



Children's Services Scrutiny Committee

**Co-ordinated and joined up services
for Vulnerable Adolescents and those
at Risk of Harm**



Definition

Adolescence, is regarded as the transitional phase of growth and development between childhood and adulthood. The World Health Organisation (WHO) defines an adolescent as any person between ages 10 and 19.

Vulnerability implies those more exposed to risks than their peers. They can be **vulnerable** in terms of deprivation (food, education, and parental care), exploitation, abuse, neglect, features of child development e.g. Special Educational Needs, mental health, violence etc.



Adolescence is not only a time of vulnerability, it is also an age of opportunity' WHO

- Human brains develop/ change more during teenage years than at any other time (apart from 1st 3 years of life)
- Enriching environments enhance development - restrictive ones do the opposite.
- Young people who are not resilient will be more likely to respond to stress by developing anxiety and depression. (Knapp et al (2016)).
- The more opportunities we can offer for learning coping skills, & the more support we provide to young people and their families, the more chance there is of healthy development.



Issues young people are faced with

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE), missing, social media, social deprivation, parental mental health/substance misuse, parental neglect and abuse, school or study problems, bullying, stress/mental health, drugs and alcohol, Domestic Violence and Abuse (DVA), crime, young carers, body image.....

"there are so many messages about what to be, what to look like, how you should present yourself to the world. It's 24/7 and social media judges most things,"

(Anne Longfield OBE, children's commissioner for England)

National & Local context



ISLINGTON

UK

- No 16+ on Child Protection (CP) plans increased by 70% from 2010 – 2013
- 132% increase in no's of 16+ looked after in 2010

After babies, the most common age to die in abuse or neglectful circumstances is adolescents

(Serious Case Review national triennial research)

Islington - As of July 2017 (ages for 13 – 17) represent:

- 62% of total children looked after / 17% of total on CP plans / 28% of total Children in Need

No of Young People (YP) flagged 'gangs at risk' increased from 2 in April 2016 – 42 in July 2017



Risk and resilience



ISLINGTON

Risk and resilience

An adolescent who is **resilient** is likely to enter adulthood with a good chance of coping well - even if he or she has experienced difficult circumstances in life. (Child Trends - 2013)

"services for children and young people, particularly for those with significant health or other needs, should be coordinated around the child/young person **and** the family"

(Getting it Right Report – Early Intervention Foundation)

Therefore, we need to work with young people and their families to build resilience in adolescents if we are to improve their outcomes as adults





What we have on offer now

- Good schools, libraries, leisure centres, adventure playgrounds, youth hubs, youth Clubs, careers advice
- Families First working with ages 5 – 19
- Islington Families Intensive Team/ Edge of care services
- Maintained universal and targeted services including £2m new investment for preventing youth violence
- Specialist social work services using motivational social work model to work with YP & families to create change
- Youth employment services
- Integrated Gang Team (IGT)



What we are progressing and why

- Integrated youth and community teams where targeted youth and youth offending work closer
- Reshaping of our services to improve join up between the family, the YP, targeted and specialist service
- Adopting one worker one plan approach to minimise number of staff involved with young people
- Updated participation and engagement strategy so we can create a website
- Widening participation in youth council
- Ensuring IGT have a preventative arm to their work
- Trauma based practice in schools pilot

Challenges

- Different thresholds / eligibility for services
- Financial constraints and service pressures
- Different legislation and policy and frameworks
- Changing society & demographics of children in our services mean the skills of our workforce need to change

Opportunities to enrich what we do

- Our ability to protect young people is contingent on degree to which services offer choice and opportunity
- Recognition of the role of young people themselves in promoting their safety ('partners in care')
- Promoting young people's own abilities to make safe choices over the longer term
- Enhance direct work with children and young people to assess risk, protect and prevent from further harm
- Further embed working with partners to ensure that they "listen" and assess, & intervene earlier