups may have links to organisational gangs, in terms of providing profits through the drug markets, acting as drug or weapon mules, or even carrying out acts of violence on behalf of organised gang member. The members are imitators of others rather than influencers over others.

Chapter 5

The Influence of Organised Criminality

Before we look at the interconnectivity between Organisational Gangs and Urban Street Groups as defined in Chapter 4, we must first look at the illegal economy and in particular the illegal drug markets which dominate the organisational gang structure in the UK.

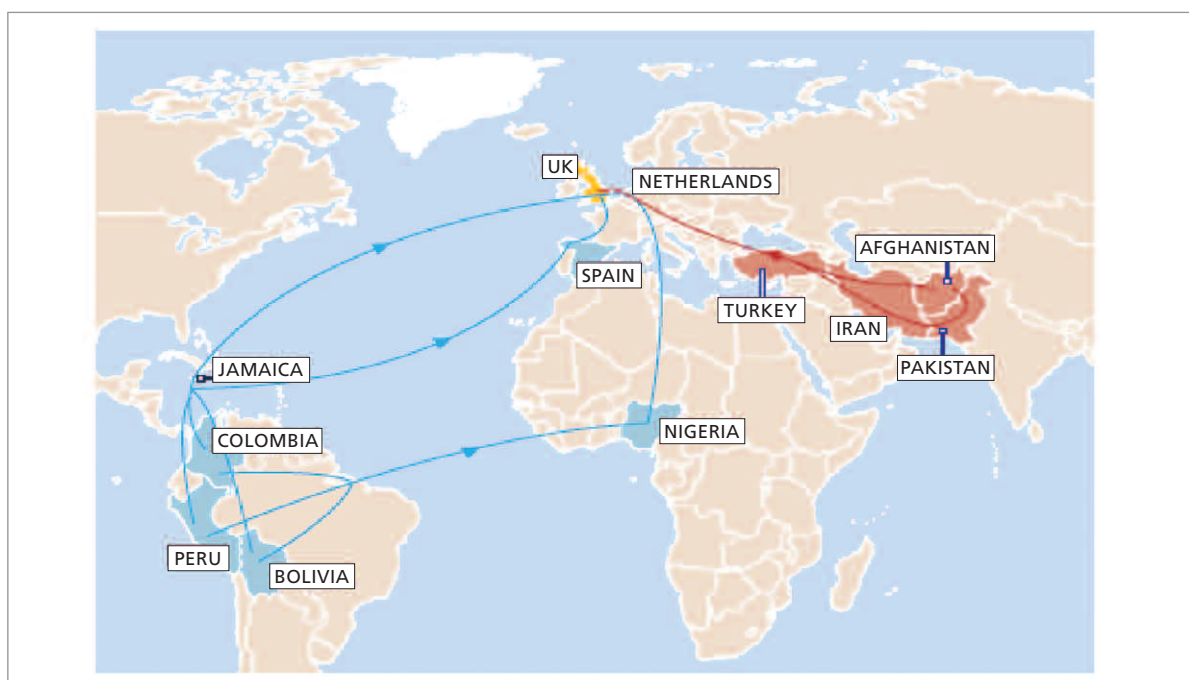
Illegal economy supply routes

The supply of illegal class A drugs has altered dramatically over the past decade, particularly cocaine and powdered cocaine. The supply routes have shifted from direct Caribbean and South American supply chains and now drugs are trafficked through North and West Africa to deliberately maximise other illegal markets, human trafficking and immigration routes. The African connection enables a wider distribution from human carriers, vehicular and air transport, boats and ferry crossings. Links through Europe provide a wide and varied method of delivery to the middle drug markets in the UK. As a result, policing these varied import sources is challenging.

However, there is a clear shift to middle drug markets being supplied through the Home Counties and rural areas. There is clear evidence from the MPS and frontline community organisations that London organisational gangs are using couriers as young as 12 and 13 to collect and deliver illegal drugs via middle markets in Norfolk, Suffolk, Essex, Hertfordshire, Sussex and as far as Wales.

There is a real opportunity for significant disruption to these middle market supply chains by establishing a special cross constabulary drugs enforcement team which can focus on these middle market suppliers. This can build on the current remit of the Association of Chief Police Officers "Middle Markets team".

Transportation routes to the UK: heroin and cocaine



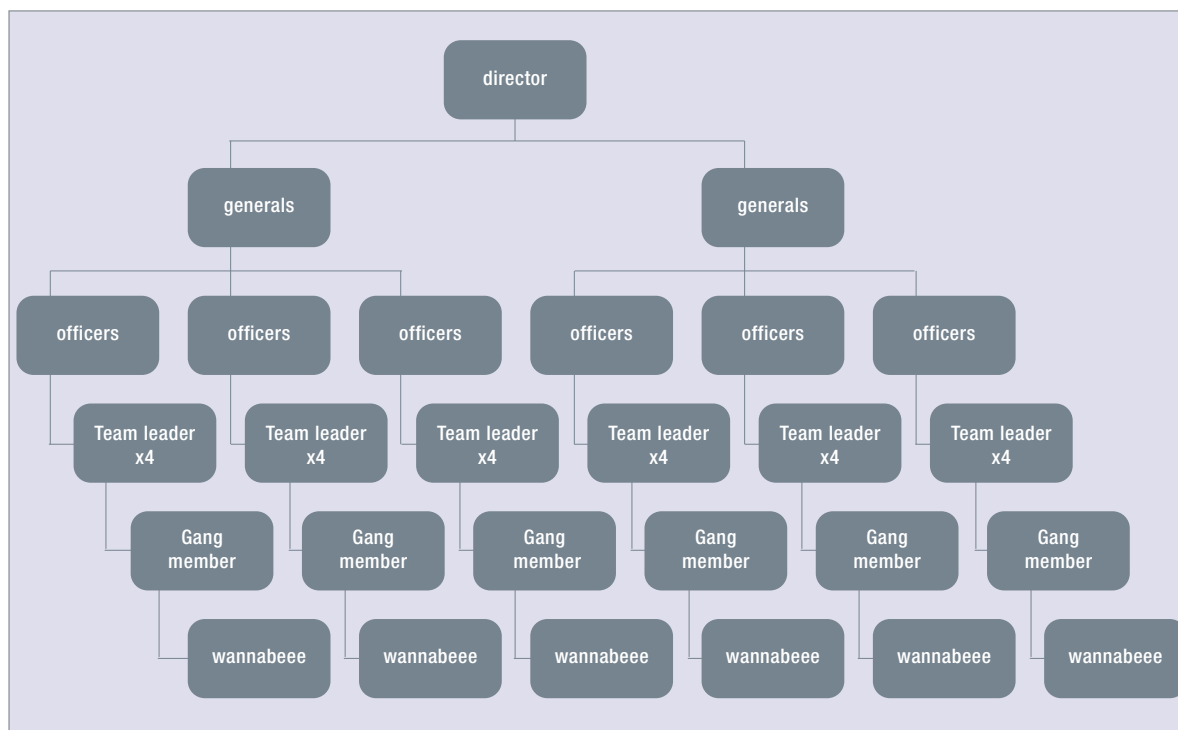
Organisational gangs: “running the business”

The key difference between organisational gangs, who are profit driven entities and other more chaotic urban street groups are the “business like” structures that exist within them. Organisational gangs are well structured, profit led businesses. They are led by entrepreneurial, dynamic individuals, capable of creating high levels of loyalty with dividends being paid to the board of directors as a reward for success. They have a strong recruitment policy, akin to headhunting, and are willing to fire people who do not perform or who go against the ethos of the business. For organisational gangs, “fire” we mean action from serious physical retribution or any other act which may include homicide. The organisational gang structure below is an example of how an associated business operates. It is nothing new. Venkatesh (2008) describes this business model from his experiences in living and working with the Black Knights gang in Chicago. Based in the Robert Taylor Homes, a notorious estate on the Chicago West side, Venkatesh spent nine years shadowing JT, a Black Knights gang leader, whose entrepreneurial skill and strong management ethos saw him rise to the heights of the board of directors. JT had a very small band of loyal officers, referred to as sales directors, who ran street team leaders. Their role was to recruit members, control the drug supply routes and drug sales markets and undertake discipline of unruly street associates or wannabees.

Venkatesh (2008). “As I watched JT question his sales teams, I began to realise that he truly was an accomplished manager. As JT reached a site the sales team director would approach him alone and instruct his troops to stop all sales activity ... In order to keep himself (JT) clear, he never carried a gun, drugs, or large amounts of cash ... He’d bear all of the burdens of running a successful underground economy, enforcing contracts, motivating his members to risk their lives for low wages, dealing with capricious bosses.”

Organisational gang leaders are rarely involved in any criminal or violent behaviour. Their role is one of reinforcing their status, maximising profits and punishing disloyalty in the higher ranks.

The big difference between the US and UK organisational gangs is the level of organisation. In the US organisational gangs control the illegal economy of a whole city with connections and branches in other cities across the country. Although currently this is not the case in the UK, recent MPS intelligence suggests that some organisational gangs are strengthening their collaborative links to ensure that their profits are not affected by local rivalries. As these collaborations are developed, the UK will see a rise in organisational gang violence as illegal economy boundaries are redrawn.

Chart 10: Business typical organisational gang structure

Summary and recommendations

There are clear links between the illegal drug market supply, other organisation criminality and organisational gangs. The evidence highlights how organisational gangs use a business structure model to control and manage their business to maximise their profits and minimise their own personal risk.

In assessing the current position and emerging trends related to gun gang and weapon violence, the following recommendations are made:

- 1)** There is a revision of the definition to focus on only two key groups as set out above: organisational gangs and urban street groups.
- 2)** That the proposed definition is adopted nationally.
- 3)** Focus is directed on addressing the middle drug markets, concentrating on the supply chains through rural and suburban routes. A dedicated regional drugs team to be set up to solely focus on disrupting these regional middle drug market routes.
- 4)** That there is a greater focus on intervention and preventative programmes, and that each provide sustained exit routes for individual gang members at each level of the organisational gang structure. This includes their connected family/girlfriends or partners. (Diagram 9 on page

10 and Diagram 8 on page 51). This is vital to prevent the serious organisational gang violence which will ensue from agreed collaboration between different illegal economy driven gangs (this will be explored further in the following chapters).

- 5)** To develop an intensive Family Intervention Programme model for organisational gang families and urban street groups. The model should include a health/based emotional and social support programme for all those involved.

- 6)** Courts need to reassess the penalties for those individuals who have previously offended or have 'come to notice' decisions attached to them. All pertinent information, including data held by partner agencies, should be compiled and presented to the courts, and should be used to attach a civil or reparation order as a court outcome.

Chapter 6

Understanding the Inter-connectivity between Organisational Gangs and Urban Street Groups

The preceding chapters have drawn on the current analytical data to highlight the changing scenario in London for gang, group and weapon violence. The following chapters primarily focus on the evidence of practitioners and frontline services who are working with individuals, groups or families, who are involved in gang, group and weapon violence.

So far we have explored the current trends, and looked at how they influence the direction of gang and weapon violence. We have also looked at how the illegal economy (in particular the drugs markets) drive these trends and provide a structured and robust business model that ensures their success.

In this chapter we will explore the motivational factors that draw people into both organisational gangs and urban street groups and the connectivity between both.

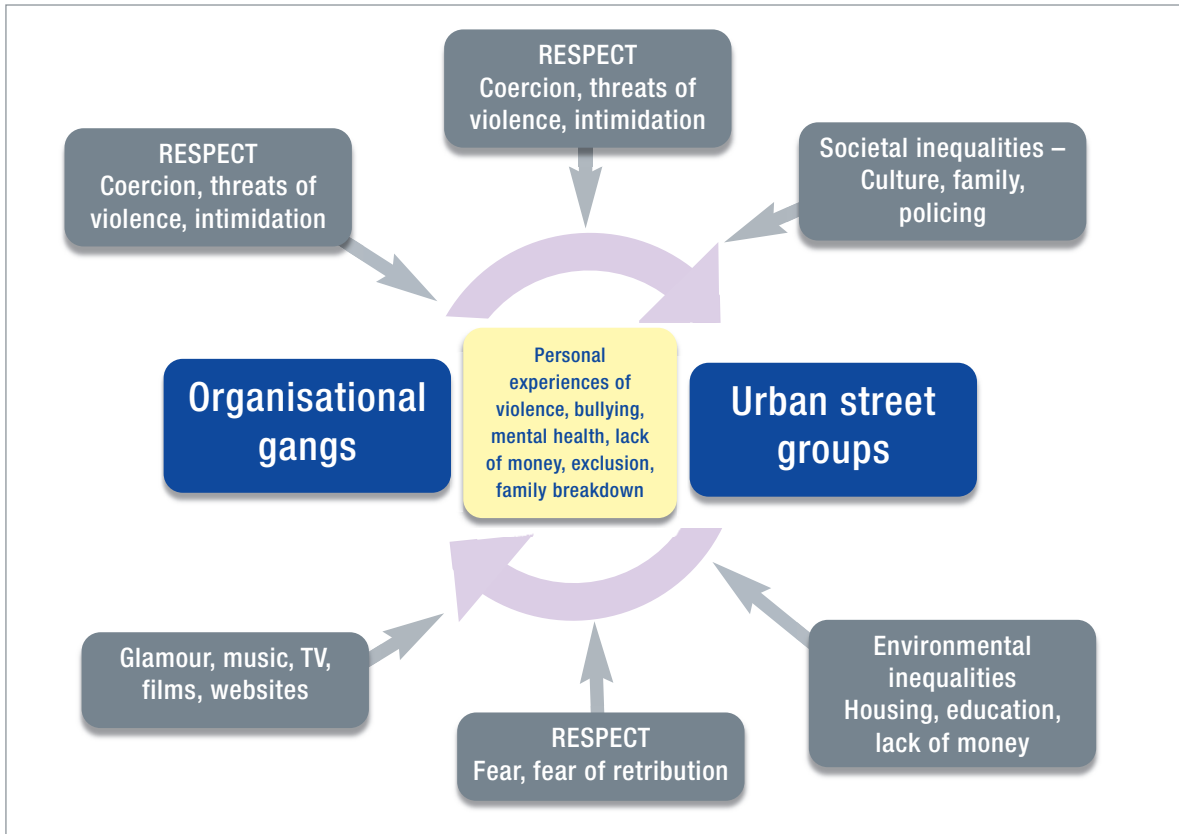
The motivational factors of organisational gangs and urban street groups

From the evidence that I have gathered in working as a practitioner in the field of gang and weapon violence, there is a clear connection between organisational gangs and urban street groups. These connections can be defined as motivational factors in two ways:

- Motivational factors from organisational gangs over urban street groups.
- Motivational factors attracting members of urban street groups into organisational gangs.

The following flow diagram illustrates how those motivational factors work in a simplified format.

Motivational changes between organised gangs and urban street groups



For some time, community organisations working closely with young people at a local level have highlighted the clear distinction between groups of young people whose associations have been developed through community based environmental networks and properly constituted gangs.

However, the glamorisation, together with the increased fear and respect issues, has resulted in a blurring of this distinction. As this is not always taken on board, the resulting preventative and enforcement interventions are not always targeted to maximum effect. Often they are aimed at the wrong group with an inappropriate methodology being used. Unsurprisingly this is counterproductive as the interventions themselves (when inappropriately applied) drive a wedge between the authorities and the groups they are trying to assist. This can result in the street based groups particularly, increasing their chaotic behaviour along with their vulnerability.

As stated in Chapter 2, nine of the 14 “gang” related homicides related to issues around territory, or gang space. The current issues affecting some schools relate to perceived territory based conflict from neighbouring estates or neighbouring boroughs. In other words the school is the location where territory based groups meet and clash; they are not the “cause” of the violence.

In addition, a case review of the 27 murders of young people in London in 2008-9 indicates that whilst they displayed clear links to local street groups, some having indirect links to organisational gangs, none of the victims were direct members of organised gangs. The vast majority were fatally stabbed as a result of minor disrespect issues.

The following section highlights in more detail the motivational factors between organisational gangs and urban street groups as set out in Diagram 6.

Motivational factors from organisational gangs over urban street groups

■ **Drugs markets/revenue:**

For organisational gangs the stability of the drugs market and the maximisation of profits is vital. Organisational gang members will use urban street groups to sell and deliver drugs as a way of keeping the drugs market fluid and most importantly keeping the focus of attention away from themselves. The attraction of earning money and increasing those earnings by becoming more “connected” to an organisational gang member forms part of this motivation.

■ **Respect/coercion/threats of violence/ intimidation:**

Organisational gangs use threats of violence and carry out acts of violence to manage their business. This can be against other organisational gangs when drug markets are being competed over, against members within its own organisation, where a member is believed to be taking a greater control than is deemed appropriate or against members of urban street groups where there is an issue over profits or as pure intimidation.

■ **Social inequalities: culture/family/policing:**

Organisational gangs use other social motivational factors to their advantage in the identification, recruitment and grooming of prospective gang members. These social factors include:

- Family connection, brother, cousin, nephew or in some cases sister of a member of an organisational gang, affords a degree of status amongst other peer groups. Often the younger member will take on a connected street name of the organisational gang member to demonstrate that status, such as “younger” or “tiny”.
- Culture: Some gangs use a cultural connectivity as part of the recruitment process. This can focus on young people from similar countries of origin such as the Woolwich Boys in Greenwich, a Somalian Gang, the Tottenham Boys gang in Tottenham which has its origins in Jamaica or the DFA in Southwark which are primarily Nigerian. The immigration status plays a crucial role here as often families face the additional pressure of immigration status which reinforces these inequalities and provides fertile recruiting grounds. Culture can also include religious culture and religion can be used in a negative aspect to draw young people into acts of serious violence. The SMS in Lambeth is a good example of a gang that professed to use the Muslim faith to carry out criminality.
- Policing: The style of policing communities and in particular the interaction of both police and other visible civil policing bodies such as community wardens, police community support officers (PCSOs) and revenue inspectors is used to reinforce the stereotypical view of young people. Whilst the consensus of opinion by young people is that certain methods of policing such as stop and search, neons and search arches are necessary, the manner in which they are conducted can reinforce the view that young people are criminals. At present, groups of young people are carrying out their own street level social revolt against authorities due to these perceived inequalities. The reference to the imposition of “government” and government rules, over them, the refusal to use their

“government name” and adoption of their urban street name are all signs of a growing social disconnect at street level between authority and urban street groups. Once again this offers organisational gangs opportunities for recruitments and grooming.

The case study below gives an example of how the influences of the organisational gang structure assists a person’s advancement through criminality.

CASE STUDY 3

The following case study is a chronological intelligence study of a person who was murdered in London in 2008. The person will be referred to as DD.

At the age of 11, DD first came to the notice of the Police when he was arrested for a public order offence. He used threatening behaviour towards the victim with a undisclosed weapon. As DD was still attending primary school he was temporarily excluded.

In the Autumn of 2004 DD came to the attention of the schools inclusion team. In early 2005 he received a reprimand for robbery.

In 2006 DD was stopped eight times and was part of a group that committed mobile phone robberies. He was arrested twice for robbery, once for handling stolen goods and once for GBH. Although charged he was never convicted either through being found not guilty or NFA’d.

In 2007 DD was stopped 12 times for stolen property. Although DD was on home study, it is believed that he was using other contacts at school to commit mobile phone robberies.

In 2008 DD was stopped eight times. However, the reasons for the stops had changed and related to drugs and firearms offences. He received a warning for the possession of drugs and was a named suspect in a robbery. DD was fatally stabbed before the completion of the investigation.

CASE STUDY

A well known gang, previously operating in Lambeth, called SMS (South Man Syndicate) has been amalgamated into another more established gang. The SMS crew were known in the media as the Muslim Boys. This was a name given to the gang by the Police due to some members converting to Islam. SMS were rivals to another major gang, but it appears that due to their leader visiting Egypt and discovering the real meaning of Islam and all the media attention, the gang then disbanded. Interestingly, many members of the amalgamated gang have now also converted to Islam and there is reference to the religion on the front page of their website. During 2005 and the early part of 2006 there were serious issues around the forced conversion of young people to the religion and this was linked to a number of high profile incidents including the murder of a local young man in Brixton.

Shaila Mahomed – Lambeth Community Safety Team 2006

Motivational factors attracting members of urban street groups into organisational gangs

Not all members of urban street groups become members of organisational gangs. As we have described above, being a member of an urban street group is part of the adolescent landscape that currently exists. Those involved in urban street groups may not even consider themselves as part of a gang and will often have self imposed behavioural methods to minimise their risk of involvement. Conversely, the issue of respect is vitally important for members of urban street groups and they will equally go to great lengths to maintain their personal status within their group.

The motivational factors that are particularly dominant in urban street groups can be principally defined as social factors. They include:

- **Environmental inequalities:** As we have stated urban street groups are formed through local friendships or connections formed by the estate or area that they grew up in, the school they attended, the family or other cultural connections. Environmental factors can define a person's involvement in serious violence depending on the other positive or negative personal influences that exist. These environmental inequalities include:
 - **Housing:** Growing up in an area where lack of affordable housing, poor housing conditions and overcrowding prevails and where community interaction is absent, can have a particular impact in terms of involvement in violent behaviour. This can happen in two ways. Firstly, through the attraction of changing the poor housing conditions to better accommodation ensuring a better way of life. Secondly, the estate or area that a group grows up in can become a place of safety, with the territory being 'owned' by a group and fervently defended. The estate or area can become synonymous with the group and develop a status of its own which other groups fear and avoid. In this way housing areas can become the playground of generations of street group members and as a result become a shop window for organisational gangs to identify budding recruits.
 - **Education:** The issue of education is misunderstood in terms of being a motivational factor from urban street groups to gangs. Poor educational attainment, exclusion and the lack of employable qualifications certainly has a place in involvement in criminality and violent behaviour. However, many members of urban street groups attend school. There is evidence that the interactions with members of other urban street groups at school are a cause of violence, particularly where schools have the challenging task of providing education for young people from neighbouring boroughs. Some young people attend school but fail to attend lessons, using the school environment as a recruiting ground for organisational gang members. There is growing evidence that some urban street groups use random acts of violence or retribution against high attaining young people to punish excellence and reinforce the message that being part of a group is safer than trying to excel. This theory is replicated in American violent street groups.
 - **Materialism:** This is self evident. The lack of money to buy the latest "in thing", the right trainers, right bag, right jacket, is a vital part of being part of the group and not excluded or disrespected. However, having these visual symbols, being able to own them, is not about standing out. Conversely it is about blending in, because being disrespected or being targeted for not blending in is itself more humiliating. For some, the lack of

money can be as simple as not having enough to buy food, in other words the very base human instincts in Maslow's hierarchy of need theory. This is important to understand as some young people become involved in urban street groups as a means to an end, to buy food or clothing or even pay household bills. The fact that, like the US the fabric of the UK society is dominated by materialism, forms the foundation for the escalation of violent crime.

Messner and Rosenfeld 1997

Given the strong relentless pressure for everyone to succeed, understood in terms of an inherently, elusive monetary goal, people formulate wants and desires that are difficult, if not impossible, to satisfy within the confines of legally permissible behaviour".

- **Respect/fear/fear of retribution:** Coercion, intimidation and disrespect are used by organisational gangs to exert influence over urban street groups. However, some members of the urban street groups gain respect by committing acts of violence to become members of urban street groups. This respect can be gained in different ways including; couriering drugs, holding weapons, committing crimes, committing sexual and violent assaults, including a stabbing or even shooting someone. However, once involved, the retaining of respect and the fear of retribution become stronger psychological influences. The fear of reprisals for not committing an act on behalf of the gang member/s or the fear that another person might be getting greater favour create a world of paranoia which is used to the advantage of organisational gangs.

Berelowitz (2008, p27). A young person talking about why some young people carry out violent assaults over others.

"... they hurt others so that THEY cannot hurt them".

- **Glamour – music/TV/Film/websites:** There have been diametrically opposed arguments that music, TV and film glamour do not directly influence violence. The argument being that If these factors were so influential then surely it stands to reason that everyone who listens to Rap or hip hop, or who plays violent video games would commit violent crime. This is an unsustainable argument. It is as meaningless as saying that "everyone who drives a car will die in a road accident". The fact of the matter is that for some people the style and look of the car and how fast it can go and how fast they can drive it means everything. The car is an extension of their image and the speed they drive it at, their reckless behaviour creates the accident not the car itself. Some of the negative images of violence, the sexual exploitation of women, fashion, image a bad boy "bling bling" lifestyle, which is promoted through music, the media and video games, directly influences certain groups of people. Combined with the other motivational factors described above, the glamour of the lifestyle which is portrayed in music and the media and the violence of video games stops being influencers and becomes a motivational factor. The gang promotion poster below which was posted on a website is a graphic example.

Of greater concern is the current media focus on gangs and the misrepresentation of territory based urban street groups as gangs. As this research has highlighted, for most young people being part of a group is a rite of passage from adolescence to adulthood. However, the current media portrayal of some of these urban street groups as “gangs” has added a new dimension hence the recent proliferation of new “gangs”, “crews” or “possees”. The impact is threefold:

- The early identification of the real at risk people who are becoming involved in serious gang violence becomes harder as the picture becomes clouded by lower level group based disorder issues.
- Those involved in urban street groups put themselves at greater risk by trying to portray a media led image which places them in direct confrontation with organisational gang members, through respect and retribution issues.
- Organisational gangs have a greater pool of resources at their disposal to strengthen their illegal economy and drug market business, whilst simultaneously merging into the background.

Gang promotion poster



Case Study – PDC

The main gang in Lambeth is the PDC; this acronym has various meanings including Peel Dem Crew and Poverty Driven Children. The PDC operate from the Angell Town Estate in Brixton and are clearly the most notorious gang in the borough. They have been in operation for several years now. This gang has been linked to a gang which used to operate in the borough during the 1980s and '90s. The 28s were well known for their involvement in criminality and associated violence. The PDC are often described as the younger 28s but it is difficult to establish where any former 28s members are actually involved in the PDC or whether they are simply using the notoriety of the former gang for kudos. The PDC would be better described as a 'movement' rather than simply a gang, it is difficult to establish exactly how many actual members there are as their notoriety leads young people to associate themselves but their website currently boasts 2,500 members (2006). They have several business interests. Their main interest is music and they have a sophisticated website for fans.

Unlike other gangs in the borough the PDC have an identified structure which includes the 'Elders' and then members of less seniority – intelligence indicates that the least senior members are also the youngest and are often those involved in any criminality.

Shaila Mahomed 2006

Personal influencing factors

The above sections describe the motivational factors which exist between organisational gangs and urban street groups.

However, as Diagram 6 above portrays, there are also other personal factors which sit at the hub of this cycle. These personal factors have been created by the dominant experiences which influence and create the individual personality of each of us. We can all remember early childhood experiences that have stayed with us, some positive some negative, a loving relative, caring teacher, a bully, the death of a relative or friend. For some people these experiences can be so harsh that they desensitise the person to other empathetic feelings.

These personal factors are unique to the individual and in essence are at the heart of the decision making process of a person to become involved in criminal, anti-social or violent behaviour.

Whilst it is impossible to fully explore the personal factors that influence every individual, our research has highlighted that there are three crucial categories that these fall into.

- Personal experiences of violence through early years development, such as domestic violence or violence committed against them, their family or friends.

- Psychological factors developed through early years development, such as a lack of personal connection with parents (see below).
- Social factors which directly and personally impact on an individual.

Psychological experiences leading to violent behaviour

There are two key reports that have been undertaken that looks at the psychological factors which influence serious violent behaviour.

The first is the WAVE trust report published in 2005. This report explores the early years of development in childhood, particularly in the womb and in the age range of 0-3 year olds. The report uses a health based methodology to highlight how the early years experience of violence has a direct impact of the development of the brain which increases the likelihood that the child will have a greater propensity to commit violence in adolescence. This propensity can be reduced or escalated by two critical factors:

- Attunement: the Wave Report highlights that an attunement with a parent, in particular the mother, is crucial in creating a natural bond and as a result, a greater emphasis of moral boundaries. Conversely, the lack of a bond, the lack of attunement through stimulation, play and love can result in a total breakdown in terms of respect for others, where committing violence against another person means no more to the individual than watching TV and playing a video game.

Berelowitz (2008, p27). A young person talking about some young people.
 "Empathy is the single greatest inhibitor of the propensity to violence. Empathy fails to develop when parents or prime caregivers fail to attune to their infants. Absence of such parental attunement combined with harsh discipline is a recipe for violent anti-social offspring".

Wave trust report 2005 – "Violence and what to do about it".

- Social factors: These have been described in the section above.

These findings are nothing new. In his novel "In Cold Blood" first published in 1966, Truman Capote recalls the comments by a physician who carried out an assessment of mass murderer Perry Smith:

Capote (1970). "his childhood related to me ... was marked by brutality and lack of concern on the part of both parents. He seems to have grown up without direction, without love, and without ever having absorbed any fixed sense of moral values ... he is oriented, hyper alert, to things going on about him and shows no sign of confusion. He has a paranoid orientation towards the world ... and an ... emotional detachment...".

The core findings of the Wave Trust report are supported by other frontline agencies. Kids Company, a National Charitable Trust, published a report entitled, 'Learning from vulnerable children how to care better'. The report reviewed approximately 300 clinical papers on factors influencing the development of adolescence and concurs that emotional detachment in early years is a critical influencer on violent behaviour in later life.

"Emotional detachment" as described above is echoed in the current studies of violent offenders.

Camilla Bahtmenjahih, Chief Executive of Kids Company, explores the development of the cerebral brain and the lymphatic system and how in some young people between the ages of 16-24 drug induced psychosis plays a significant factor in their violent behaviour.

The behaviour which can be caused by experiences of violence at an early stage, can result in an unconscious violent trigger, whereby this trigger results in a physical conflict as a way to calm themselves down. In some cases the person may turn to other substances in order to gain control over their behaviour. This in turn can lead to other mental and medical disorders and psychosis.

Gaskell (2007)

Research shows that in the limbic area of some of these children's brains, the traumatic storing of the memories creates little electrical storms (not unlike seizures) which create agitation and potentially lead to a compulsion in the individual to behave badly and aggressively. After the aggressive enactment, the electrical hyper-function subsides. This is suggesting to researchers that some individuals are rewarded by their physiological gift of calm for their victimisation of others. This may explain why some children enjoy planning and victimising others because, paradoxically, they are soothed by behaving violently and like an abuser.

The Wave Trust report concurs with this research and highlights the long term psychological damage that can occur due to memories in early life.

Shaw and Winslow (1997)

“The presence or absence of healthy emotional development has significant implications for the level of violent crime in society. A baby who is healthily attached to its carer can regulate its emotions as it grows older because the cortex which exercises rational thought and control has developed properly. But in the case of the child who has been badly impacted the cortex is underdeveloped. The damaged child lacks an emotional guardian. The result can be violence that emerges as domestic violence or child abuse in later life.

“Studies have found a pathway from low maternal responsiveness at 10-12 months, through aggression, non compliance and temper tantrums at 18 months, lower compliance, attention getting and hitting at two years, problems with other children at three years, coercive behaviour at age four and fighting and stealing at aged six.”

Decima Francis, Chief Executive of From Boyhood to Manhood, refers to this psychological factor as a “red mist descending”. In this term the red mist is a blocking trigger. The person uses the red mist to desensitise themselves from the people they love, their family, thoughts about the victim, in other words as a way to block out any compassion or empathy.

The recently published London Safeguarding Children Board draft “safeguarding children affected by gang activity and/or serious youth violence” 2008 refers to three specific groups for children that kill:

- Psychotic Children where psychosis limits their understanding of reality and lead them to kill without an appreciation of what they are doing.
- Over-stressed children who become explosively violent under extreme stress, usually following a one-off incident.
- Aggressive children, constituting the largest group who are in nature anti-social youths whose aggressive behaviour escalates over time and results in violent acts and killing.

“By far the majority of children do not become violent overnight. Their behaviour represents many years of (increasingly) anti-social and aggressive acts, with aggressive habits learned in early years of life often the foundation for later behaviour.”

Youth Aggression and Violence: A Psychological Approach (Thomas G. Moeller 2001).
Social and Cultural Experiences that Affect Youth Violence, Report of the American Psychological Association Commission on Violence and Youth Vol. 1.

(London Safeguarding Children Board draft “safeguarding children affected by gang activity and/or serious youth violence” London Councils 2008.

Christianson (2007)

“Some offenders experience extremely negative emotions during and after criminal acts and this is especially significant among offenders who have committed reactive violent crimes ... In reactive homicide, the violence leading to the death of another person can be construed as some sort of impulsive response. The attack is spontaneous, immediate and emotionally driven. Victim provocation is evident, but there is no apparent external goal other than the harm to the victim following a provocation/conflict ... in some cases the crime may contain some degree of planning ... the offender may leave the scene to get a weapon and return for revenge without a “cooling off” period. The fact that reactive homicides tends to evoke extremely negative feelings in perpetrators is illustrated by statistics showing that 58% of them develop Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) symptoms in response to their own crimes.”

Whilst researchers and psychologists in the field agree on the impact of childhood experiences and the increase risk of the child being having a greater tendency towards violent behaviour in the future, there is a difference of opinion in how we can best address it.

Some researchers believe that the best approach is to identify the potentially at risk parents, during the early stages of pregnancy and providing improved pre and post birth health based support.

Others believe that because a young person’s brain continues to develop for 25 years we have a longer time to intervene and that there are crucial intervention points if we make better use of the assessment process to identify children, from five above who are displaying violent or serious anti-social behaviour, or alternatively appear to have a strong emotional detachment from those around them.

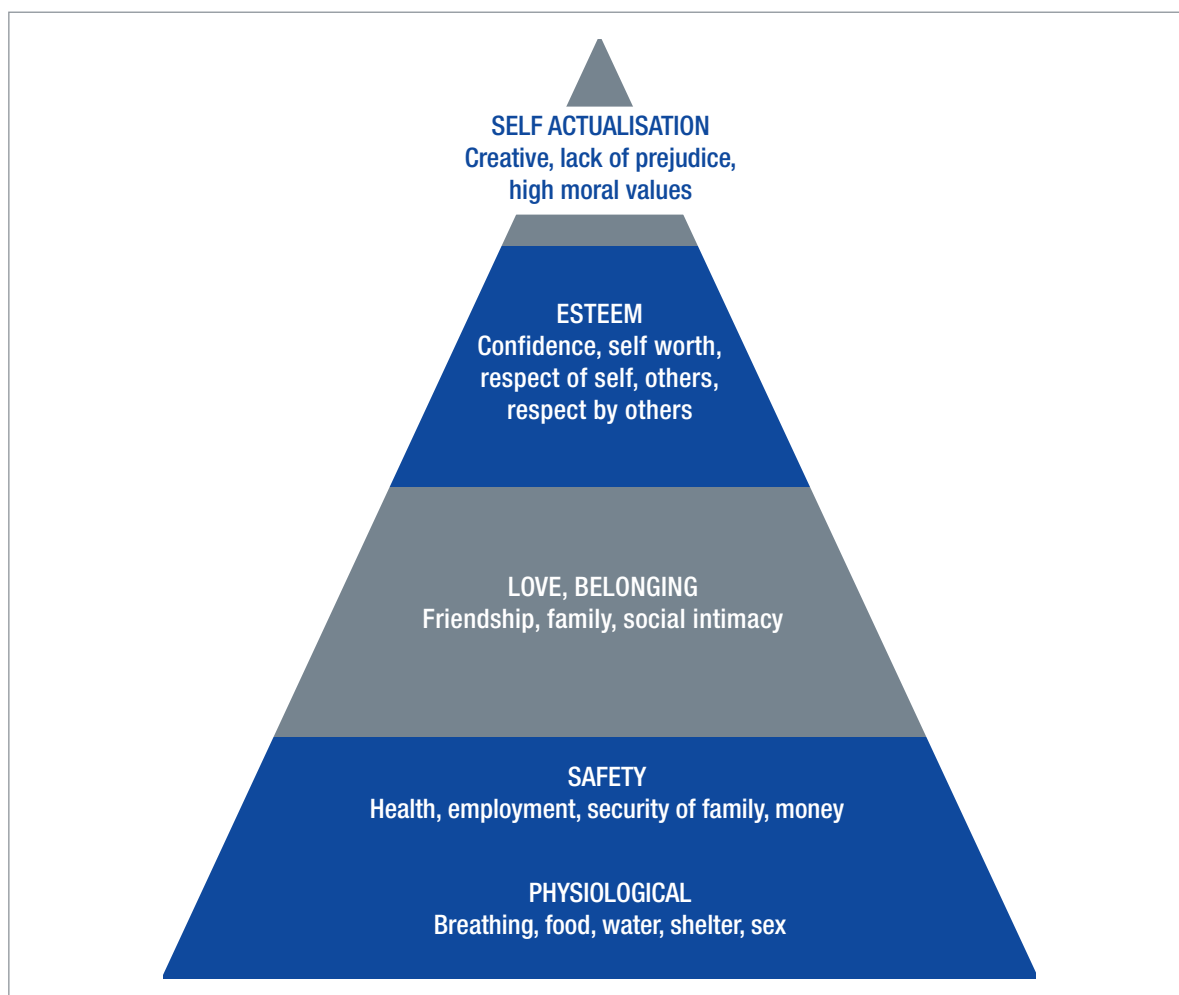
There are merits in both arguments and there is no doubt that there is a strong case for health partnerships to take a lead on this agenda. However, if we combine the analytical findings with the psychologists’ research we can see that there is a very strong case for identifying earlier, the individuals who are involved in escalating criminal and anti-social behaviour, and delivering a health/based emotional and social support programme for those individuals and their families.

Personal social factors influencing violent behaviour

Unlike the wider context of social factors, described above, personal social factors are ones that are directly borne out of an individual’s personal experience. For example the personal social factor relating to lack of money is not the lack of money to buy the current trend in clothes of trainers. Instead it relates to the chaotic lifestyle at home, the possible impact of alcoholism of a parent, drug abuse, or psychosis. The result is that money is spent on alcohol or drugs, with the basic parenting functions of providing food, warmth and a safe shelter for their children being neglected. Having a lack of money is as basic as having no bread on the table or no electricity.

In essence the personal social factors can be best described using Maslow's Hierarchy of need as set out in Diagram 8 below.

Diagram 8: Maslow's hierarchy of need



Recommendations

- Develop a local authority based emotional support programme at key stages of development, 0-3, 3-5, 9-12, 12-15, 15-19. The programme should be designed and delivered collectively by health, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service, schools, Youth Offending Teams, and children's services practitioners. This collaboration should provide emotional and psychological support varying in intensity through childhood and adolescent development. The approach should be targeted through a risk based approach using, both early offending and emotional assessment indicators as key triggers for support.
- Ensure that the current range of risk based assessment methodologies are consistent and provide for early offending and emotional assessments as key indicators of future risk of violent behaviour. This should become a core part of the Common Assessment Framework

- Modify the existing Gangs Assessment Tool to assess the motivational factors of an individual involved in either urban street group or organisational gang violence. The assessment tool will need to have a two stage approach. The first stage relating to the motivational factors that exist between organisational gangs over urban street groups. The second stage needs to relate to the key motivational factors from individuals involved in urban street groups into organisational gangs. (See Diagram 5.)
- The modified Gangs Assessment Tool should be piloted and rolled out nationally, and should be incorporated as part of the London Criminal Justice Board, Youth Justice Board and National Offender Management Service as a key part of the assessment and determination of both risk and referral processes. This tool should form part of the Common Assessment Framework as a risk escalation process.
- The assessment tool should become a core part of the London Safeguarding Children's Board "safeguarding children affected by gang activity and/or serious youth violence procedure".
- The development of a core programme for frontline services including Police, local authorities, National Offender Management Service, Youth Offender Teams and voluntary organisations on "understanding gang and weapon violence". The programme will contain core elements with flexibility to ensure that the local context setting is incorporated. The core elements would include:
 - Understanding organisational gangs and urban street groups.
 - Identifying the motivational factors of organisational gangs over urban street groups and vice versa.
 - Understanding the issues of perceived inequalities, cultural, societal and environmental motivational factors, to provide tools for frontline officers to reduce and minimise them.
 - Understanding the personal motivational factors and how and who to refer to for support in the local authority area.
 - Understanding the motivational factors for change and where and who the local support networks are.
- The de-glamorisation of gangs and their associated lifestyle. Despite the call for a more responsible media approach to this issue, there remains an over glamorisation in this area which is escalating violence. The only approach is to introduce stringent legislation to regulate the media, film, music and computer games industry to address this glamorisation. The legislation should extend the Violent Crime Act to enable local authorities or other national bodies the power to prosecute media organisations, where it is found that they are misrepresenting or over glamorising gang violence. The scales of costs need to be set in the context of the Home Office social and economic cost of crime, using an average of the violence offences schedule of costs. For example the average cost to society of a serious wounding case is £10,711. The monies received should be used to deliver intervention programmes in the local area.

Defining success – the market society

It is very easy to recognise the basic instincts that are embedded in materialism, particularly where the ability to possess certain things are a statement of inclusion. However materialism on its own, doesn't account for the changing trends in violence and violent offences. As the analysis has highlighted our profiles have got younger and involve individuals from stable nurturing family backgrounds. In case study 3 the parents of DD created a caring family environment yet despite that the involvement in offending persisted. So what is at the heart of our society which is causing violent conflict?

Messner and Rosenfeld (1997) argue in their book 'entitled 'Crime and the American Dream', fundamentally it is the fact that the fabric of American society is built on monetary and material success, over and above any other of the other values in that society, which has resulted in the levels of violence in the United states; 'Any means justifying the ends'.

The term 'American Dream' was introduced in 1931 by historian James Truslow, as a society open to individual achievement. Achieving the American Dream means having the best that you can get. The best house, best job, perfect family, best car, latest TV and consoles, most expensive holiday, most amount of money that you can obtain. It is infinite, the pursuit of the American dream is never ending and requires unrestrained innovation to achieve it.

Elliott Currie as quoted in Messner & Rosenfeld (1997) described this economic dominance as the 'market society' in the book 'Crime in the market society; from bad to worse in the nineties'. Currie says that in a market society, as opposed to a market economy, "the pursuit of private gain becomes the organising principle of all areas of social life", (Messner & Rosenfeld, 1997, p. 24).

This theory argues that the economic dominance of the American market society devalues other social values in life. Education is only relevant as a means to occupational attainment because it promises economic rewards. Although in America family values are a promoted aspiration in American life, However, it is the "home owner rather than the home maker who is envied" (Messner and Rosenfeld 1997, p. 71). Child care workers are paid less than bar staff and parental leave legislation in America is based on minimum standards for unpaid leave as opposed to paid leave.

Other areas which are the fabric of social life are also devalued. Politics and policing are valued but only where they create market opportunities Many Americans would prefer to put faith in business leaders instead of political ones to carry out political functions.

The cold winds across the Atlantic

Over the past quarter of a century, American culture has increased its influence over the lifestyle of the UK. It is not just in the music fashion, arts and entertainment industry that we have experienced this influence. The globalisation of business has seen a greater interdependency on American institutions and the UK has followed the development of the financial and service market, led by America. Politically our foreign policies are united and often intrinsically linked, above and beyond all other alliances. We may not be entirely wedded to America, but in cultural, business and political terms we are certainly in a long term relationship.

So we have to ask the question, will UK society become as violent as the US? This question deserves far greater exploration and more detailed forward looking research needs to be carried out on this crucial question. In short however, the authors of this review believe that with the right kind of social and government direction the answer is no.

The fabric of society in the UK is built on very different foundations to that of the US. The history of our social structure has been built over many centuries, where cultures have changed and naturally interwoven. There is still a greater emphasis on the value of the family in our society and legislation and public sector services prioritise valuing the family and supporting the vulnerable, both young and old.

To use comparable metaphors the US is likened to its symbol, "the bald eagle" a powerful bird of prey, the UK would be a magpie; an eclectic mix of cultures, legislation, social and economic make up, built up over many years, which has resulted in a more tolerant, rather than market society.

If we are to resist a trend towards the market society, it is crucial that we look nationally, to ensure the value of the family, education and the maintenance of civil order are held over and above economic dominance. Organisational gang members are astute enough to use the market society, to maximise their own profits through the illegal economy. Pay a few hundred pounds to a young person to deliver drugs, carry out retribution to maintain their drug territory, is a small investment for a multi million pound organisation. In a world where the economic recession will heighten social inequalities, it is vital that investment in family support and educational attainment is increased. It is also vital that nationally, regionally and locally we focus our resources on the very locations at a micro level which will be most acutely affected, rather than allow the market society to start defining violence as an accept method of any 'means justifying the ends'.

Women and gangs

There is very little academic or practitioners research relating to the role of women in gangs. However, we do know from our frontline agencies, action research and from our health information that the women and the sexual development of both adolescent boys and girls play a dominant factor in serious violent behaviour.

What do we know:

We know that women play a variety of roles as:

- Mothers or maternal role models.
- Girlfriends or partners – a close emotional and protective bond.
- Sexual partners – an object that enables sexual desires to be fulfilled with limited emotional bond.
- Sister/female relative: a protective highly supportive relationship.
- Associates: part of a group, carrying out group activity. Possibly hold stolen goods, illegal drugs or weapons.
- Friends: loose affiliation or an affiliation outside of the normal group framework.
- Female led urban street group member: in essence a group that fulfils the criteria of an urban street group but in which the members are all female.

Women can play more than one of these roles and by their direct association to a gang or a specific gang member; they create their own personal status. This status can be enhanced by the function that they fulfil:

- Actively encourage offending by carrying weapons, acting as instigators.
- Passively encourage offending by maintaining relationships, receiving financial benefits.
- As violent individuals.
- Acting as a distraction and potential motivation away from violence – either passively or actively.

The NSPCC reported from one London Project working with girls ... nearly all of the girls they have contact with have been raped by male group members. Some senior gang members pass their girlfriends around to lower ranking members and sometimes to the whole group at the same time.

There is evidence in academic studies that girls who are raped by gang members very rarely talk due to threats and intimidation.

(Pitts 2007)

One of my year 10 students was recently gang raped by some gang members. I talked to her and her mother. They are obviously very frightened and the mother insists that it was consensual. The girl won't come to counselling because she is afraid of being seen to talk to anyone in authority about it.

Current issues for women

One of the real concerns is the sexual exploitation of women who are associated with violent crime.

There is anecdotal evidence of females being sexed into gang activity and being the property of multiple males, and of rape being used as a weapon against women who have an association to a 'wanted' male.

Carlene Firmin ROTA – 2008.

Carlene Firmin, initial conclusions from her research into Women in Gangs is supported by two data sources:

- There is evidence of an increase in group rapes and sexual assault is increasing in 2008/9 (April - Nov 08) compared to the same period in 2007-8.
- There is evidence that there is an escalation in sexual offences in the 10-19 age range.
- There is national evidence of an increase in reports of permanent exclusion of school pupils for sexual misconduct over the last three years. However, this may be attributable to the increase in awareness of sexual misconduct which has been delivered through schools.

Firmin's initial study also indicates that women use sex and pregnancy as a way of maintaining or keeping a male gang member. Women involved in this type of sexual activity often result in having very low self esteem and a very low opinion of themselves and their status in the relationship.

It is clear from this initial research that the issue of improving the healthy lifestyle and having healthy relationships is crucial to addressing the involvement of women in gangs. In addition it is vital that we deal with the challenges of women and gangs as an integral, rather than separate element of our response on gangs and weapons.

Recent indicators from some boroughs highlight that:

- Sexual offences involving groups on one individual have been steadily rising over the last 18 month period.
- Suspects appear to be equally drawn from the Afro-Caribbean and White European ethnic groups, with few suspects derived from other ethnicities.
- Levels of offending against victims aged 15-19 have also been increasing in recent years.
- There is a disproportionality of Afro-Caribbean victims aged 14-19 particularly in the 10-19 year old age range.

Recommendations

- Develop a deliver a broad 'healthy relationship' educational programme for young women, including a focus group for women who are known to be associated with groups of gangs.
- Wider support programmes for mothers of both victims and offenders of gang and weapon violence.
- A structured intensive intervention programme for young women focusing on self esteem, personal identity, sexual relationships and healthy relationships.
- Intelligence on perpetrators needs to include an analysis of the possible females associated with them in order to assess both the risk and the impact on the female/s once enforcement action has been carried out. This intervention includes witness protection.

Chapter 7

The Motivational Factors for Change

Having made a clear distinction between organisational gangs and urban street groups, we can start to review the factors that can best generate change.

The most important starting point is the factors for change differ, apart from one crucial point. Change can only take place at an individual level. Any enforcement, intervention or preventative strategy can only be effective if there is a component that supports the individual within the gang or group to change. Some of the most effective interventions are highlighted below.

Motivational factors for change amongst organisational gang members

The motivational factors for change for individuals involved in organisational gangs is very different from those involved in urban street groups.

In the main, for organisational gangs we are talking about young adults, with the main cohort between 18 and 24. This corresponds with the analytical data in Chapters 2 and 3.

Organisational gang members will have gone through a lifelong journey which will have seen them create and generate a persona of respect, orchestrated and maintained through violence and intimidation. They are likely to have influenced or managed a business and had significant earnings.

So, why do organisational gang members want to get out of this lifestyle? In simplistic terms they grow up and out of the gang. Of all the young adults that we have spoken to who have successfully exited organisational gangs, they describe a self realisation or self evaluation of their life where their personal values and responsibilities change and dominate the previous influencing factors. Diagram 6 illustrates the interconnectivity between these motivational factors.

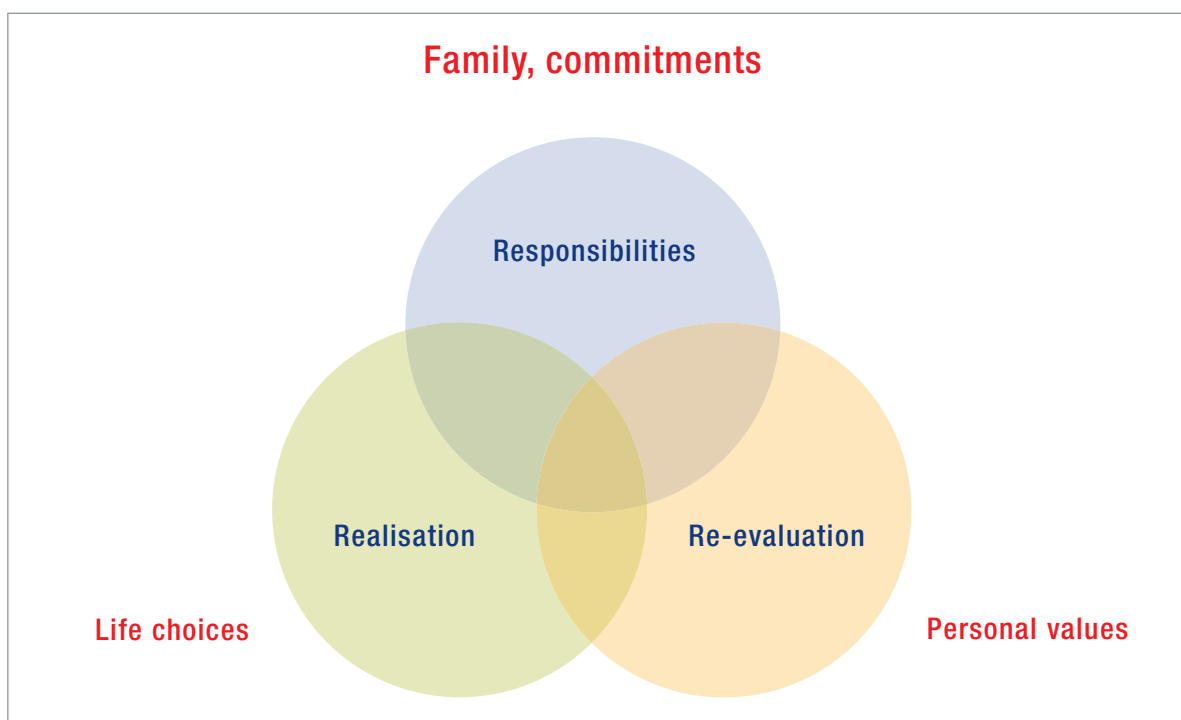
- **Responsibilities:** Many organisational gang members will, by the age of 18-24 have a partner rather than just a girlfriend. They are likely to have one or more children. These changing dynamics, the personal responsibility and bond with others have a significant influence on realigning the personal values of the individual. There is a channelling of their risk and protective factors from being inwardly focused, to projecting outwards towards those they have a love for.
- **Re-evaluation:** In essence the re-evaluation factor is driven by the personal values that responsibilities or personal experiences bring. The experience of an 18-24 year old who is involved in organisational gangs is likely to be of friends or associates have been seriously wounded, shot or lost their lives. They may be in, or have served time in prison. They are likely to have the daily paranoia that they are about to be wounded, shot or arrested. That paranoia extends to their associates, even close relatives, as well as from other gangs or authority. As these experiences increase and repeat themselves, there is a realignment of both aims and ambitions. Material possessions and respect by intimidation hold a lower value compared to self respect and the respect of a partners or siblings. The re-evaluation can take the form of long term ambitions, seeing their child grow, being safe and keeping their family safe.

■ **Realisation:** The third dynamic of realisation provides the individual with the insight for change. The realisation that the life chances in being an organisational gang member, reliant on the illegal economy, are limited. The realisation that earning a wage, having a job, having a family and seeing your children grow is a real life choice. Realisation is crucial in the dynamic and the ability to recognise change can only result in change for organisational gang members, if they want to make that choice themselves. From the experiences of practitioners, organisational gang members have to make that life choice. The alternatives are limited, constant paranoia related to threats to themselves or their loved ones, long term imprisonment, serious physical injury or homicide.

Levitt 2005

“to the kids growing up in Chicago’s south side, crack dealing was a glamour profession. For many of them the job of a gang boss – highly visible and highly lucrative – was easily the best job they thought they had access to. Had they grown up under different circumstances they might have thought about becoming economists or writers. But ... in 50% of the neighbourhoods children lived below the poverty line ... 78% came from single parent families. Fewer than 5% of neighbourhood adults had a college degree. ... gang foot soldiers often asked help in landing what they considered a “good job”, working as a janitor at the University of Chicago.

Diagram 9: The motivational factors for change in organisational gangs



As we have described above, the dynamics of the motivational factors for change in organisational gangs are critical. They are interdependent, similar in many ways to a domestic violence critical intervention model.

Providing support for those individuals that personally choose to exit a organisational gang is vital. That support needs to be intensive and sustained over a long period of time. Experience from successful projects indicates a minimum of six months. In addition, the support has to include:

- Personal understanding of themselves and their identity.
- Psychological and physiological support.
- Emotional understanding leading to conflict management.
- Educational and vocation skill matching.
- Finding safe life changing accommodation that breaks local dependencies.
- Intensive support for partners/girlfriends, siblings and close family.
- Practical support, a doctor, dentist, cooking, maintaining a home.

All of these elements require an individual assessment and acceptance. At present, most of the support programmes are only available for those organisational gang members who are in existing offending institutes. There is very little support available for organisational gang members who make a personal lifestyle choice to exit.

As a result there are missed opportunities to support those individuals, minimise the risk of gang or weapon fatalities and maximise the life chances of those individuals.

A key recommendation from this research is to develop intensive support and intervention programmes for organisational gang members who are seeking to exit a gang through their own volition. The programme will need to provide a one to one advocate with access to a range of skilled service provision as set out above.

Motivational factors for change amongst urban street groups

The motivational factors for change in urban street groups are very different to organisational gangs.

As Diagram 10 shows the motivational factors for this group are substantially more than exist for organisational gangs and counter balance against each other in terms of positive and negative influencers. As the diagram demonstrate, having a lack of money can be offset by an individual's personal aspirations, peer pressure can be offset by having a strong family support network, and so on.

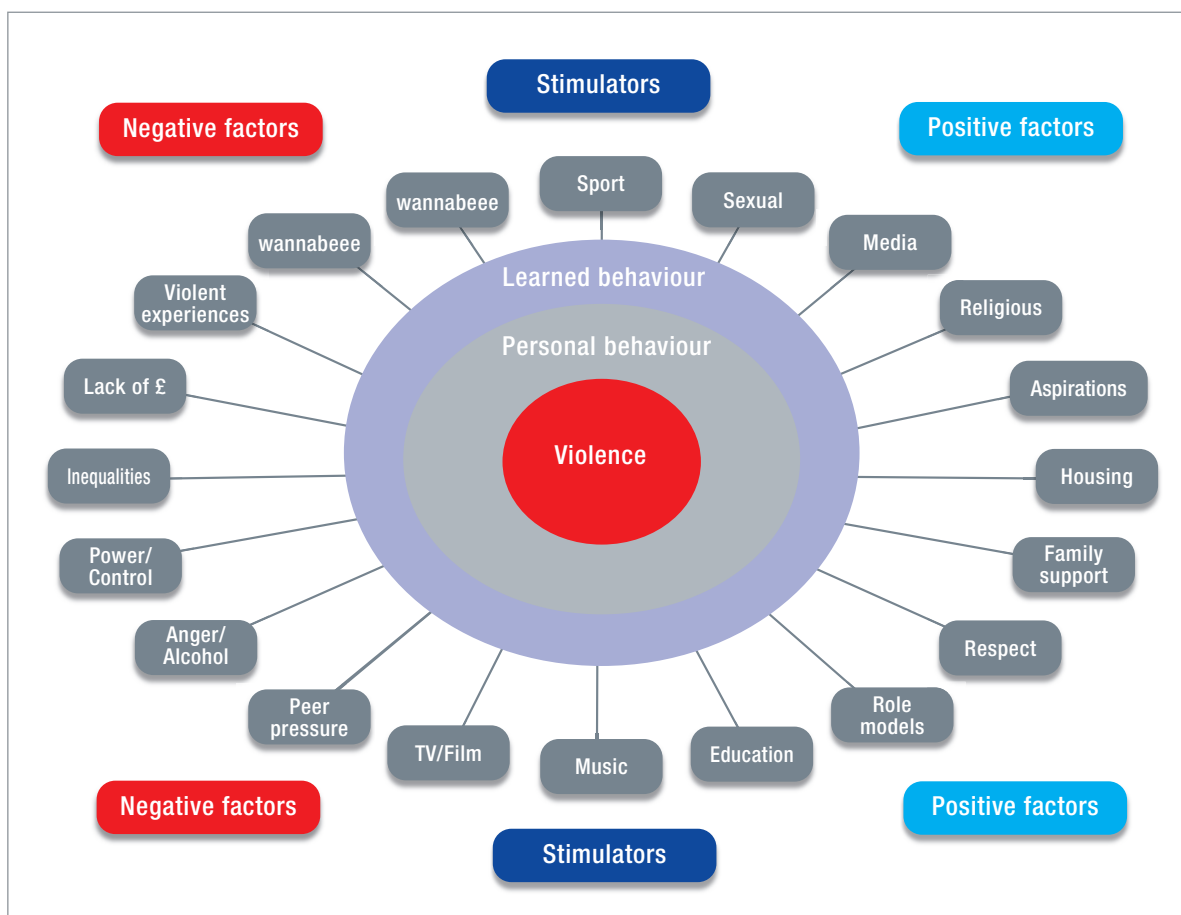
In addition the members of urban street groups have strong stimulation influences. We have already highlighted the impact of TV, music, computer games and the media. Sexual experiences or sexual development is another strong stimulator for adolescence, for both young men and young women, and is often the root cause of serious violent behaviour. In essence, members of urban street groups are dominated by external influencers rather than the internal motivation for change. That we see in organisational gang members.

The most important consideration is that for most of the members of urban street groups there are as many positive as negative factors that enable us to influence change. Most of those young people that we have worked with have some positive aspects in their lives.

“As part of a home visit carried out with an identified urban street group member in September 2008 we asked MM if he loved his mother and brother he said he did. We then asked him what we wanted his brother to be like when he grew older. MM replied, “I don’t want him to grow up like me”.

The above quote from one of the Southwark Home Visits may appear to be negative. It is not. Not only does MM recognise change but he also has a deep emotional connection with his brother and mother. Working on that bond and other positive factors enables agencies to put in a range of protective measures to reduce the opportunity of affiliation with other more problematic urban street group measures.

Diagram 10: Positive and negative factors determining change



Providing a platform that enables practitioners to work on the receptors and as a result, identify the motivational factors for change is at the heart of addressing the personal conflict and territory driven feuds that is so prevalent in the analysis as set out in Chapters 2 and 3. Rather than explain every receptor, the most important piece of work for practitioners is to put a framework in place which enables us to maximise the motivational factors for changes.

The motivational framework for change

This framework needs to include:

- **Assessment tool:** Building on the existing assessment frameworks and “gangs assessment tools” currently available, there is a clear need for an additional assessment framework, when identifying the individuals involved in urban street group violence. The assessment tool needs to focus as much on the stimulators and positive factors that motivate the individual to enable a wrap around support package to be put in place.
- **One to one dialogue – key agency:** It is vital that the framework includes a face to face dialogue with the individual or family. That dialogue needs to focus of the consequences of behaviour. Trying to deliver a ‘say no’ message or use indirect communication to stop behaviour will not work. The stimulators of music, media and the sexual development, combined with the daily negative factors of peer pressure, fear of violence and lack of money, make it impossible to deliver a “change” programme unless it is face to face and one on one. The consequences dialogue gives three clear messages:
 - Consequences to you physically, violence, wounding or fatality.
 - Consequences to your family.
 - There is support if you want it but it is not a given. if you abuse it we will enforce.

Unlike other criminal justice based programmes, the framework for one to one dialogues is based on recognising the negative factors and using the stimulators to set long term goals.

- **Family Intervention Programme (FIP):** Part of the wrap around support package that sits alongside one to one dialogue is targeted family interventions. The current FIP focuses on families with high levels of vulnerability or high criminal behaviour. In the cases of members of urban street groups, the majority of their families do not meet either of these criteria. The dynamic of the families are often ones where the parent or parents are working or studying, where providing the basics of food and shelter dominate their daily existence, often having to work in the evenings or having to attend evening classes. These families however, have high emotional and family support needs and the framework needs to include a tailored FIP, for this group.
- **Mentor or advocate:** If negative motivational factors are peer pressure, experiences of violence and intimidation through control, one of the dominant positive motivational factors is positive role models. Developing a community based mentoring framework is vital to address urban street group violence. The role of the mentor is to offer one to one support, identify the motivational factors and link the individual and their family to the key support programmes. The mentor needs to stay with the individual for 3-6 months and have the skills to work with them to attend and stay with key personal support or intervention programmes.
- **Personal support packages:** The personal support packages, like the FIPs are tailor-made to provide the emotional framework to motivate positive change. The emotional framework is likely to involve conflict management and healthy relationships. Both programmes should be aimed at redefining respect for the “street definition” which is “respect of others” to an empathetic definition of “respect for others”. It is not the role of the mentor to deliver these programmes but it is their role to know about them and to make the necessary links and referrals as well as monitor progress.

- **Access to inclusive programmes:** A key part of the framework is to involve the individual with programmes which work on the personal stimulators and positive motivational factors for each individual. For urban street groups' members, programmes which solely offer stimulation (music, dance, sport, arts), will not provide a long term solution of their behaviour. There has to be an educational and emotional element, based on the individual's motivational factors and with direct links to long term support. This is the reason that programmes such as X-it in Lambeth, RAW delivered by Involve and well managed Youth Inclusion Programmes (YIPs) work so well.
- **Review and monitor:** The motivational framework for change has to include the ability to review and monitor both the progress of the individual and the impact of the overall intervention. This can be integrated with the current Child Assessment framework (CAF); however, the CAF requires a wider use and needs to incorporate the assessment tool as set out above. An alternative, although unwieldy option, is to run a multi agency case management meeting. However, from the view of practitioners that current case management meeting structure is already over burdensome and has considerable duplication. Establishing and clarifying the current case management structures which provide a clearer escalation process would be valuable for practitioners.
- **Policing boundaries:** If an individual is engaging in a motivational change programme there needs to be a greater understanding by those agencies that police the environment. Any motivational change needs to be supported by clear boundaries and whether it be schools, police, council officials or parents putting boundaries in place and enforcing them is a vital part of the motivation factor for change in members of urban street groups. However, those boundaries have to be policed sensitively. If there is a level of engagement there also needs to a level of understanding that change will not happen immediately. The interdependency of being involved in urban street groups, the negative factors and stimulation or respect, having status, links to gangs which can provide money and a fashion driven lifestyle take time to break. In essence, whilst establishing boundaries vital, how we share information in order to police those boundaries, sensitively is vital. A clear recommendation from this research is that there needs to be a closer multi agency intelligence sharing process in place which enable agencies to have a better understanding of the progress that a individual is making in changing their behaviour and to agree the best method of reinforcing the motivations for change.

This practitioner's research recommends that every area, affected by gang and weapon violence requires a motivational framework for change which incorporates the criteria, set out above.

Chapter 8

Changing our Methodology of Delivery

Chapters 6 and 7 have set out the motivational factors that influence organisational and urban street group members, and the motivational factors for changing their violent or criminal behaviour. This chapter will focus on how partnerships can work together to harness the potential for change for the individuals and families involved in urban street groups and organisational gangs.

In order to maximise the work of practitioners we also need to establish a delivery methodology, which enables partner agencies to both work in an effective integrated way, but also provides for those agencies to agree their roles and work to their strengths.

The first point that we need to establish is whether the methodology for delivery is different between organisational gangs and urban street groups. It is clear that the motivational factors for change are different between the two groups. One is based on person choice the other dominated by a cacophony of external influencers, based on the here and now, but simultaneously provides a multitude of receptors which can enable change.

So if that is the case is there an argument to provide different methodologies for delivery?

The answer is no. Although the multi partnership framework is different, there still needs to be the same core strands in each model.

In order to understand this we will look at current multi partnership models:

A universal multi partnership delivery model

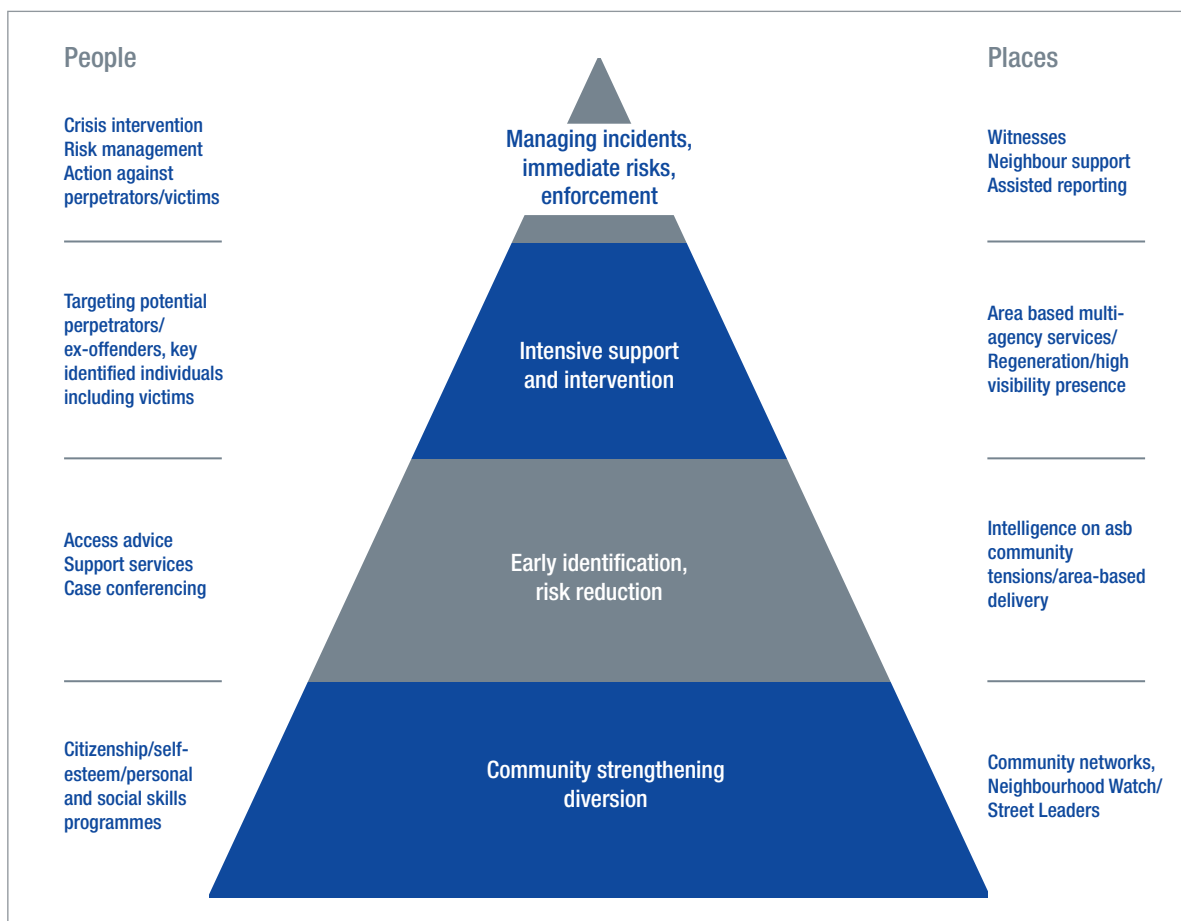
There are examples of a variety of multi partnership delivery models that currently exist.

The Home Office, "Practical guide to tackling gangs May 2008", provides a number of examples such as:

- Manchester Multi Agency Gangs Service is a dedicated multi agency team established to end gang violence by 2010. MMAGS brings together the skills of statutory voluntary and community sectors to deliver, diversionary, intervention, support and enforcement for both victims and offenders of gang and weapon violence.
- The Strathclyde model is a multi agency Violent Crime Unit with a strong health lead focusing on early child and family support and intervention.
- The Birmingham reducing gangs' violence has four key strands of from offender management and enforcement, to community cohesion and the establishment of a Independent Advisory Group. This programme is overseen by a strategic executive made up of statutory, community and voluntary programmes.
- Other local authorities have mainstreamed their programmes within the crime reduction partnership, or, through a risk management process across the council departments. Southwark for example has elements of tackling gangs, enforcement. Intervention and prevention, sitting

across its principal departments, with a tiered risk management process to identify and intervene as behaviour escalates. This process (Diagram 11) is overseen by a multi agency intelligence led group known as Hamrow.

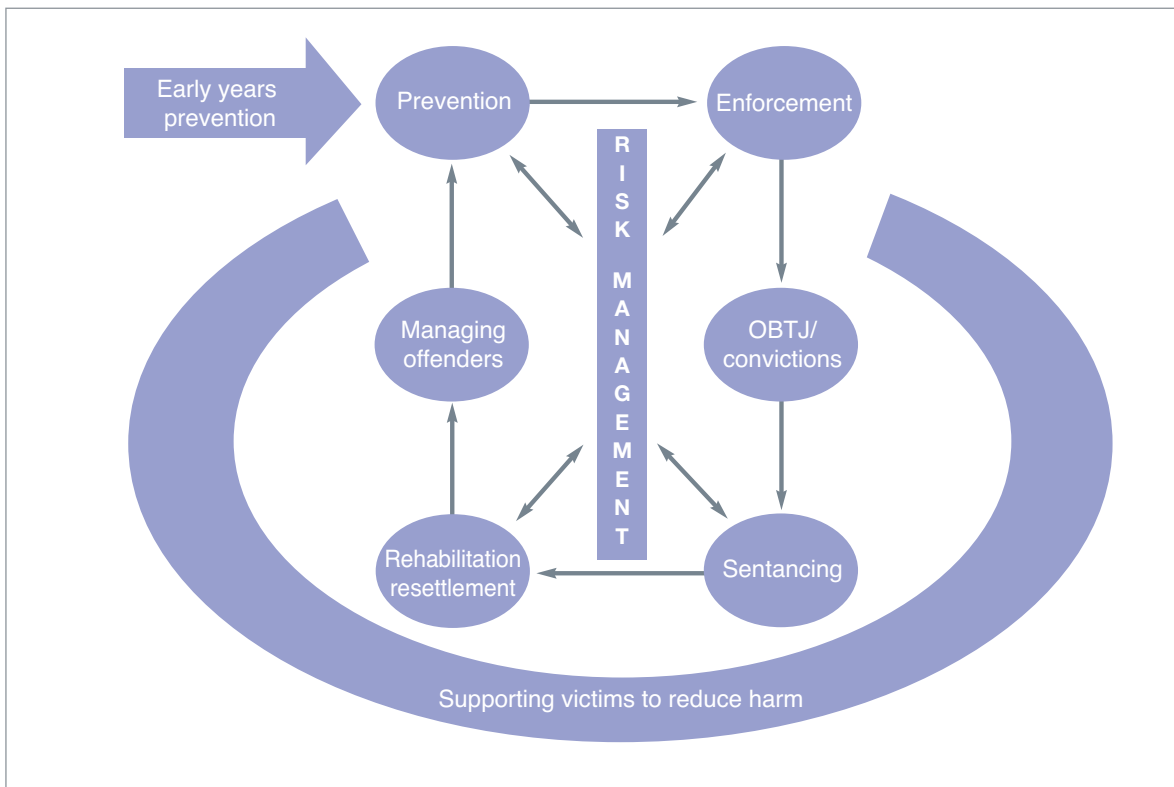
Diagram 11: Southwark violent crime intervention and disruption triangle



What is clear is that whatever the agreed model, every one of them has similar features. These are:

- Prevention
- Enforcement
- Offender management including the criminal justices system and rehabilitation and resettlement.

The Home Office publication 'Saving Lives, Reducing Harm, Protecting the Public; an action plan for tackling violence 2008-11', sets out these core elements and uses the risk and protector factor framework as part of an overall victim and offender process. This is illustrated in Diagram 12.

Diagram 12: Life cycle of offending – a risk based intervention model

There is no doubt that the use of a dedicated resource to focus on gang and weapon crime sits at the heart of a successful intervention model and that risk identification and assessment are crucial to the process.

A missing component of the home office victim and offender model is the vital role that the community has to play to addressing gang and weapon crime. We can see from our motivational influencers and motivational factors for change (Chapters 6 and 7), that families, siblings, friends, girlfriends and partners are key influencers.

Assessing risk and appropriate risk based intervention

Our research clearly highlights the need for a risk based approach for tackling both the violence associated with urban street groups and the escalation of young people into organisational gangs.

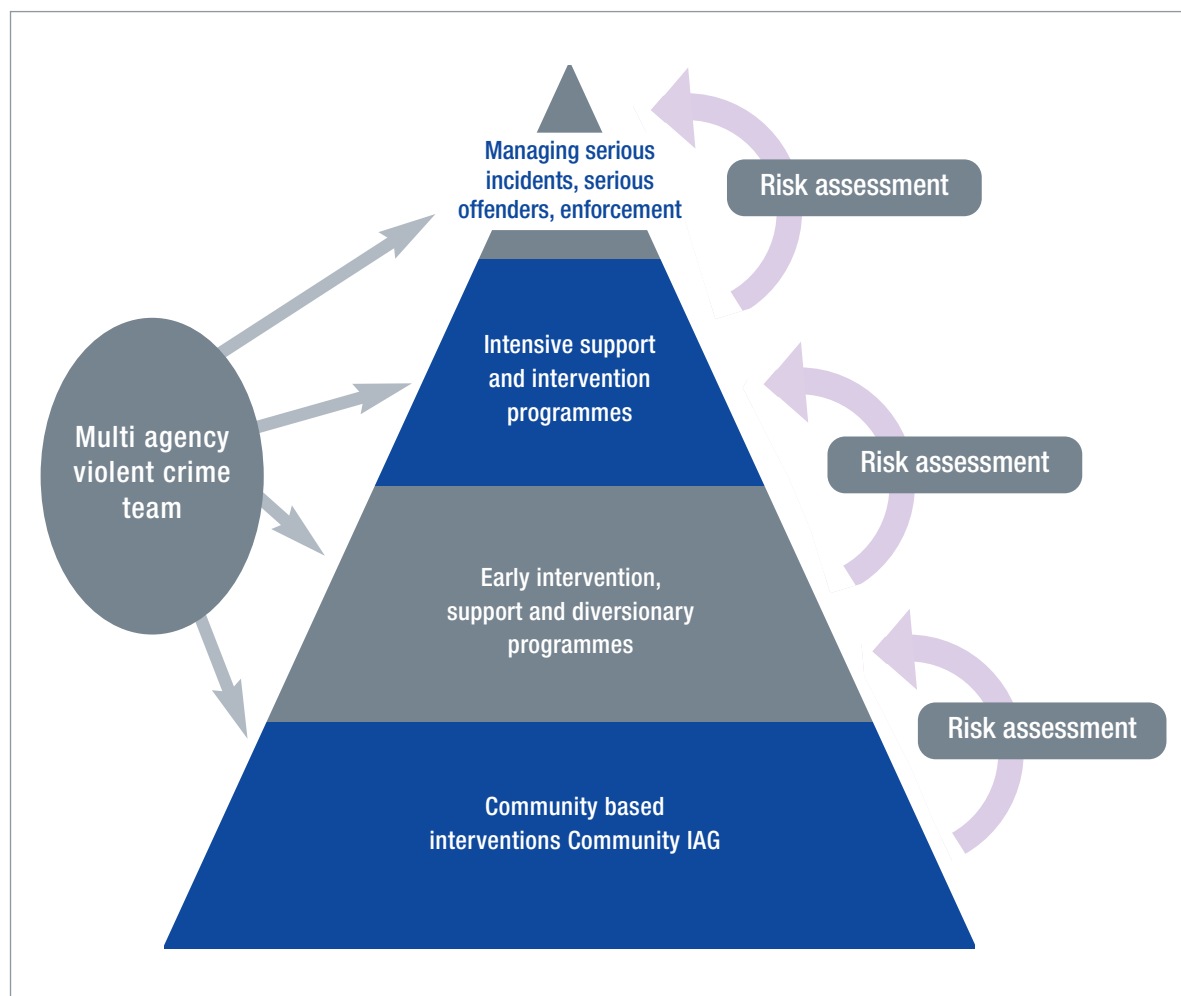
The current framework for assessing that risk for young people is embedded in the safeguarding policies and procedures which have been established. The recently published London Safeguarding Children Board draft “safeguarding children affected by gang activity and/or serious youth violence” which has been led by the Serious Youth Violence Board is a helpful guide to some of the issues and processes which are available. The findings of this draft policy mirror those of this practitioner’s research.

However, the questions need to be asked as to whether the safeguarding risk framework is ideal for the two needs as set out above. There are definite crossovers, and the common assessment framework should be a universal approach used by all agencies who are involved in identifying and responding to children, to ensure that child safety and welfare of children is paramount.

It is clear from our research that there is an escalation of behaviour of some young people based on the factors described in Chapters 5, 6 and 7. However, it is also clear that there are significant indicators that can be used to identify that risk from an earlier point. Once these indicators and signs become clear there needs to be an assessment and escalation process which provides for specialist or statutory services.

Our recommendation is that this is best achieved by using a more specialist assessment tool such as the gangs assessment tool developed by Crime Concern in 2006. In addition the escalation procedure is best achieved through specialist risk panels, which support and link but do not overburden the safeguarding processes.

Diagram 13: Organisational gang and urban street group partnership intervention model



Recommendations

Our recommendations from this research are that, from a practitioner's perspective a successful interventional model for both organisational gangs and urban street groups (Diagram 13) would comprise:

- **Core multi agency team:** the size and complexity is dependent on the issues for each local authority area. The police should always be included but not necessarily lead the team.
- **A risk escalation process with a clear referral process to and from other high risk management bodies.**
- **This risk escalation process should be linked to the common assessment framework but, once a risk of gang association is made there must be a separate risk escalation process through specialist or statutory agencies and special risk management processes.**
- **Increasing training and awareness of frontline professionals on the key risk factors, the local authorities' escalation process and how to refer to support agencies at a local level.**
- **An overarching governance body which has a strategic overview of serious violence and cross partnership action plan, including the work plan of the team.**
- **Series of early intervention programmes which are community and voluntary sector based. There is a strong argument that these early interventions should include an early years health component.**
- **A small number of highly specialised voluntary organisations delivering intensive support programmes for individuals who are either at the heart of or close to becoming heavily involved in serious organisational gang violence.**
- **An offender management programme building on the Priority and Prolific Offender process.**
- **A dedicated multi agency intelligence desk which can effectively assess the urban street group and organisational gang nominals based on a range of community, police and partnership intelligence.**
- **A community based Independent Advisory Group which meets with key partners on a regular basis.**
- **The model should apply to both identified victims and perpetrators.**

Chapter 9

Recommendations

The following is a summary of the recommendations from the above research. It includes a note of who the lead body should be in the development and delivery of the recommendations:

Recommendations	Lead body for development/delivery
Early intervention recommendations	
<p>Review the current assessment processes to focus on at risk offenders, using a early offender scorecard approach. The scorecard would be based on trigger offences, linked to other social and personal risk factors. Based on the above analysis we would suggest that the trigger offences be, stopped or charged for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Robbery • Violence against the person • Drugs • Association or affiliation with known organisational gang nominals 	YJB/NOMS
<p>Design and deliver early intervention programmes delivered through existing social settings, at school, at home, health services or social venues which work with individuals who are showing early signs of offending.</p>	Serious Youth Violence Board/London Community Safety Partnership Board
<p>There needs to be direct ethnicity based support programmes based on the ethnic and cultural inequalities that are evident from the data analysis.</p>	Serious Youth Violence Board/London Community Safety Partnership Board
<p>Develop a emotional support programme at key stages of development, 0-3, 3-5,7-9, 11-12, 13-15, 17-19. The programme should be designed and delivered collectively by health providers, Children and Adolescent Mental Heath Services (CAMHS), schools, YOTs, and children's services practitioners. This collaboration should provide emotional and psychological support varying in intensity through childhood and adolescent development.</p>	Serious Youth Violence Board/London Community Safety Partnership Board
<p>Specific targeted interventions for the age ranges of 15-19 and 19-24 year olds. The programmes will need to be different and should include, but not separate victim and offender elements. Resolving personal conflict needs to be at the heart of these programmes.</p>	Serious Youth Violence Board/London Community Safety Partnership Board

Recommendations	Lead body for development/delivery
Recommendations to maximise motivational change opportunities	
Develop an intensive FIP model which includes a health/based emotional and social support programme for those individuals and their families involved in either organisational gangs or urban street groups.	Home Office
A key recommendation from this research is to develop intensive support and intervention programmes for organisational gang members who are seeking to exit a gang through their own volition. The programme will need to provide a one to one advocate with access to a range of skilled service provision as set out above. Establishing and clarifying the current case management structures which provide a clearer escalation process would be valuable for practitioners.	Home office/local authorities
Focus on intervention and preventative programmes that provide sustained exit routes for individual gang members at each level of the organisational gang structures. This includes their connected family/girlfriends or partners. (Diagrams 7 and 8 pages 49 and 51.)	Serious Youth Violence Board/London Community Safety Partnership Board
Develop and deliver a broad healthy relationship educational programme for young women, including a focus group for women who are known to be associated with groups of gangs.	DoH/DCSF
Wider support programme for mothers of both victims and offenders of gang and weapon violence. A structured intensive intervention programme for young women focusing on self esteem, personal identity, sexual relationships and healthy relationships.	Home Office/LA's Home Office/Mayor's office/LA's
From a practitioner's perspective a successful interventional model for both organisational gangs and urban street groups (Diagram 11) would comprise: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Core multi agency team: the size and complexity is dependent on the issues for each local authority area. The police should always be included but not necessarily lead the team. 	Home Office/Mayor's office/LA's

Recommendations	Lead body for development/delivery
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A risk escalation process with clear referral process to and from other high management bodies. • An overarching governance body which has a strategic overview of serious violence and cross partnership action plan, including the work plan of the team. • Series of early intervention programmes which are community and voluntary sector based. There is a strong argument that these early interventions should include an early years health component. • A small number of highly specialised voluntary organisations delivering intensive support programmes for individuals who are either at the heart of or close to becoming heavily involved in serious organisational gang violence. • An offender management programme building on the Priority and Prolific Offender process. • A dedicated multi agency intelligence desk which can effectively assess the urban street group and organisational gang nominals based on a range of community. Police and partnership intelligence. • A community based Independent Advisory Group which meets with key partners on a regular basis. • The model should apply to both identified victims and perpetrators. 	Home Office/Mayor's Office/LA's
Criminal Justice recommendations	
Restorative justice outcomes need to be delivered particularly where a person has come before the courts on numerous occasions. These restorative justice programmes need to include a call-in style process conducted by the courts. The community court programme provides a useful framework for this.	London Criminal Justice Board/YJB
Establish a Priority and Prolific offender programme for organisational gang members, with a premium criminal justice process which will encompass the transitional age range of 15-24.	NOMS/Ministry of Justice

Recommendations	Lead body for development/delivery
<p>Tougher criminal justice outcomes, particularly in terms of trigger offences, possession and use of knives need to be given through the courts. There needs to be stricter guidelines in terms of bail and remand for these types of cases.</p>	<p>London Criminal Justice Board/YJB</p>
<p>Courts need to reassess the penalties for those individuals who have previously offended or have 'come to notice' decisions attached to them. All pertinent information, including data held by partner agencies, should be compiled and presented to the courts, and should be used to attach a civil or reparation order as a court outcome.</p>	<p>LCJB/YJB</p>
<p>Establish a dedicated regional drugs team to be set up solely to focus on disrupting these regional middle drug market routes. This team would expand the remit of the current Police "middle markets" team.</p>	<p>Home Office</p>
<p>Establish a series of interventions that dismantle organisational gangs rather than disrupt them. This includes female associates.</p> <p>The interventions include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intensive support programmes to help individuals and their families exit gangs. • Enforcement work that focuses on the individual and their family. • Increased work through proceeds of crime at an earlier stage of identification. 	<p>Serious Youth Violence Board/London Community Safety Partnership Board</p>
<p>Recommendations to improve risk assessment methodology gang and group members</p>	
<p>Modify the existing Gangs Assessment Tool to assess the motivational factors of an individual involved in either urban street group or organisational gang violence. The assessment tool will need to have a two stage approach. The first stage relates to the motivational factors that exist from organisational gangs over urban street groups. The second stage needs to relate to the key motivational factors from individuals involved in urban street groups into organisational gangs. (Diagram 4 above.)</p>	<p>Serious Youth Violence Board/London Community Safety Partnership Board</p>

Recommendations	Lead body for development/delivery
<p>The modified Gangs Assessment tool to be piloted and rolled out nationally to be incorporated as part of the London Criminal Justice Board, Youth Justice Board and National Offender Management Service (NOMs) as a key part of the assessment and determination of both risk and referral processes. This tool should form part of the Common Assessment Framework as a risk escalation process.</p>	<p>Serious Youth Violence Board/London Community Safety Partnership Board</p>
<p>The assessment tool should become a core part of the London Safeguarding Children’s Board “safeguarding children affected by gang activity and/or serious youth violence procedure”.</p>	<p>London Safeguarding Board</p>
<p>Improve the current multi agency risk based assessment processes to ensure that they are both consistent and provide for early identification of offending and emotional assessments as key indicators of future risk of violent behaviour. This should become a core part of the Common Assessment Framework.</p>	<p>Serious Youth Violence Board/London Community Safety Partnership Board</p>
Training and awareness raising	
<p>The development of a core programme for frontline services including police, local authorities, NOMs, YOTs and voluntary organisations on “understanding gang and weapon violence”. The programme will contain core elements with flexibility to ensure that the local context setting in incorporated. The core elements would include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding organisational gangs and urban street groups. • Identifying the motivational factors of organisational gangs over urban street groups and vice versa. • Understanding the issues of perceived inequalities, cultural, societal and environmental motivational factors, to provide tools for frontline officers to reduce and minimise them. • Understanding the personal motivational factors and how and who to refer to for support in the local authority area. • Understanding the motivational factors for change and where and who the local support networks are. 	<p>London Councils</p>

Recommendations	Lead body for development/delivery
Training and awareness raising	
<p>The development of a core programme for frontline services including police, local authorities, NOMs, YOTs and voluntary organisations on “understanding gang and weapon violence”. The programme will contain core elements with flexibility to ensure that the local context setting is incorporated. The core elements would include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding organisational gangs and urban street groups. • Identifying the motivational factors of organisational gangs over urban street groups and vice versa. • Understanding the issues of perceived inequalities, cultural, societal and environmental motivational factors, to provide tools for frontline officers to reduce and minimise them. • Understanding the personal motivational factors and how and who to refer to for support in the local authority area. • Understanding the motivational factors for change and where and who the local support networks are. 	London Councils
<p>Introduce stringent legislation to regulate the media, film, music and computer games industry to address this glamorisation. The legislation should extend the Violent Crime Act to enable local authorities or other national bodies the power to prosecute media organisations, where it is found that they are misrepresenting or over glamorising gang violence. Any monies received should be used to deliver intervention programmes in the local area.</p>	Home Office
<p>Increasing training and awareness of frontline professionals including teachers on the key risk factors and the local authority's escalation process and how to refer to support agencies at a local level.</p>	Local authorities
<p>Intelligence on perpetrators needs to include an analysis of the possible females associated with them in order to assess both the risk and the impact on the female/s once enforcement action has been carried out. This intervention includes witness protection.</p>	CDRPs/MPS
<p>Establishing and clarifying the current case management structures which provide a clearer escalation process would be valuable for practitioners.</p>	CDRPs/Safeguarding boards/Serious Youth Violence Board

Recommendations	Lead body for development/delivery
<p>A clear recommendation from this research is that there needs to be a closer multi agency intelligence sharing process in place which enable agencies to have a better understanding of the progress that an individual is making in changing their behaviour and to agree the best method of reinforcing the motivations for change.</p>	<p>Home Office/Ministry of Justice/LCJB</p>
<p>Regional and national policy recommendations</p>	
<p>Adopt the gang definition of two distinct groups and that the definition is adopted nationally</p> <p>Organisational Gangs: a well structured business organisation with a distinctive brand. Organisational gangs have a defined territory which is not geographical but based on highly profitable criminal activity such as drug markets. Organisational gangs will have clearly defined positions within its structure and will use a range of recruitment methods, including coaching, fostering and headhunting to ensure stability for the business and longevity of the gang. Organisational gangs carry out specific acts of serious violence to protect their business. Members of organisational gangs are influencers often held in high esteem amongst urban street groups.</p> <p>Urban Street Groups: A group of three or more individuals who have developed a close association through the area they have grown up in, the school they have attended, family or other community based networks. They have a defined identity and commit a range of anti-social behaviour and criminal activity. The street group will have a geographical territory (endz). They are chaotic in nature, often carrying out acts of serious violence due to respect or retribution. Street groups may have links to organisational gangs, in terms of providing profits through the drug markets, acting as drug or weapon mules, or even carrying our acts of violence on behalf of organised gang member. The members are imitators of others rather than influencers over others.</p>	<p>Home Office/ACPO</p>
<p>Establish both a regional and national practitioners' Task Force which can scope, develop and deliver core framework and essential components for addressing serious violence on regional and national level.</p>	<p>Home Office/London Councils</p>

Recommendations	Lead body for development/delivery
Provide a combined funding package on a regional and national level to establish and deliver the core framework and essential components.	Home Office Serious Youth Violence Board/London Community Safety Partnership Board
Develop and deliver alternative, short term accommodation programmes for individuals and families who are threatened with retribution violence. To be funded on a national basis and using a range of housing stock.	CLG
Review the Bail Act and incorporate a “call back” bail restriction which forces a gang or urban street group member to attend a multi agency “consequences” meeting.	Ministry of Justice
<p>Establishment of a national advocacy programme to deliver intensive support for individuals involved in group or organisational gang members to exit gang lifestyles. The advocates can be targeted to a specific geographical area, school, group or gang, dependent upon the local issues. The advocates can work on three levels:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Community based advocates working at a local level to provide 121 support and links to local intervention programmes. ➤ Family advocacy support or family intervention but specifically designed for families whose siblings are becoming affiliated to gang violence. ➤ Intensive advocacy support for gang members exiting prison particularly in the 18-24 year old age range. 	Home Office/Ministry of Justice
Develop a core national programme for schools at primary level and secondary level on the issues of group and gang violence as part of the “healthy lifestyles” and “anti bullying” PSHE curriculum.	DCSF

Chapter 10

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