

Report of: **Executive Member for Children and Families**

Meeting of:	Date	Ward(s)
Policy and Performance Scrutiny Committee	26 January 2017	All

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SUBJECT: Update report on £500k per year additional investment to prevent youth violence

1. Synopsis

- 1.1 This report provides an update on the £500k per year additional investment to prevent youth violence.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 The Policy and Performance Committee are asked to:
- Scrutinise the work undertaken as a result of the £500k spend on services to prevent youth violence

3. Background

3.1 Objective

There is already a great deal of work being delivered by services within the council and with partners to prevent and reduce youth violence. However, given the level of incidents of youth violence and gang related violence Islington has seen in recent years, Islington has invested more funding in interventions to tackle this issue which affects young people, families and the wider community.

The additional investment has enabled further capacity in services such as mentoring and key working which increases the time staff can devote to direct work with children and young people from 7 to 18 years of age. Interventions are targeted at those who are at risk of becoming involved in gang activity, a perpetrator or victim of youth violence. Investment also focuses on those who would benefit from specialist interventions to enable them to leave gang activity and/or support to overcome trauma and risks associated with being victims of youth violence. This investment aims to reduce serious youth violence which in

turn will help people to feel safer and aid community cohesion and a sense of safety within the community.

Building relationships and trust with young people is key with this age group and persistence with non-attendance and lack of engagement is crucial in to ensuring young people are supported.

The objective is to adopt a stronger early intervention approach to serious youth crime. The interventions, services, and training and resources for staff will focus on further embedding the Think Family approach to ensure the wider systemic issues (such as parental issues) are addressed alongside intensive direct work with the young people, addressing the underlying causes of their behaviour.

3.2 Methodology

There is recognition that some of the highest risk young people and their families feel a level of distrust and suspicion towards the state. In identifying the most appropriate interventions to prevent serious youth crime Islington will consider that for some young people, the greatest difference will be made by commissioning providers from voluntary and community sector who have a track record of delivering change for these hard to reach groups. The commissioning approach will reflect this need for a spread of services/interventions across the local authority and independent providers.

3.3 Resource

The council has identified £500k per year for 4 years from 2016/17 to 2019/20.

3.4 2016/17 allocation of resource

Members have been keen to minimise delay whilst commissioning is underway for interventions from 2017 onwards. This has been achieved through identifying interventions in 2016/17 that enhance the integrated approach and reach targeted young people who will benefit the most from the interventions.

3.5 Funding has been allocated to the following, as part of an integrated multi-agency approach to tackling youth crime, gang activity and violence:

- mentoring delivered by Chance UK for an additional 10 targeted primary school children (to increase reach of current mentoring contract from 2016-2020) and Safer London for 25 young people 11 to 17 years
- one to one intensive support for 75 10-18 year olds plus group work, delivered by workers from St Giles Trust who utilise their experiences as a way of connecting with young people both on the fringes of and already entrenched in gang activity. They will be based in TYS, TYS/Integrate (a Camden and Islington Foundation Trust clinical led project that engages young people involved in gangs in EC1 area) and Integrated Gangs Team (IGT)
- additional capacity within TYS to deliver counselling for an additional 48 young people 12 -18 years old
- IGT workers to enhance communication and information sharing as well as one to one work with 24 young people and group work(2016-2020)
- one to one education, training and employment support delivered by a worker from New Horizons for 40 young people known to YOS and group work
- Specialist Intervention Pilot Project (SIPP) which is a Child sexual exploitation (CSE) and harmful sexual behaviours (HSB) pilot to implement and evaluate specialist interventions for 20 young people at medium to high risk of being victim of CSE and/or perpetrator of HSB. In addition to direct one to one work SIPP run group work to young people and deliver training, consultations and produce direct work tools for practitioners. (2 year pilot 2016/17-2018/19).

The vast majority of these resources are integrated within IGT (Integrated Gangs Team), YOS (Youth Offending Service), TYS (Targeted Youth Support) and CSC (Children's

Social Care) in an attempt to ensure seamless delivery of services for children and young people.

- 3.6 **At the point of writing this report many of the posts have been delivering a service for just 3 months as the majority of posts did not start until the middle of Quarter 2 (Aug-Oct 2016).** This is due to time taken to recruit and delays with Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks. The funding for 12 month secondment posts will roll over to ensure a full twelve months of delivery.

This work is very fluid so the outputs and outcomes listed below are a snapshot at end of Dec 2016.

Outputs

- 3.7 One to one work – over 95 children and young people are accessing one to one support. In addition over 94 young people at risk of CSE and HSB have been identified to SIPP through practitioner consultations, one to one work and participation work, enhancing the quality of CSE/HSB specific risk assessments and interventions.

The vast majority of referrals to services funded through this investment have been appropriate, identifying what evidence¹ suggests to be key risk factors such as behavioural issues, exhibiting violent and/or offending behaviours, history of domestic violence within the household, family members with offending histories, victims of violence and/or bullying, mental health concerns, family separation and anger management concerns.

- 3.8 Group work – over 347 young people have attended group work sessions run by IGT YOS link worker, Gangs Safeguarding Co-ordinator, SIPP workers, New Horizons EET Worker and St Giles trust workers ranging from whole year and targeted workshops in schools to small targeted groups focusing on a range of issues including offending behaviours, CSE or employability. In addition the Youth Counsellor has participated in several informal youth work sessions at Platform, Lift and Spectrum to explore emotional wellbeing, promote the counselling service and discuss potential blocks young people may have around accessing mental health services.

“The SOS workshop was informative and interactive. The facilitators made the young people feel relaxed and open about sharing their views among their peers. The slides and examples, particularly the facilitator’s own story made the workshop even more engaging for the young people.”

“It encourages the young women to discuss and share their thoughts.”

- 3.9 Training for practitioners – 329 practitioners from Targeted and Specialist Children and Families Services have received training on safeguarding young people in relation to gang activity and serious youth violence. In addition 38 practitioners from Independent Futures have attended the first 3 of a series of 9 bespoke workshops delivered by the Safeguarding Gangs Co-ordinator in partnership with colleagues from other services, including IGT. 39 practitioners have also received training on CSE and HSB.

“the worker had extensive knowledge on Islington’s gangs profile and the historical context.”

This training has given me the “confidence and resources to (address issues with adolescents)”

¹ [Islington gangs safeguarding protocol and practice guidance \(page 11\)](#)

- 3.10 Staff consultations – 44 staff consultations have taken place regarding young people deemed to be at risk of CSE, HSB or involvement in gangs, offered by SIPP and Safeguarding Gangs Co-ordinator. There has been good feedback about the quality of this support, impacting on the quality of risk assessments and the interventions practitioners then put in place.

“...encouraged the worker to refocus on specific case issues and then think of appropriate intervention rather than feel like they were just managing crisis.”

- 3.11 Strategy meetings – The YOS inspection highlighted that risk from and involvement in gangs needed to be better identified as a safeguarding issue. Since March 2016 there have been 30 strategy meetings (23 plus 7 strategy reviews) plus 20 professionals meetings.
- 3.12 Practitioner work tools – A number of work tools have been developed to enhance the work of the wider targeted and specialist workforce including a CSE risk assessment; 5 new direct work sheets for working with young people at risk of CSE; 25 case based intervention and safety planning programmes.
- 3.13 Support for families – Services including Chance UK and SIPP have provided direct support to parents/carers.

Outcomes – young people

- 3.14 Given the investment for 2016-17 has, in the main, been implemented since September 2016, it is early days to see the impact of this spend in youth offending figures. At the time of writing this report, data available to end Sept 2016 predict violence against the person is stabilising following a consistent rise since 2012, with a possible slight reduction. Youth crime figures for Quarter 3 are not currently available².

Many of the young people supported through services and interventions funded by the £500k have experienced many difficulties and traumatic episodes in their lives and the behaviour they display is a way of trying to meet needs currently unmet and coping with challenges they face. Needless to say support for young people will not see outcomes overnight. Relationships take time to build, to develop trust and respect and break down barriers.

However, there are already some positive indications about the impact of these services and posts on an individual level, some examples of which are summarised below.

- 3.15 Education, training and employment (EET) outcomes – The majority of young people are still of statutory school age. Of those who are over 16 and NEET, 2 young people enrolled at college, 1 started university, 3 started work and training in construction, 1 started an apprenticeship, and 1 started an Art Award Programme.
- 3.16 Relocation – 2 young people have been relocated to another borough, working in partnership with the young person, family and social services. This support has been in recognition of the level of risk for those young people if they remain in the borough. One of these young people moved into employment following relocation.
- 3.17 Participation – an important stepping stone for young people is having a sense of control over their lives and feeling empowered to contribute to the services they receive. A few young people have engaged in developing their own projects (including a gym project). In addition young people have been encouraged to be vocal and central to their support planning and whilst young people often find it hard to be in a room with a number of

² Youth Crime Figures for Islington will be available on 23 January 2017 and will be presented to Youth Justice Services Management Board on 24 January 2017.

professionals there has been a lot of work to encourage their attendance and contribution. As a result a number of young people (and their parents) have attended their own CSE/HSB and gangs strategy meetings ensuring their voice is heard and acted upon. Also 3 young people at risk of CSE have contributed their views about the service as part of some participation work, feeding back on service delivery and how they felt about decisions relating to their care.

- 3.18 Access support services – For some young people an important first step is accessing and engaging with support services. 8 young people have engaged with the NEET team at New Horizons Youth Centre to gain access to a range of employability support and opportunities as well as tap into the other services the centre has to offer, including counselling support. 2 young people have met with the counsellor at the centre. For YOS clients, engagement in other support services will ensure young people have ongoing support beyond the life of their YOS order. The counselling service, being based within the community and within youth hubs, has been very well received by both young people and youth workers. 14 young people have accessed this additional youth counselling support since October 2016.

- 3.19 Family relationships – 1 young person whilst in custody has been supported to rebuild his relationship with his mother who had not previously visited him in prison.

One primary school child supported by a Chance UK mentor has formed a good relationship with his mentor and his mother has already seen improvements within the home as shown in the quotes below from 3 month review / goal-setting:

Child X: "I like K (mentor) because she's nerdy and cool at the same time and loves doing adventurous stuff. We like the same things like world war history and we do stuff my mum doesn't do. I am a history and tube geek. We like doing adventurous stuff in London and did a tube scavenger hunt which was amazing." (X has a history of disengagement and running away from school).

Mentor: "X is SO ARTICULATE. He's clever and knows more about history. He teaches me about history. Mentoring has helped X explore his passions and now (through goals) it aims to help develop his confidence in telling other people about these".

Mum: "So much has changed because of K. X is more cooperative at home and it has made such a big difference to me. I can't believe this....!".

Outcomes – partnership

- 3.20 Improved information sharing – Through the training, practitioner consultations, there has been improved working relationships and quality of information sharing between services, both within the council and between the council and partners. Better information sharing between Independent Futures and other services (e.g. IGT) has resulted in better risk assessing, safety planning and identification of the most appropriate interventions.
- 3.21 Improved partnership working – Some of these services have enabled the promotion of voluntary sector agencies available for professionals to access for support and intervention for their cases where previously it had been difficult for practitioners to keep abreast of the range of services on offer. This has led to appropriate referrals to voluntary sector partners, better using the wider resources available. The resettlement planning meetings chaired by the IGT YOS link manager have ensured referrals to the appropriate panels (MARF, MAPPA, Bronze) to enable adequate planning and actions are completed prior to release from custody.
- 3.22 Increased awareness – The gangs training has seen a rise in staff awareness on the gangs safeguarding protocol and procedures. As a result there has been a significant

increase in the number of gangs strategy meetings being requested in Quarter 3. In addition, all young people known to be at risk of gang involvement are now recorded as a hazard on the Children's Social Care recording system to better support and track these young people.

Resource allocation in 2017

- 3.23 In addition to the resources that will continue to be funded post 2016, two services will be advertised in January 2017 to be commissioned by July 2017. These services will be a mentoring service and a key working service.

An intervention programme 'Positive Choices' for young people known to TYS and YOS has been agreed and staff will be trained in this intervention in the coming months.

In addition it has recently been agreed for the youth counselling post to continue beyond the end of 2016 to maintain the increased reach this additional post can provide, responding to the positive feedback and demand for community based mental health services.

Decisions making is underway regarding allocation of the remaining budget for 2017-2020.

3.24 Implications

3.25 Financial implications:

All the measures described in this report can be implemented within existing budgets and the £500k additional investment in targeted and specialist interventions to prevent youth violence.

3.26 Legal Implications:

The Council has a duty to investigate where it has reasonable cause to suspect that a child in the area is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm, and to take appropriate action (section 47 Children Act 1989). Further, the Council is under a duty to make arrangements to ensure that its functions are discharged having regard to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children (section 11 Children Act 2004). Services working with children and young people are aware of these duties and that safeguarding considerations are paramount.

The procurement of external service providers will need to be undertaken in accordance with the council's Procurement Rules and the Public Contracts Regulations 2015.

3.27 Environmental Implications:

None

3.28 Resident Impact Assessment:

The council must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation, and to advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations, between those who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it (section 149 Equality Act 2010). The council has a duty to have due regard to the need to remove or minimise disadvantages, take steps to meet needs, in particular steps to take account of disabled persons' disabilities, and encourage people to participate in public life. The council must have due regard to the need to tackle prejudice and promote understanding."

A Resident Impact Assessment is in place for the £500k additional investment and is a live and working document which will continue to be amended as the commissioning

progresses. This piece of commissioning is intended to contribute to providing fair chances for all and have a positive impact on young people in the borough, increasing sense of safety in the community. No specific issues have been identified and there are plans in place to monitor, track and evaluate our approach and the impact of the services and interventions.

4. Conclusion and reasons for recommendations

- 4.1 The additional investment has enabled further capacity in services such as mentoring and key working which increases the time staff can devote to direct work with children and young people from 7 to 18 years of age. Building relationships and trust with young people is key with this age group and persistence with non-attendance and lack of engagement is crucial in to ensuring young people are supported.

The objective is to adopt a stronger early intervention approach to serious youth crime. The interventions, services, and training and resources for staff will focus on further embedding the Think Family approach to ensure the wider systemic issues (such as parental issues) are addressed alongside intensive direct work with the young people, addressing the underlying causes of their behaviour.

The aim being to reduce the number of young people who become victims of peer on peer violence and enable children and young people to fulfil their potential.

- 4.2 The committee is asked to scrutinise the huge amount of work underway to address this issue and the early signs of impact, noting that the majority of services/posts have only been delivering for the last three months, and to request a further update in six months.

Appendices: Appendix A – case studies

Signed by:

Executive Member Children and Families Date 6 January 2017

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Appendix A – Case Studies

Case Study A – Specialist Intervention Pilot Project (SIPP)

Female - 17 year old

A is at risk of sexual exploitation and is on the edge of care. A had only returned from Algeria in October 2016 after her Mother had refused to allow her to return after a routine family holiday. A returned to the UK and Islington Children Social Care applied for a Forced Marriage Order in respect of her.

A child sexual exploitation strategy meeting was organised in respect of A and the young person was invited as part of SIPP's steps to increase participation of young people in the service. Attending the meeting allowed A to hear why professionals were concerned about her safety and for her to see that there were people who cared and were working together to try and reduce the risk of harm. A was also given the opportunity to share her views about the situation which meant professionals gained more of an insight in to her life and the existing risks and strengths. An immediate positive effect of A attending the meeting was that the plan that was drawn up was realistic, for example one support service was suggested and the young person said that it wouldn't suit her needs and life style. Because of this information a different strategy was agreed upon.

The meeting was a multi-agency meeting and it gave the professionals a chance to explain to A how their information sharing procedure worked, it appeared that the young person was reassured around this subject especially in regards to the sexual health clinic explaining what information they would share with the network and what they wouldn't.

A's feedback after the meeting was that she thought it was *"going to be more awkward than it was and that everyone was very nice"*. She said she would attend a meeting again. Most poignantly she rated herself at medium risk of CSE whereas professionals thought she was at lower risk. In response to this she said that there was *"stuff"* professionals didn't know and that's why the risk was higher. This information was very important in regards to intervention and minimising risk.

The aim will be for A to routinely, when appropriate, be invited to CSE strategy meetings. A structure around the SIPP worker meeting with the young person prior to the meeting, preparing them for the meeting and supporting them throughout needs to be developed (in this case the young person was spoken to prior to the meeting by the SIPP worker). SIPP would also support the other professional attendees around how to engage in a meeting meaningfully when young person is present.

Case study B – Safer London Mentoring

Male - 16 years old

B has been known to children's social care in different boroughs since 2001, due to him and his siblings suffering significant harm when in the care of their birth parents due to neglect. There were also concerns of radicalisation from B's mother and her partner as well as their associates. Additionally there were concerns as B's father had a known substance abuse issue and suffered from mental health difficulties. The father was murdered during a burglary in 2015. In 2013, the children went to live with their paternal aunt and her husband.

At the time of referral B was residing with his aunt, and was a victim of serious physical assault a year earlier at his previous school which resulted in him being out of education for four months. It was identified that B would benefit from a mentor because he expressed the desire to be a normal child, and he does not always feel able to talk to his aunt.

At time of referral, B was on a Child in Need plan with Islington Children's Social Care, had therapeutic input and was attending a local college. Aspire worked with social services, the police, and B's school to provide him with the best outcomes, as detailed below.

B was supported by Aspire from March to December 2016. This included texts, emails, and phone calls 3-4 times a week.

Following B's engagement, a mentor was lined up to start work with him. The mentor met with B once. Shortly after, B asked to speak to Aspire and disclosed details of emotional and physical abuse by his aunt. He expressed that he did not feel safe or want to be in his aunt's home. Aspire made a referral to Children's social care. Following the referral, B's brother got in contact and also reported physical abuse, and both children were taken into police protection and then moved into their sister's home while the children were waiting to be placed in care. Aspire supported B in getting basic necessities such as clothes and an oyster card. Following Aspire working with Islington and another borough's social services, B was placed with a foster carer outside of Islington and is reportedly much more settled. There were still concerns around B's emotional stability, and Aspire has recommended a referral to counselling to aid in B's recovery.