

SAFEGUARDING YOUNG PEOPLE AGAINST GANG RELATED HARM

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Definitions, “Hallsworth & Young”



Peer group:

A small, unorganised, transient grouping occupying the same space with a common history. Crime is not integral to their group identity

Street gang:

A relatively durable, predominantly street-based group of young people who see themselves (and are seen by others) as a discernible group for whom crime and violence is integral to the group's identity

An organised criminal network:

A group of individuals for whom involvement in crime is for personal gain. The gain is mostly measured in financial terms. Crime is their 'occupation'

COGS – Co-Offending Groups



Peer group:

A small, unorganised, transient grouping occupying the same space with a common history. Crime is not integral to their group identity

Co-Offending Group:

Similar to a Peer Group, a small, semi-transient grouping, with limited organisation/structure, occupying the same space with a common history, but where criminal co-offending has become integral to their group identity

Street gang:

A relatively durable, predominantly street-based group of young people who see themselves (and are seen by others) as a discernible group for whom crime and violence is integral to the group's identity. Primarily identified through the local Trident Command Matrix

An organised criminal network:

A group of individuals for whom involvement in crime is for personal gain. The gain is mostly measured in financial terms. Crime is their 'occupation'

Some Gang Facts & Figures



- 3,500 gang members in London in 250 gangs
- 70 per cent of gang members are aged 17-23
- Two thirds of gang members have also been victims of crime
- Most identified gang members on the Matrix are male (98%) with only 40 females represented in total
- The majority of individuals are identified as BME (78% of all individuals, with white ethnic descriptor representing only 10%)

Other Key Factors

- Drug use exacerbated amongst gang affected young people – increase in mental health issues
- The normalisation of violence and young people within their peer group and communities
- Social economic conditions worsening among those already in some of the most deprived communities – increases the attraction of the superficial benefits of a criminal lifestyle
- Repetitive – without intervention the same choices/behaviours reoccur across generations

Tower Hamlets Gangs Profile



Tower Hamlets Gang Problem Profile is characterised by:

- Having one of, if not the, youngest gang demographic of all the London boroughs – though this is changing
- Until a year ago having the 2nd highest number of gang flagged offences of any London Borough, now down to joint 5th/6th
- Having the highest number of offences in London involving knife injury committed by offenders under 25
- High level of drug supply, related to the fact that Tower Hamlets has the highest number of heroin and crack cocaine users of any London Borough
- Emerging evidence of County Lines activity/CCE, with Tower Hamlets young people being trafficked out of the borough to other parts of the country to participate in illicit drug supply

Main Tower Hamlets Gangs



- RBS - Roman (Road) Blood Shedderz
- Aberfeldy
- IOD - Isle Of Dogs Boys
- DRF - Devons Road Family
- Globe Town Massive
- JSM - Jubilee Street Massive
- S Block

Why Young People Join Gangs

- To fulfil and unmet need for support and nurture
- Financial gain
- For a sense of worth, identity and belonging
- Peer pressure
- Reputation
- Protection
- Excitement
- They are actively groomed and recruited
- They make rational choice to join / be a part of a gang
- May not see themselves as belonging to a gang at all?

Risk Factors

Behaviour to watch out for and circumstances of young people:

- Going missing
- Anti-social behaviour/peer group
- Drug and/or alcohol misuse
- Loss of Interest in school and/or truancy
- Carrying weapons
- Inexplicable new clothing or cash
- Additional mobile phones, especially bricks/burner phones
- Becoming secretive about friends/peers
- Home address located in high risk area
- Stopped by police with known gang members or in high risk locations

Risk Factors

Predisposing factors/characteristics

- NEET
- A history of victimization/being bullied
- Sexually inappropriate behaviour
- Identified as being at risk of, or already a victim of sexual exploitation
- Going missing
- Social isolation, lack of care, support and/or nurture
- Parent mental health or drug/alcohol problems
- Becoming beyond parental/carer control
- Exposure to domestic violence
- Older siblings with a history of involvement in gangs, violence and/or drug dealing

Risks of Gang Involvement

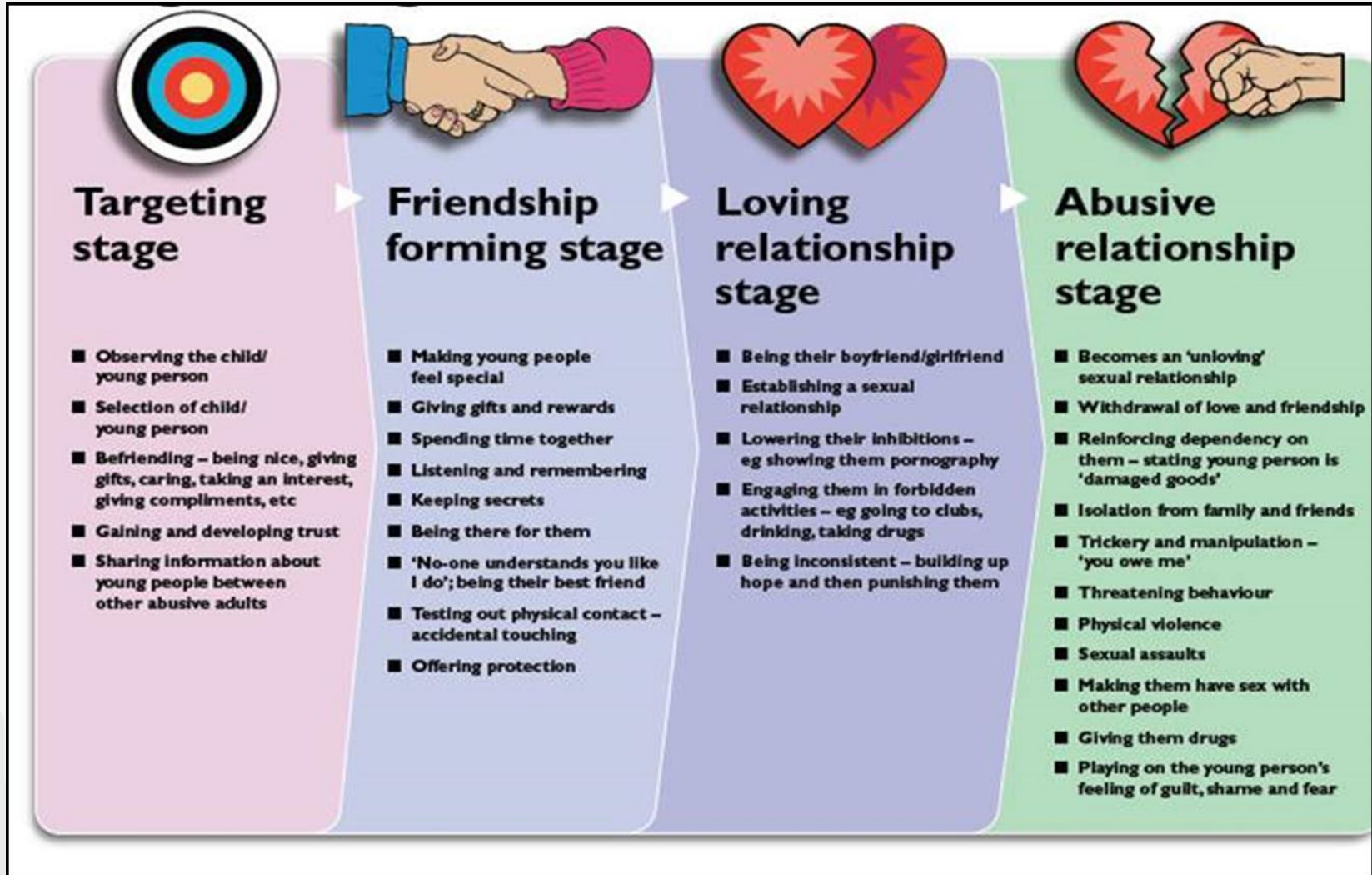
- Sexual and/or criminal exploitation
- Being drawn into criminal activity and the criminal justice system
- Substance misuse and/or addiction
- Cut-off from pre-existing support networks, further isolation and marginalisation
- Diminished mental health and emotional wellbeing
- Diminished life opportunities and choices
- Violence resulting in physical injury or death

Vulnerable Young People



- Learning disabilities – mild is more of a risk with gangs as may not get a social care service.
- Physical disability – deafness an asset for a foot soldier
- Isolation - Gangs give sense of belonging
- Substance misuse

The Grooming Line



Local Services & Interventions



- COG Panel
- St. Giles SOS Project
- Exploitation Hub & Integrated Gangs Team
- Youth Justice Service
- Children's Social Care
- Youth Service
- Spotlight
- Fight For Peace
- Step Forward
- Princes Trust
- Streets of Growth
- Divert
- Probation/IOM
- Women's Aid
- CAHMS
- London Gang Exit Programme
- Rescue & Response
- Victim Support

What You Can Do



- Engage with the family dynamics.
- Curiosity about other family members.
- Make a safeguarding referral:

Children's Services 0207 364 5006

Adult Services 0207 364 6085

