



ISLINGTON

Islington Youth Safety Strategy

2020-2025

**November
2020**

Islington Youth Safety Strategy 2020-2025

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1. Introduction

Kaya Comer Schwartz

Deputy Leader and Executive Member for Children and Families



There is no more important a task for the council, or for the partnership, than protecting and safeguarding children and young people. We were one of the first areas in the country to see youth safety through a safeguarding lens, indicative of our 'child first, offender second' approach.

We know that many of our young people have become involved in offending because of adverse childhood experiences, trauma, discrimination and exploitation. That's why it's essential to us, whilst simultaneously protecting the public and victims, we do what we can to steer these young people onto the right path. We can only do this by working together, as a partnership and alongside these children, their parents/carers and the wider community.

We know from our own academic research – the evaluation of the work of our Integrated Gangs Team and our ground-breaking work on disproportionality – that some cohorts of our children are more vulnerable to exploitation and becoming involved in and affected by youth safety than others. Organised crime groups target certain cohorts more, as they deem them to be more vulnerable. We aspire to prevent this because all of our children and young people are important to us.

This strategy sets out how we aim to create a better society for all of our children and young people through our Fairer Together initiative and through our partnership response to youth safety and safeguarding. Finally, I wish to thank everybody for their expert contributions to this strategy and I look forward to a successful partnership so that we can give every young person the borough the very best chances to succeed

Raj Kohli

Islington/Camden Metropolitan Police Borough Command Unit



In my professional and personal opinion there are few things more important than ensuring the safety of young people and we can only make this happen by working in real and true partnership.

But for me it is not just about keeping young people safe – it is also about maximising their potential, making them our young people the best they can be, and society has a responsibility to make sure this happens.

As you read through this document please I want you to know these are more than just words on a page. These are our commitments to keeping young people safe and help realise every young person’s potential.

This can only be done in partnership and my experience of the partners in Islington is that they are people who truly care and who truly want to make a difference.

My commitment to the partnership, in addition to striving to make sure that it as successful as possible, will be to ensure we have our schools officers in place, to continue our work with the volunteer cadets and to make sure the Integrated Gangs Team (recognised as best practice across London and beyond) has the right number of police officers supporting it. I am also determined to strengthen our relationship with young people and other members of the community because this is integral to reducing youth violence and making our borough safe.

Husen Abdullahi Islington Young Councillor

As Islington’s Young Mayor, I am really pleased that my fellow Youth Councillors and I have been involved in shaping the youth safety strategy

In the Youth Council Election, 5 of us who got elected, campaigned around issues relating to youth safety and knife crime, so being able to inform this strategy has enabled us to represent the voice of Islington’s young people. Keeping the community safe is very important to us.



As a youth council, Youth Safety is one of our priorities:

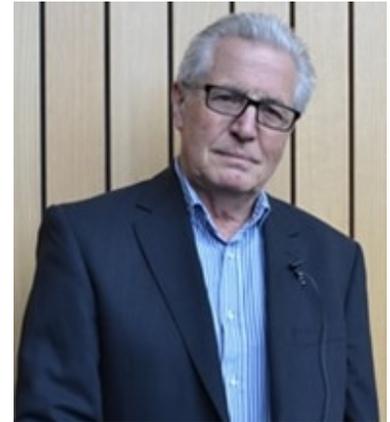
- We are working with council leaders and officers to promote safety both online and within our communities and support campaigns that focus on a reduction in violence towards women and girls.
- We are use our social media platforms to engage with young people and promote campaigns around tackling crime and exploitation and improving overall safety.

Over the last 6 months, we have attended and hosted community events with Council Leaders, decision makers and the Borough Police Commander, including recently a Somali Community Event in which over 35 young people attended. Youth Safety will continue to be one of our main priorities.

Professor John Pitts

Criminologist

I was pleased to be invited to assist Islington with the development of its new Youth Safety strategy. I met and interviewed a number of key professionals and also met with children, young people and the Youth Council. Despite the cuts to public services in the past decade, Islington has retained a well-developed, integrated, set of services for identifying and working with young people at risk, in need and trouble. There is a strong commitment to partnership working between local authority departments, the voluntary sector, the police and criminal justice agencies. There are a range of excellent voluntary sector agencies operating in the borough and they are central to, non-stigmatising, safeguarding interventions with many young people. There are also clear challenges, however, due to the increasingly complex issues that lead to the exploitation of children and young people and the likely long-term impact of COVID-19.



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2. Executive summary

Islington's partnership is determined to protect as many of our children from harm as possible. Our previous youth safety strategy, 'Working Together for a Safer Islington', outlined our commitment to viewing and responding to youth crime matters through a safeguarding lens – the safeguarding of our children and young people is one of our main priorities. Serious Youth Violence (SYV) is an issue that has devastating repercussions for children and young people, their families, and the wider community; Islington, similar to other London areas, has continued to experience the tragic consequences of knife and gun crime in our borough. In 2016, we lost four of our young people to knife crime and we vowed that we would never have such a terrible year again. This strategy sets out how we will work with our partnership and local communities to keep our children and young people safe, while building upon and strengthening the principles that we set out in our previous strategy.

Through Islington's Fairer Together Partnership and our work on this strategy, we spoke to hundreds of children and families in the borough – unfortunately, it is clear that for many of our young people, fear of crime and violence has become a part of daily life. We are determined that this will change.

For every young person that:

- is injured or killed as a result of knife crime or SYV – that is one young person too many;
- enters the criminal justice system – that is one entrant too many;
- is sexually or criminally exploited by a criminal gang – that is one victim too many;
- receives a custodial sentence or is remanded to custody – that is one young imprisoned person too many.

We want to keep as many of our children and young people away from youth crime and violence as possible and give them all the best possible start in their lives.

Islington's Fairer Together initiative has set the ambition to make Islington fairer and create a place where everyone, whatever their background, has the opportunity to reach their potential and enjoy a good quality of life. We are intent on ensuring that children and young people in Islington have the best possible start in life and that we keep them safe.

We have written this strategy in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic and in the knowledge that the likely impact of any post-pandemic economic downturn on family incomes, alongside youth and adult employment, will probably have a greater impact on the borough's most disadvantaged children, young people and families. There is also a danger that more children and adults will be drawn into the 'informal economy' as a result - the most lucrative element of which is drug dealing and county lines.

In addition to the challenges that we have in relation to SYV and the indisputable negative and significant after-effects of the pandemic, we also face important challenges in relation to

discrimination, inequality and disproportionality. We have long known that (young) Black and minority ethnic (BAME) people are overrepresented in the criminal justice system, and have poorer health outcomes compared to white people. The aftermath of George Floyd's murder in the USA looks set to be a defining moment in terms of racial inequality in general, starkly illuminating the under-representation of BAME people in positions of power and their over-representation in terms of poverty, ill health, crime and incarceration. It is widely acknowledged that racism and prejudice are significant contributory factors to these societal issues. Islington's Youth Offending Service (YOS) is working to explore disproportionality through our innovative work with City University, the Youth Justice Board (2020) and beyond. Identifying ways of tackling this are priorities for us and is aligned with this strategy.

This strategy therefore sets out our plan to increase the safety of young people in Islington over the next five years. It is based on a comprehensive needs analysis undertaken in Islington with Public Health, our partners and stakeholders alongside an analysis of 'what works'. The evidence tells us that many of the young people who become involved in crime or violence have had a troubled adolescence, but we also know that the causes can start much earlier in life due to Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE's). Islington has invested significant new funding into our work to support families experiencing domestic abuse (DA) as we know that witnessing DA in early childhood is highly prevalent amongst the most concerning young people in the YOS. This group may have family difficulties, but they are often responding to pressures in their peer group, school or neighbourhood. Islington has developed a trauma-informed approach to youth crime. We see young people involved in or affected by crime as children first; exploitation, including county lines, is a child protection issue. The criminological literature describes their criminality as 'adolescent time-limited' because, having become involved in early adolescence, they are likely to 'age out' of these behaviours by their late teens or early 20s (Farrington, 2012). However, there is growing evidence that because of a lack of viable routes out of gang crime, some young people are staying longer and thereby risking lengthy prison sentences, serious injury or possibly death. This is why interventions by the Youth Offending Service (YOS), the Integrated Gangs Team (IGT), Targeted Youth Services (TYS), the Post-16 Participation/Progression programmes, and third sector agencies such as Arsenal in the Community (amongst others), aim to create alternative futures for these young people in order to help them leave crime behind. We will do all that we can to assist our children and young people in this regard, whilst also prioritising our duties and responsibilities in terms of enforcement and public protection. Indeed, as we have acknowledged and recognized the devastating impact of drug dealing and violence on young people and the wider community, we must also ensure that, where appropriate and necessary, the full force of the law is used to protect victims and the public and to act as a deterrent.

3. Our objectives

An effective youth safety response requires the 'whole system' to work in partnership to achieve lasting and sustained change. Partnership working between agencies such as social

care, health, youth justice, Targeted Youth Support, Integrated Gangs Team, education, commissioned services, the voluntary sector, and the police has developed rapidly in the borough in the past few years. This has enabled services to devise 'joined-up' responses to the young people exposed to risk in their communities and families, to those experiencing trauma and mental ill health, to those who struggle at school, and to those involved in – or threatened by – criminal networks and gangs. Whilst the partnership has achieved a lot for our children and families in this regard, it is our intention to be more ambitious in terms of our vision, approach and in the achievement of positive outcomes that we secure for, and with, our children. We want to ensure that we are able to support our children, young people and families as soon as their problems emerge, rather than when they reach a crisis point and are in need of more specialist interventions and support. We aim and aspire to provide the best early help services in the country.

In Islington, the partnership's approach to tackling youth violence includes the World Health Organisation's public health model – this strategy is based on the evidence of links between personal vulnerability and involvement in youth crime and violence, endeavouring to maximise the protective factors that will keep them safe. Whether the young person is a victim or perpetrator of violence, protective factors within communities, neighbourhoods, families, schools, and peer groups can reduce risk significantly.

Our objectives:

1. Protect children and young people from violence, abuse and exploitation
2. Foster stronger and safer communities, public spaces and schools
3. Safeguard children and young people and support families, parents and carers
4. Build the resilience of Islington's children and young people
5. Secure school inclusion and maximise academic and vocational achievement
6. Addressing inequality and disproportionality within the youth and criminal justice system
7. Reduce re-offending for those children and young people who have become more persistent in their offending behaviours
8. Empower communities to create a safer environment for all, but especially for children

These objectives are based on a comprehensive needs analysis undertaken in Islington, which has combined quantitative and qualitative evidence. In relation to the latter, Islington's children, young people and families have been consulted over a long period. This consultation has included active participation from the voices of children and young people in regular service user forums to elicit feedback about the quality of service provision.

The Islington Youth Safety Strategy adopts a public health model, which means taking an evidence-based and intelligence-led approach to reducing vulnerabilities and building resilience among young people and their families and the wider community.

To achieve these objectives the action plan for this strategy will focus on eight key strands of intervention:

- Prevention
- Identification

- Engagement
- Diversion
- Support
- Protection
- Disruption*
- Enforcement and Prosecution*
-
- (*For the more prolific, high risk and persistent offenders)

How will we know if we have been successful?

To achieve these outcomes we have set out a number of actions and performance measures (as outlined in section 6) so that our progress can be robustly monitored and measured. We will establish a Youth Safety Delivery group composed of statutory organisations and community partners working alongside young people and parents/carers to assess our progress, and drive the improvements needed to ensure our young people remain safe. For accountability purposes, we will also make sure that the Delivery group is aligned with, and that it reports to, the Youth Justices Services Management Board, which is our governance board for matters related to youth safety and youth justice.

We will know if we have been successful if we have:

- Increased numbers of children achieving an overall "good level of development"/Percentage of pupils achieving a Good Level of Development in the Early Years Foundation Stage P
- Reduced the number of fixed term and permanent exclusions in Islington schools
- Improved attainment and progress at GCSE for Black Caribbean and White UK Disadvantaged pupils so that the gap with the LBI average is narrowed
- Reduced the number of young people who are NEET
- Prevented more young people from entering the youth justice system for the first time
- Reduced reoffending amongst young people who are being supervised by the YOS
- Secured more positive outcomes for children and young people who have been victims of modern slavery/exploitation via the National Referral Mechanism (NRM) process. This will include having robust safety plans for these children after they have received a positive NRM outcome
- Reduced disproportionality among young people from Black and minority ethnic communities
- Reduced levels of serious youth violence
- Reduced the number of children who go missing from home and care
- Reduced the number of knife crime victims under 25
- Increased the number of children and young people having a first appointment with a Social, Emotional and Mental Health Need (SEMH) service within 4 weeks or less

4. Youth Safety – Local, national and regional context

The significant, extensive and widespread concerns that have existed for a number of years in relation to youth safety have unfortunately increased in recent times. We know that the wellbeing of children and young people, within a youth safety context, is one of the highest concerns for Islington residents and community members. Whilst the numbers of offences involving children has decreased in England and Wales, many inner city areas are struggling to keep large numbers of (vulnerable) children safe. In 2019, the number of offences involving knives and sharp instruments in the UK rose by 7 per cent to 45,600 in the year, a record national high. In London, 23 teenagers were killed because of knife crime and Serious Youth Violence in 2019 – the highest level for 11 years – sending shockwaves across the capital. This has heightened the responses from local, regional, and national government to address the issue and tackle its causes as a matter of significant priority.

In Islington, we are aware that the drugs markets is an aggravating factor in youth violence in the borough. Vulnerable young people, particularly young men and boys, can be groomed into gangs and the drugs trade from a young age. These children and young people are being exploited, for profit, by adults involved in the drugs trade and risk being lured or bullied into involvement in 'County Lines' drug distribution. This risk is heightened if they are from the African or African-Caribbean community, have learning difficulties, or are living with Autism. Helping young people affected by youth violence is a priority due to the detrimental impact on children directly affected as well as all children in the borough. Indeed, although many young people in Islington will grow up without directly experiencing acts of violence, the presence of it within our community can have far-reaching, long-lasting and significant effects.

Many young people in Islington are aware of gang activity and of the related 'postcode wars'. The existence of such issues can impact on their feelings of safety and can prevent some young people from feeling safe travelling around the borough. This provides the partnership with more reasons to reduce the prevalence of youth offending and SYV in the borough (and beyond).

In October 2019, Islington had the highest levels of income deprivation affecting children (IDACI) in London. 28% of children under 18 were living in families facing income deprivation. The London average was 18%. In the same year, Islington had the 10th highest levels of IDACI in the country (Karnad et al, 2019). In Islington, 60% of families live in social housing (compared to 20% nationally) and 30% live in one parent households. 17.8% of households are workless, and 21.7% are income deprived. Overall, this means that Islington has one of the highest child poverty levels in the country. 52.9% (7,500) of primary school age children, and 69.6% (5,300) of secondary school age children, are eligible for the Pupil Premium, which assists children facing deprivation. It is well documented that children who grow up with higher levels of poverty are much more likely to experience adverse childhood experiences and poorer outcomes. Subsequently, such children are much more susceptible and vulnerable to exploitation and entry into youth crime.

Some of our families may need a little or a lot more support, especially with the ongoing impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Families will need help to adapt positively to these changes at a time when there is intense pressure on public finances. However, research tells us that resilient children, families and communities can 'bounce back' and thrive despite the challenges they face. We want to provide our children and families with the resources to be as resilient as they possibly can. Children, young people and their families can be supported in three broad ways: through early help and prevention, so that problems do not arise in the first place; through early intervention and diversion, to ensure that their circumstances do not get worse; and through specialist intervention so that services can respond when needs are more significant and multi-faceted. We are determined to make Islington fairer and a place where everyone – regardless of their background or status – can thrive and reach their full potential.

Islington has experienced some success in relation to youth safety since we launched the 'Working Together for a Safer Islington' strategy in 2017 and we hope to continue to build on the progress that our partnership has made. We have:

- Reduced the number of young people who are first time entrants into the youth justice system from 75 in 2016/17 to 57 in 2019/20
- Curtailed the number of children who have received a custodial sentence from 30 in 2016/17 to 9 in 2019/20
- Seen the number of knife crime injury victims (under 25) fall by more than 46% between 2017/18 and 2019/20.
- Experienced reductions in the number of gun crime incidents (although this measure does not count incidents involving young people alone) by more than 42% Between 2017/18 to 2019/20

Table 1. Youth safety improvements measures 2017/2018 – 2019/20

Crime type	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	% Change Islington between 2017/18 and 2019/20
Total notifiable offences	31,425	28,328	30,273	-3.7%
Knife Crime with injury (non DV under 25)	76	63	41	-46.1%
Knife Crime Offences	630	576	554	-12.1%
Gun Crime offences	75	62	43	-42.7%
Theft Snatch	5682	1808	N/A	N/A

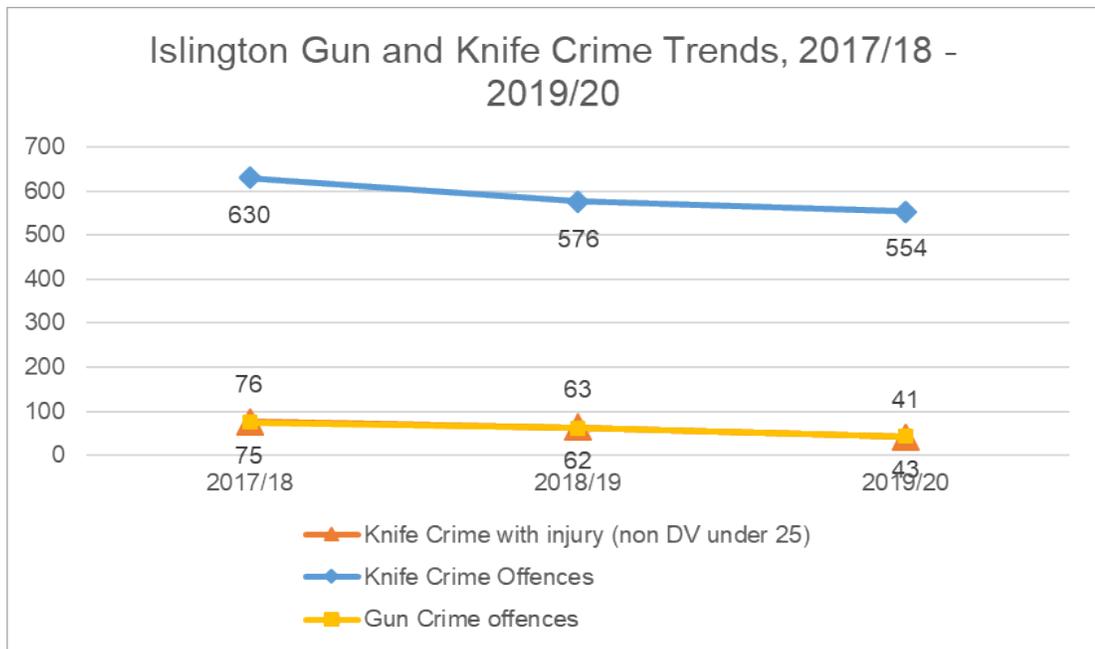
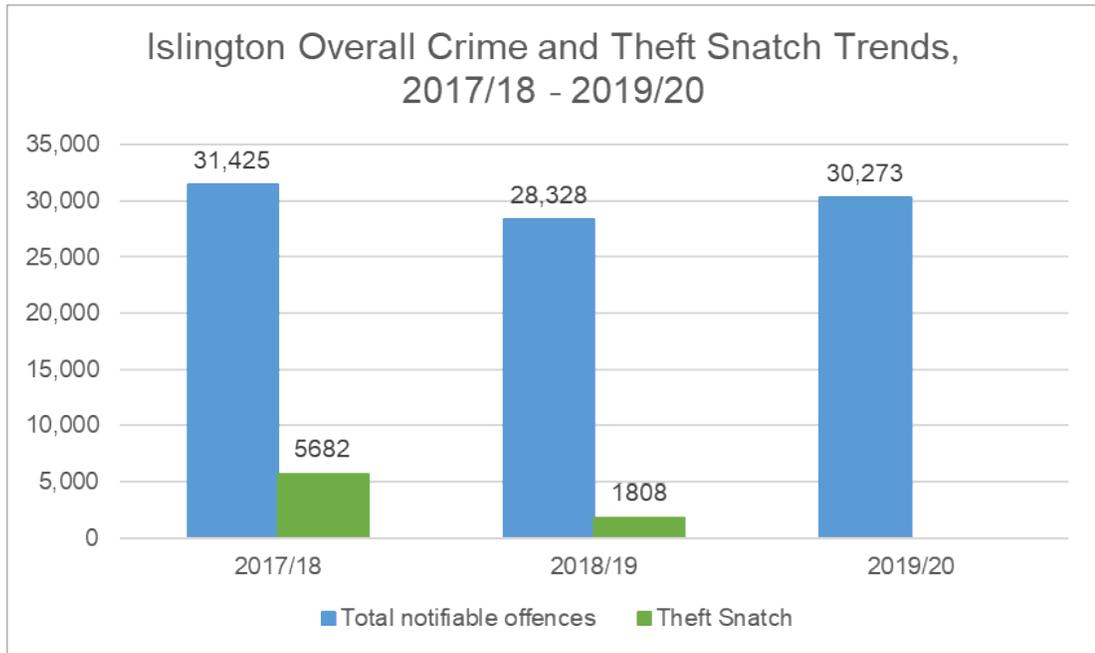
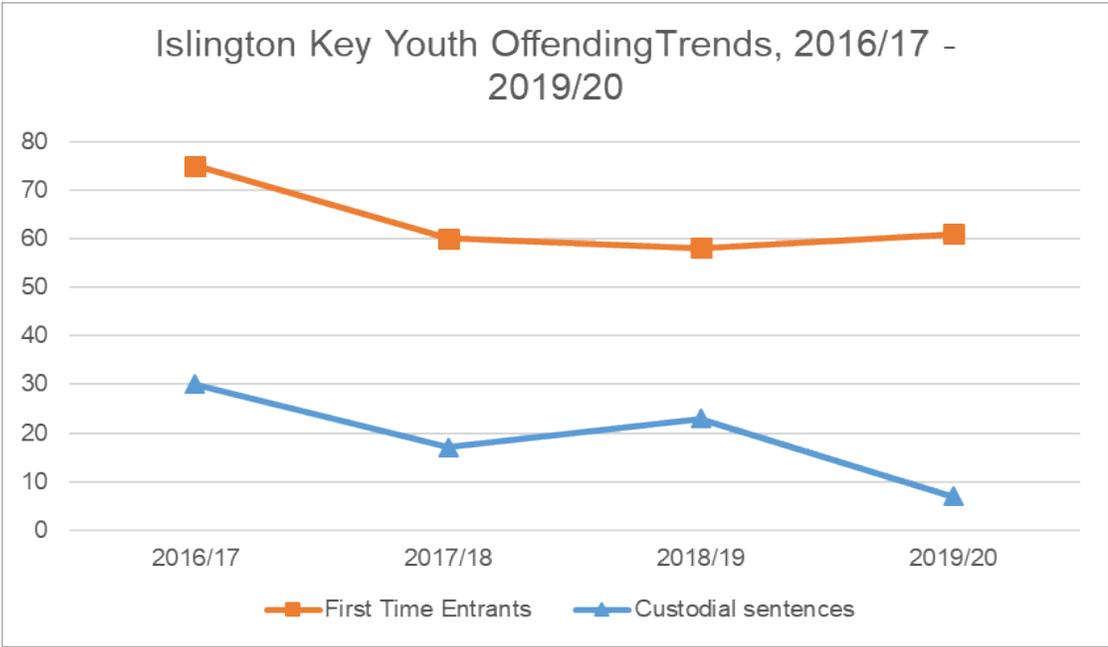


Table 2: National performance indicators performance for custody and first time entrants from 2016/17 to 2019/20 in Islington

	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
First Time Entrants	75	60	58	61
Custodial sentences	30	17	23	7



Youth violence in Islington
Key results for London Borough of Islington, August 2020

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Youth violence victims^[1]

Accused of youth violence^[1]

Youth Offenders^[2]

1,100 average victims per year

3 out of **4** are men

The average age of a victim in Islington is **24** years old

In 2018 and 2019 there were 2 murders each year

100 people accused of youth violence in Islington in 2019

Most were **aged 15-19** (56%)

and 89% of those accused were **men**

Most relationships (39%) were family, relatives or partner

Colleague of victim (work/school) **18%**

Other* **19%**

Aquaintance of victim **24%**

Family/ Relatives/ Partner of victim **39%**

*Other relationships include Child Minder, Criminal Associate, Doctor, Employer, Housemate and Social Worker.

Most of youth offenders starting an intervention are **aged 16 and 17**

NEET

161 (40%) of young people in the youth offending service were **Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET)**.

Exclusions

199 (35%) of young people known to Youth Offending Service (YOS) had at least one fixed **term exclusion** during 2013/14 to 2017/18. This is significantly higher than the average rate for all Islington secondary school pupils throughout the same period.

GCSE Results

45 (9%) pupils **achieved 5 or more GCSEs at A*-C/Grade 4+ or equivalent.** No qualifications were recorded for 42% of youth offenders.

Note: Youth offending data includes young people aged 10-17 who have had proven offences and excludes data where the young person was not found guilty.
Source: [1] Youth Crime Data; [2] Data and Performance Team, People Directorate. Infographic created by Cintia Liberatoscioli, Public Health KIP team, September 2020.
 For any further details, please contact PHASS@islington.gov.uk

5. Our approach

A multi-agency steering group coordinated the development of this strategy, incorporating the voices of young people and families, a comprehensive needs assessment led by Public Health, as well as a literature review, expert insight and learning from other areas. A key objective was to build on some of the work and initiatives that are already having a positive impact in Islington, including the initiatives covered in this section. We are seeking to find innovative solutions to areas that need more development because, as mentioned earlier, we cannot become complacent about youth safety – we know that we can always do more to protect our children and young people.

5.1. Fairer Together and Islington's aspirations

The Fairer Together Borough Partnership was launched in February 2020 and it builds on a whole range of examples of successful partnership working in Islington over the past ten years. The aim is to bring together the collective energy and resources of key partners across the borough to challenge inequality and make Islington fairer for all of its residents (but especially for the more disadvantaged). The initiative is built around three key principles:

Building strengths

Building relationships

Building community

Young Islington is a strand within Fairer Together and focusses on the development and provision of a coherent offer for young people, drawing on resources across the partnership. One of the main themes that has emerged when consulting young people for this strategy, and for Fairer Together, is the desire for the partnership to adopt an optimistic outlook towards young people and children. Young people are aware that there are numerous negative societal and external factors that can impact on them, but they are determined that this should not define them.

There are ten main all-encompassing and overarching components under the Young Islington strand of Fairer Together, based on the principle of being '**OPTIMISTIC**'. These are all interconnected with this strategy.

Opportunities for young people to share experiences – Hearing and responding to the voices and views of our children and young people is essential. It is important that we provide the forums and platforms for this to be done and that we continue to ensure that the voices of our children directly contributes to and helps shape the design and structure of services which exist for them and their families. We have established service user groups such as the You-Led

group within the Youth Offending Service and we will continue to develop and build upon such groups.

Parenting Support and resilience – Strengthening the capacity and resilience of parents and carers is vital to ensure that our children and young people thrive. Early help services must be responsive to the needs of services so that the need for the intervention of specialist children’s services is significantly reduced.

Training, Employment and Education – This is an indisputable protective factor for children and young people in the short and longer-term. Identifying and supporting children and young people who have Special Educational Needs (SEND) is subsequently even more significant.

Implement and launch a new youth safety strategy – The principles and ethos of the Fairer Together and, more specifically, of the Young Islington component are heavily connected to this youth safety strategy. The more aligned that the partnership is in the delivery of both initiatives, the greater the number of children and young people who will be successful in their lives.

Mentoring and role-modelling services – Young people who we engage with regularly as part of participation forums and those who have spoken to us for this strategy and the Young Islington strand of Fairer Together have advised that some young people, particularly those with the more complex needs, do not have mentors or role-models who they can look to for inspiration or guidance. It is crucial to bridge this gap if we are to reduce the risks for the more vulnerable children.

Improve relations with the police – The police are very aware that they have bridges to build in order to improve relations with particular members of the community and one such group is young people. The police is only one institution and cannot address all of the inequalities that exist in society, however its ability to improve relations with young people is essential to the success of youth and wider community safety.

Substance misuse and alcohol abuse - Multiple national population surveys have found that about half of those who experience a mental illness during their lives will also experience a substance use disorder and vice versa. The delivery of effective services for children and young people in relation to prevention and to who require support with these issues is important and is a priority for the partnership.

Transitions - There are a number of transitional services available for young people in Islington, which local systems cater for when required. There are also sufficient processes and strategic leadership in place to make sure that transitional processes for children are as seamless and effective as possible. It is important to continue to respond strategically to this area and ensure that services continue to be effective when young people are transitioning into adulthood.

Inclusive universal youth offer - Islington offers a range of youth work services to young people delivered from various spaces across the borough, including youth hubs and clubs. This provides safe spaces for young people to share their challenges and for problems to be spotted early. We are determined to make sure that our offer, as part of Islington’s early help

approach, is as inclusive as possible and that it reaches and supports our children and young people from all backgrounds and communities.

Coping mechanisms and robust Social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) services. Improving the coping mechanisms and emotional resilience of children and young people is integral to helping them fulfil their full potential. Our children need to be helped to develop and nurture resilience and the skills that enable them to respond to and deal with crises that will arise throughout their lives. The interface with CAMHS is essential.

Young people's views on Youth Safety and related matters

On what the biggest issues they face in Islington are and what more can be done and by who to solve them.

Lots of young people face **depression and stress**. Young people go through loads of issues and things.

I think the biggest issue facing young people is **peer pressure** and **struggling with independence**. This may be in the form of committing illegal acts to stay 'cool' or act negatively against people who are seen as unpopular.

I think we should create more opportunities for the youth to **understand their options after GCSEs** as most turn to these gangs for money as their grades don't turn out as expected. I feel we should **look at ideology and mindset** before actions to make real change.

I've realised (due to personal experience and analysing my surroundings) that the biggest issue facing young people in Islington right now is **unemployment and poverty**. Mainly young people between the aged 16 -18+ are finding it harder to get good jobs - especially those who are not in education.

In my opinion the biggest issue facing young people in this day and age is **knife crime**. This especially has increased in the past few years dramatically.

5.2. The 'Public Health' model of violence reduction

'No more looking at violence as an isolated incident. It means acknowledging that to genuinely change behaviour we need to look at the context and influences that impact on individuals at significant points in their life. It means understanding that no individual operates in a vacuum, but that they are both part of and influenced by a huge range of other contexts'
(London VRU, 2020)

In Islington, the partnership's approach to tackling youth violence has adopted the World Health Organisation's public health model and adapted it to the needs of the children and young people in the borough. A 'public health approach' is the term given to treating youth violence as a broader public health issue rather than simply a law and order issue. This means taking a whole-community approach to tackling the problem, with a clear focus on prevention and involving a wide range of partners in the effort from schools and the police, to health professionals and youth workers.

In addition, like the London Violence Reduction Unit (VRU), Islington's approach is rooted in a contextual safeguarding approach and model, which focusses on:

- Children and Young People – reducing Adverse Childhood Experiences and building resilience.
- Families and Home – supporting and enabling them to nurture and protect young people.
- Peers and Friends – supporting young people to be the best they can individually and together.
- Community and Neighbourhoods – enabling and empowering communities to lead from within to build sustainable futures.

This will involve:

- Acknowledging that violence is preventable
- Identifying the nature of the problem through the systematic collection of data about the magnitude, scope, characteristics and consequences of violence in the borough and establishing a dialogue with vulnerable groups through face-to-face outreach work
- Rooted in evidence of effectiveness to tackle the problem
- Identifying of risk and protective factors
- Identifying proven and promising interventions, as necessary, and monitoring their impact.
- Co-creating responses with the children, young people and their families impacted by crime and violence
- Long term as well as short term solutions

5.3. Spark review

In 2018, the YOS decided to strengthen our strategic response to youth safety further by identifying the key characteristics and patterns across Islington's most 'prolific' young people who offend (February 2018 snapshot). This involved the incorporation of data from multiple services and data sources. A submission was made to the council's Spark initiative to better understand the themes, trends and learning of the 25 most prolific offending young people in Islington, all of whom had been known to the Youth Offending Service. The objective was to collate information and data from a range of partnership services, to help better understand the journey that these young people had experienced in accessing a range of services at different stages in their childhood and adolescence. The aim was to analyse and reflect on what the partnership could have done differently to support them.

• Was first known to Children's Social Care around the age of three.

• Has a 3/4 chance of domestic violence concerns having been recorded in a CSC assessment.

• Had a more than 2/3 chance of a parent/carer having a recorded criminal offence, with the first offence occurring when they were under the age of seven.

• Had a more than 2/3 chance of their father being absent or uninvolved and their family claiming out-of-work benefits.

• Attended more than one primary school and had a 50% chance of using Play services - and if using Play, had over 60 attendances recorded.

• Was first arrested aged 12 and was arrested more than four times prior to their first conviction.

• Was first convicted of a crime aged 13, received more than 12 YOS interventions and had nearly five YOS case managers.

• Most likely used Islington Youth services - and if using Youth, attended more than 41 times.

• Attended (or was enrolled at) more than three different secondary schools.

• First entered custody aged 16.

• Has had several (five plus) social workers, 10+ missing episodes, seven unique addresses (over 3-4 yrs on ave.) and three moves in/out of Islington (same period).

• Is now nearly 18 years old and has committed more than 35 criminal offences, most likely including theft, violence and weapons offences.

Some of the actions that arose as a result of the Spark research included:

- Setting up a pilot to assist children transitioning from primary school to secondary school;
- Targeting siblings of young people who offend and/or are and gang affiliated to prevent those children becoming involved in the criminal justice system;
- Implementing trauma-informed practice within the Targeted Youth Service and Youth Offending Service; including Play and Youth services in future analytical/ case learning work;

- Working in partnership with other YOS's to analyse and review issues relating to disproportionately, including contribution to the multi-borough steering group;
- Strengthening early intervention by allocating a TYS lead into secondary schools;
- Appointing an Educational Psychologist to work with the YOS to support case-managers in identifying young people with unmet SEN needs and developing interventions to support their learning;
- Informing the development of the Keel multi-agency team to test new ways of working with families experiencing domestic abuse with a focus on supporting children and the non-abusive parent to repair and recover from the harm caused by experiencing DA in early childhood.

There have also been other important initiatives that we have introduced and that have arisen in order to help in the improvement of youth safety following this important review. Although this review took place a couple of years before we produced this strategy, the findings are still very relevant and will continue to help inform our work with young people who offend.

5.4. High risk groups of children and young people

All children and young people are of course of equal importance, regardless of their background, race, gender or other factors. It is very important as part of this strategy, however, to acknowledge that there are certain groups of children and young people who are more vulnerable to becoming involved in youth crime and SYV and to be victims of it in our borough. It is important to be transparent about this so that we can better identify, protect and support these cohorts of children and young people and reduce the prevalence of their involvement.

Black-Caribbean Boys

Black-Caribbean (BC) boys are an over-represented group in Islington's Children in Need cohort and as subjects of Child Protection Plans with social care. BC boys were over-represented amongst those with social care assessments where concerns over gang involvement, criminal exploitation, serious youth violence and child sexual exploitation were identified. BC boys have the highest levels of offending in the borough and their custody rate has been amongst the highest for several years. However, their re-offending rate is only average for the borough which means that they do not generally perpetrate multiple offences after having entered the criminal justice system. BC boys have lower educational attainment and Progress 8 scores at GCSE than the borough average. They have higher levels of Special Educational Needs (SEN) and higher levels of 'absence' and 'persistent absence' compared to the borough average. BC boys have a rate of fixed term school exclusions almost four times the borough average and the highest rates of permanent exclusions. A higher proportion of BC boys aged 16 or 17 were NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training) compared to the borough average.

All of these indicators show that BC boys are particularly vulnerable and it is important that this strategy is responsive to their needs. The work that we completed with City University, Haringey Council, and the Youth Justice Board in relation to disproportionality (2020) involved qualitative interviews with boys from this background, all of whom explicitly expressed the challenges they have experienced due to unconscious bias. This has had an impact on the outcomes. We have written an action plan, which sets a number of objectives, which we aim to achieve to improve outcomes for BC boys and the next two groups in this section of our strategy.

Black-African Boys

Black-African (BA) boys are over-represented amongst the groups of Looked After Children and Children in Need, but under-represented amongst CAMHS clients compared to the resident population. BA boys were over-represented amongst those with social care assessments where concerns over gangs were identified, and also amongst those with hazards related to child criminal exploitation or serious youth violence. BA boys have a rate of fixed term exclusions almost four times the borough average but their permanent exclusions are lower. They have slightly lower Attainment and Progress 8 scores at GCSE and higher levels of 'absence' and 'persistent absence' but slightly lower levels of SEN. A lower proportion of BA boys aged 16 or 17 were NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training) compared to the borough average. Rates of offending for BA boys are around the borough average. However, very few of those cautioned or convicted had not previously had any substantive criminal justice outcomes compared to other ethnic groups.

As with the outcomes and measures for BC boys, these figures also show that BA boys are also vulnerable when it comes to youth safety. At the time of finalising this strategy, two BA young adult males had been killed in Islington within a four-month period. The partnership is very concerned about the vulnerability of some parts of the BA group in terms of them being coerced and exploited into county lines activity. We will be working very closely with our African community – especially those of Somali heritage – and with faith and community groups, to strengthen our youth safety response to these children and young people who are particularly vulnerable.

Mixed Race-Black/White Boys

Mixed-Race-Black/White (MBW) young people are over-represented amongst the group with Special Education & Health Needs but under-represented amongst CAMHS clients, suggesting unmet need in the community. MBW boys are slightly over-represented in all the social care categories and amongst those with social care assessments where concerns over gangs and hazards related to serious youth violence are identified. MBW have high rates of offending compared to the borough average and high custody rates. A higher proportion of those cautioned or convicted from the MBW ethnic group had previously had a substantive criminal justice outcome compared with other ethnic groups. MBW boys have slightly lower Attainment and Progress 8 scores at GCSE than the borough average and a higher rate of fixed term and permanent school exclusions. MBW boys have slightly higher levels of SEN than the borough

average and slightly higher eligibility for Free School Meals. They are also the group with the highest levels of young people who are Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET).

Based upon our data and analysis, there are also significant vulnerabilities in relation to a number of our MBW boys and this must be a priority for the partnership going forward. Ensuring that our universal and targeted services are able to respond to the needs of MBW boys and their families is significant in order to prevent the escalation of youth safety issues for the young boys within the group.

White Boys from low-income families

Although White boys from poor families are not heavily represented in Islington's youth crime statistics, they are slightly over-represented amongst the group of young people with social care hazards for child criminal exploitation or serious youth violence. This is a group that is falling behind in terms of educational attainment, having a higher rate of absence and persistent absence from secondary school as well as higher rates of fixed term and permanent school exclusion. Special educational needs amongst White-British boys (WBB) who were eligible for Free School Meals are significantly higher than the borough average. WBB aged 16-17 have a higher rate of being Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) than the borough average and are also over-represented amongst CAMHS service users.

WBB's are much less likely to experience the same issues with unconscious biases that BC, BA and MBW boys' experience, but local evidence and data shows that they are still susceptible when it comes to youth safety related matters. This susceptibility is significantly greater for those WB's from lower socio economic backgrounds. Again, our strategy must be responsive to this need.

Young Women and Girls

In their work with girls and young women, the Abianda project and the St Giles Trust, both of which have workers embedded in the Islington IGT, have identified the risks to girls and young women involved in, or on the periphery of, violent youth gangs. Girls may be used to hide weapons and money or transport drugs to out-of-town locations as part of County Lines operation. Gang involved girls are at serious risk of sexual abuse and violent retribution aimed at themselves and their families, unwanted pregnancy, sexually transmitted diseases and mental health problems as a consequence of gang-related trauma. In Islington, most young people, where there are concerns around Child Sexual Exploitation, are female, and most are teenagers. The largest ethnic group involved is White-British; however, whereas the police and other agencies know the identities of most of the young men involved in gangs, the girls tend to be invisible. Thus, in 2020, there were 2552 men and boys recorded on the Metropolitan Police Service Gangs Matrix but only six women or girls, representing only 0.2% of the total.

At present, not enough of the young women at risk of gang violence (and its consequences) are being identified or worked with – not least because, traditionally, the lion's share of funding for gang intervention is channeled into work with young men. This is a situation the partnership is working hard to change. We will ensure that the needs of young women and

girls are prioritised and responded to from a safeguarding and youth safety perspective, by ensuring that we have specific services in place to support them and are solely focused on young women.

Children with Special Educational Needs and/or Children who have been excluded from school

In April 2019, the Foreword to Permanent and Fixed-Period Exclusion from School, a draft report of Islington's Children's Services Scrutiny Committee, noted that the borough had "a rate of school exclusion higher than the Inner London and England averages and comparatively higher than Islington's statistical neighbours. This is an equalities issue". Nationally, disadvantaged students, those with special educational needs and disabilities, and pupils from certain ethnic minority groups, are significantly more likely to be excluded. Boys are far more likely to be excluded than girls. The report also noted that "There is a significant variation in the exclusion rates of Islington schools which cannot be justified. It is unfair that children attending some schools are far more likely to be excluded than their peers attending other schools in the borough. Exclusion penalises young people who have vulnerabilities, additional needs and experiences of trauma. Exclusion can have significant personal and financial impacts on young people and their families". A recent snapshot (from January 2020) evidenced that more than half of the YOS cohort at that time were known to have some form of Special Educational Needs, with 16% having Education, Health & Care Plans (EHCPs) and a further 40% having SEN Support. As a comparison, around 2.0% of Islington secondary school pupils had an EHCP and 14.2% of pupils required SEN Support. In addition, data analysis has showed that at least 50% of the YOS cohort have received a past or have a current school exclusion.

We are aware that some children with SEND are more susceptible to being exploited and this increases their youth safety risk. It is subsequently important to ensure that SEND are identified as early as possible and that the support packages designed for them is robust.

In relation to school exclusions, whilst the national evidence base provides a mixed picture about the correlation between school exclusions and involvement in gangs and SYV, our own local dataset is clearer. This is one of the reasons why we are determined to reduce the numbers of our children who are excluded from school. The council has corporate indicators to address and improve this for BC and White boys. These include narrowing the gap in attainment between BC pupils and the LBI average at Key Stage 4, and narrowing the gap in attainment between White British pupils eligible free School Meals and the LBI average at Key Stage 2.

Subsequently, the partnership and this strategy recognise the significance of ensuring that we support all of our children and young people, whilst ensuring that – because of their increased level of vulnerability – these specific groups are provided with additional universal support and targeted interventions.

Children Looked After by the Local Authority

Looked After children are those who are subject to a Care Order made by a judge at family court, and those who are accommodated on a voluntary basis by agreement with their parents. In early 2020, Islington had 365 Looked After Children. Children mainly become looked after because their parents or carers are unable to care for them, they have been abused, neglected, or have contextual risks within the community, and/or are unaccompanied asylum seekers. Amongst Islington's Looked After Children, Black-African boys are the most over-represented group, whilst White boys and girls are under-represented. Because of their experiences, Looked After Children are often more vulnerable than others. In their recent study of 'Looked After' young people, Anne-Marie Day and colleagues (2020) found that most had witnessed domestic abuse in the family home. This often resulted in challenging behaviour in school, typically in Year 5 or 6, and, having been identified as troublesome in years 5 or 6, by Year 7 or 8 most had been excluded from mainstream education and placed in alternative provision. These placements had often broken down by Years 10 or 11, leading to them dropping out of education completely, long before the statutory school leaving age. This combination of early childhood trauma, an unsettled family life, and disrupted education, meant that the children spent a lot of time on the street, associating with like-minded peers, whom they sometimes described as 'family'. Many of the offences they committed – street robbery, possession of weapons, driving offences, burglaries and serious physical assaults – were related to their involvement in what Hallsworth (2014) calls 'violent street worlds'. Between one fifth and a quarter of the young people known to the YOS in Islington are Looked After Children.

Responses to Islington's looked after children have been improving steadily in the past few years. In their inspection of children's social care services in 2020, Ofsted noted that children and young people at risk of sexual and criminal exploitation and gang involvement receive a highly effective response. The report notes that 'creative and persistent efforts are made by exceptionally knowledgeable and skilled practitioners in the exploitation and missing team and the integrated gangs unit to locate and engage with children who go missing'. Ofsted thought the identification and understanding of risk for children facing exploitation was 'sophisticated and impressive'; as was the quality of return home interviews, which had improved significantly since the last Ofsted inspection. The report complements the services on the effective disruption, prevention and safeguarding activity, which reduces risk for these highly complex and vulnerable children and young people.

6. Achieving outcomes with the partnership

The Youth Safety Strategy is seeking to achieve the following objectives, to:

1. Protect children and young people from violence, abuse and exploitation
2. Foster stronger and safer communities, public spaces and schools
3. Safeguard children and young people and support families, parents and carers
4. Build the resilience of Islington's children and young people
5. Secure school inclusion and maximise academic and vocational achievement
6. Address inequality and disproportionality within the youth and criminal justice system
7. Reduce re-offending for those children and young people who have become more persistent in their offending behaviours
8. Empower communities to create a safer environment for all, but especially for children

To achieve these objectives, our proposed model involves eight core activities, all of which we suggest are crucial to keeping our children and young people (and the wider community) safe. It is important to emphasise that these activities can only be achieved by the partnership working together in close alignment. We have also looked to good practice from other areas in order to inform our response in relation to some of the core activities.

The core activities that we are focusing on are:

- Prevention
- Identification
- Engagement
- Diversion
- Support
- Protection
- Disruption*
- Enforcement and Prosecution*

(*For the more prolific, high risk and persistent offenders)

Prevention

Prevention in relation to youth safety takes several different forms; the approach of this strategy is to consider both a universal and a targeted approach. One component is to target young people whose early (adverse) childhood experiences in the family make it more likely that they will have problems adjusting to the behavioral requirements that are expected of them. For example, within the school environment, some children may display problematic behaviours and this in turn will affect their ability to learn. Research tells us that children and young people who have experienced trauma are also much more likely than their peers to become involved in offending when they reach adolescence. If such behaviours are not prevented (and 'treated' which uses the analogy of our public health model), the emotions

caused by traumatic childhood experiences can persist and affect a child or young person's behaviour long after the event. A new School Improvement post has been created which links schools and Targeted Youth Support, allowing for universal and targeted support especially where there are issues around schools exclusion, gangs, drugs and alcohol.

It was because of this understanding that the partnership and Islington's Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) piloted the Islington Trauma Informed Practices in Schools (iTIPS). To date, iTIPS is now operating in 11 primary schools, 2 secondary schools and Islington's Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) New River College, and is working to roll out Tiny Tips in early years settings. The programme is based upon the ARC model (Attachment, Regulation and Competency). The ARC framework helps teachers identify children who are likely to be affected by trauma and disrupted attachments and helps commence the process of working collaboratively with partners to address this trauma. This appears to have improved staff-pupil interactions and staff report that they are now having more reflective conversations with pupils. Pupils also appear more able to reflect upon their feelings and emotions. iTIPS marks an important step on the way to developing a unified response to children and young people in need and in trouble in the borough's schools, as well as prevention and early intervention through Tiny Tips in early years settings.

However, the onus cannot and will not just be placed on schools when it comes to our prevention programmes. Islington has a range of partners who are central to preventing the escalation of children and young people's problems. This is what we want to build on and strengthen, so that it becomes second nature to us. Indeed, for many years, Arsenal in the Community has been working with hundreds of young people across the borough. Its 'Kicks' programme runs footballing sessions on all but one of the six gang-affected estates in the area. The same staff group runs all of these sessions, which means that staff know and have built positive relationships with, young people and their families from each of these estates. They have pursued a strategy of creating 'safe spaces', where young people from the different estates – even those in conflict with one another – are encouraged to attend sessions in each other's areas. Arsenal in the Community have been able to refer cases on in order to prevent young people's circumstances from escalating or deteriorating. This is a powerful example of prevention and we will develop more and build on innovative partnerships that we have in order to achieve our pursuit of prevention.

Identification

Reports that children are being neglected, abused or physically or psychologically harmed can come from relatives, neighbours, schools, G.Ps, police and hospitals, or from the children themselves. These reports will be forwarded to the police and the borough's Children's Services Contact Team (CSCT). This will lead to allegations and/or concerns being investigated by a social worker and/or a police officer. After this process, it is often the case that a meeting of professionals will decide what action should be taken. This could mean that a family is referred to one of the Islington's Early Help services or one of its centres for help and support in relation to parenting. If the child is believed to be in imminent danger, he or she would be removed from home and accommodated elsewhere. The latter is applicable to the more

concerning and serious cases, but identification of children and young people who are in need of support does not always need to be at such a serious and high threshold. The earlier that identification takes place for a child or young person, the better.

An example of an effective early identification approach is the Islington Child & Adolescent Mental Health Transformation Plan (2018-2019). This plan was designed to identify and offer more accessible services to a broader range of children and young people with emotional and mental health who would not otherwise be in touch with relevant services. The plan aimed to ensure that all Islington children and young people with emotional and mental health needs could be identified and referred to the right service at the right time. This has meant broadening the offer of early intervention for children and young people with mild to moderate needs and creating a central point of access (CPS) for all social, emotional and mental health services. Launched at the end of September 2019, the CPA has been integrated into Islington's Children's Service Contact Team (CSCT) 'front door'. The new integrated service operates on the principle of 'no wrong referral' and extends beyond the customary CAMHS offer, thereby giving young people access to a wide range of health, social care services, facilitated by a new multi-agency intake team. We will ensure clear referral pathways with youth work initiatives at Emergency Departments, including Red Thread at UCH and St Giles Trust at Whittington Hospital, to support early identification of young people who have been harmed.

Engagement

The engagement of children, young people and their families is essential to the youth safety strategy. We recognise that voluntary engagement has its challenges some of the time, but that this should be the main approach in the first instance. Strenuous effort should be made to engage children (and parents/carers) on a voluntary basis where possible, even when there is initial reluctance from them. In order to be successful in such an approach, the identification of a 'trusted' or 'lead' person who is the main professional who develops and strengthens the relationship with the young person is crucial here. Action for Children identified in its 'Keeping Myself Safe' (2014) research that young people said staff could help keep them safe by developing their trust. By developing such trusting relationships, young people are more willing to talk to staff about keeping themselves safe and discuss risk-taking behaviour. They point to the work of Newman (2004) who identified effective strategies for developing resilience in adolescence and early adulthood (13 to 19 years), including:

- strong social support networks
- the presence of a least one unconditionally supportive parent or parent substitute
- a committed mentor or other person from outside the family

In our Serious Case Review for Child P (2020), the importance of engaging children and young people as early as possible when they are experiencing difficulties is highlighted as a significant factor in preventing escalation. We will make a commitment with our partnership to make sure that all of our children who are in need are engaged and responded to accordingly, even if it takes some time to (fully) engage them.

The engagement of children and young people in Education, Training and Employment is an indisputable protective factor for all of our children. As part of an integrated approach to improving employment, education and training outcomes for vulnerable young people, the Youth Employment, Progression and Skills Service deliver a range of targeted interventions. The World of Work initiative guarantees all young people 100 hours experience of industry-led world of work activity by age 16, with a tailored offer targeted at vulnerable groups including Children Looked After, those working with the Youth Offending Service and young people at New River College. These cohorts, along with others identified as at risk of becoming NEET, are offered one to one Post-16 transition support from the Progress team including information, advice and guidance on pathways, and application and enrolment support for college or sixth form. Those who become NEET are offered wraparound support to reengage, while a new Youth Employability and Skills (YES) programme will deliver ongoing support for vulnerable young people aged up to 25 with a package of coaching, skills tuition, paid work experience and therapeutic interventions.

Diversion

The benefits of diverting young people away from the youth justice system when they first begin to display low-level criminal behaviours is indisputable and is now backed up with a huge body of research. We have looked to councils such as Wakefield, which formed an award winning Liaison and Diversion Service in partnership with the police that worked with offenders who have vulnerabilities. It was initially focused on under 18s, but was then extended to all ages when it was commissioned to be one of 10 national pilot sites by NHS England in 2013. Those young people that are identified as having vulnerabilities – whether this is a mental health problem, learning disabilities, substance misuse or even help with employment, education or housing – were assigned a caseworker to carry out a full assessment. This looks at all aspects of the person's life, taking a whole family approach to identify vulnerabilities which may be contributing to their offending behaviour. The person is then diverted on to interventions that are appropriate and proportionate to the offence using restorative practice.

In Islington, we have an effective triage system delivered by TYS, the police, health and other partners, which is similar to the scheme in Wakefield. However, we want to develop this model further still so that our diversion interventions rank as being the best in the country. Every young person that we fail to divert from the criminal justice system is one young person too many.

Support

Islington is proud of the high quality services that it has in place to support children, young people and families who are in need of support. These services reflect the commitment and investment across the partnership including the council, CCG, Public Health, Police, voluntary sector, and beyond. We recognise that the problems that can arise can be complex and multi-faceted in nature. In order to address these problems, it is important that the system responds in the most cohesive way. It is also important that young people do not feel

overwhelmed by having too many professionals involved in their lives and that interventions are sequenced when multiple organisations are involved.

Protection

All children are equally important and we want each one of them to thrive and achieve their full potential. We have recognised, however, that some groups of our children are more vulnerable to becoming victims and/or perpetrators of youth crime as we mentioned earlier in section 4. Subsequently, it is important that we focus on the protection of these cohorts of children whilst simultaneously focusing on the safeguarding of all of our children who are in need of help and protection. We will further develop and enhance our practice and initiatives in order to do so.

An innovative example of how we do this is through us being one of the seven local authority partners involved in the £2 million Tackling Child Exploitation (TCE) initiative announced by the Department for Education (DfE) in May 2019. The programme, which will run until April 2022, is designed to support Children's Services departments tackling child criminal and sexual exploitation. The programme is led by Research in Practice, the Children's Society and the University of Bedfordshire.

Traditional safeguarding policy and practice has tended, in the past, to sideline child protection concerns like sexual exploitation and involvement in 'county lines', which takes place outside the family home. However, this extra-familial abuse is a primary focus of Contextual Safeguarding, which is a central feature of the TCE programme. The term Contextual Safeguarding first appeared officially in the government's Working Together to Safeguard Children guidance in 2018. This signaled a recognition in government that extra-familial forms of abuse were a child protection issue. We have adopted this approach in Islington and recognise that such issues must be assessed and responded to from a safeguarding perspective. We will continue to do so and will retain this ethos and approach in this strategy to protect our children and young people.

Disruption

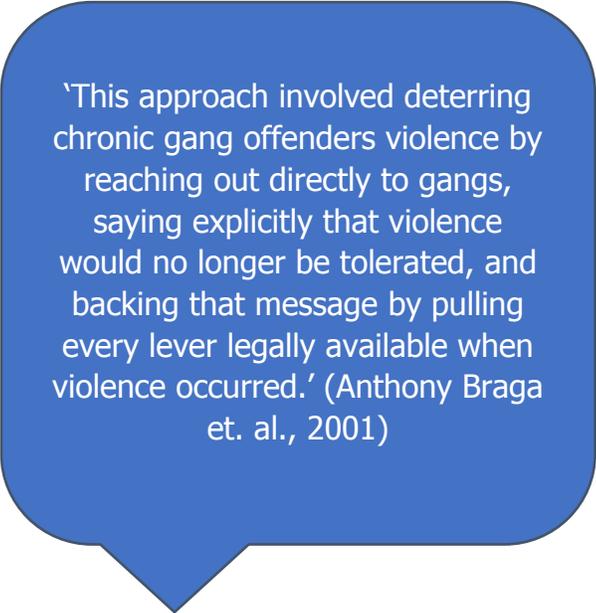
The reduction of youth crime and violence requires a borough-wide community and multi-agency approach. Youth violence is not solely a policing and crime issue, as all partners in the borough work together to bring about positive change. Although the police may be the main agency when it comes to disrupting offending, the contributions of the partnership and the community are vital to the success of effective disruption.

In Islington, as elsewhere, there is an overlap between organised crime and gang crime, but there are also differences. Organised crime groups have a hierarchy and can be very powerful, influential and dangerous in their fields. They are often led by adults. Gangs involving young people may be controlled by such organized groups and young people are rarely at the top of such hierarchies. The interconnectivity between the two groups however can have terrible consequences and outcomes for communities. Information sharing between partners and between boroughs is therefore central to mapping organised and gang crime at a local level and developing strategies to disrupt it in order to minimise the threat posed to local people. In

Islington, the Community Safety Partnership provides just such a forum. The crackdown on drug dealing and firearms crime in Finsbury Park in 2019 is an example of a successful disruption strategy. The partnership, which includes Community Safety, the Police, Housing, the IGT, the YOS and Probation, as well as local voluntary sector agencies, work to identify the pathways and vulnerability factors that result in young people joining street gangs and older people participating in organised crime. This includes the monthly TTCG (Tasking and Coordination Meeting) which is led by the police and the council attend to ensure good partnership working to prevent and disrupt harm to young people and crime in the community. The council has powers, like rights of entry, which can be used to disrupt serious and organised crime by disturbing their planned activity or exposing other criminal offences such as benefit fraud, trading illicit goods or failure to meet health and safety legislation. This is called the 'Achilles Heel' approach where councils can use Closure Notices on venues that are suspected of being linked to serious and organised crime.

Enforcement and Prosecution

Although the central aim of Islington's Youth Safety Strategy is to prevent youth violence and divert young people from offending, it is sometimes necessary to enforce the law to prevent harm to potential victims and protect the public. While the police and the Courts are centrally involved in enforcement and the imposition of penalties, the IGT and its key partner the police use a strategy, sometimes described as Coordinated Leverage, pioneered initially by the police in Boston USA in the mid-1990s and adopted by the Glasgow Violence Reduction Unit in 2007.



'This approach involved deterring chronic gang offenders violence by reaching out directly to gangs, saying explicitly that violence would no longer be tolerated, and backing that message by pulling every lever legally available when violence occurred.' (Anthony Braga et. al., 2001)

Operation Ceasefire, which was similar in design, brought local people (including gang members) together with the police, welfare, education and employment professionals and researchers, to undertake an assessment of the youth homicide problem and plan a response. There followed multi-agency crackdowns in which targeted gang-involved people were threatened with the relentless enforcement of any and all breaches of parole, probation and supervision orders, vehicle licensing or tenancy agreements of certain specified behaviours, like the possession or use of knives and firearms, harassment and serious assaults. However, this threat was accompanied by an offer of help with family difficulties, education, training and employment if they desisted from these behaviours. Latterly, core elements of this strategy (albeit not all components of it) have proved to be effective in many other locations. The effectiveness of parts of the approach in Islington has been shown via the reduction in the number of gang-related offences in the borough in recent years and has been evaluated as being an approach that can be expanded upon. Indeed, one of the outcomes of the evaluation

of the IGT by City University (2019) concluded that co-location was a defining aspect of the IGT, but suggested that some data sources such as the gang matrix needed re-examining. Whilst the Gangs Matrix is no longer used in its original form, the intelligence sharing processes determine where resource is targeted and are crucial to enforcement and prosecution.

Inevitably, whilst most young people who appear before the courts will receive a community outcome, some who have committed more serious crimes, pose a threat to the public and/or are more prolific will be sentenced to custody. The partnership recognises the significant adverse impact that custodial sentences can have on children and young people, but also acknowledges that there are times when this is required.

In Islington, the reoffending rate for young people who are involved in the youth justice system has been higher than the London average for some time (although there have been improvements in this area in recent years). It is subsequently important to ensure that this cohort of young people are provided with the support that they need to leave such a lifestyle behind, but that they are dealt with via enforcement and prosecution measures if they continue to reoffend and cause harm to the community.

7. Measuring our success and impact

It is important for us to continuously and regularly review our achievement of our priorities, as a partnership, in relation to youth safety. Subsequently, it is crucial to have a set of key performance indicators that lets us know how we are performing. We did not want to produce an exhaustive or endless list, however, so we have selected those which we assess as being the most essential to youth safety. The indicators that we selected are:

- Increased numbers of children achieving an overall "good level of development"/Percentage of pupils achieving a Good Level of Development in the Early Years Foundation Stage P
- Reduced the number of fixed term and permanent exclusions in Islington schools
- Improved attainment and progress at GCSE for Black Caribbean and White UK Disadvantaged pupils so that the gap with the LBI average is narrowed.
- Reduced the number of young people who are NEET
- Prevented more young people from entering the youth justice system for the first time
- Reduced reoffending amongst young people who are being supervised by the YOS
- Secured more positive outcomes for children and young people who have been victims of modern slavery/exploitation via the National Referral Mechanism (NRM) process. This will include having robust safety plans for these children after they have received a positive NRM outcome
- Reduced disproportionality among young people from Black and minority ethnic communities
- Reduced levels of serious youth violence
- Reduced the number of children who go missing from home and care

- Reduced the number of knife crime victims under 25
- Increased the number of children and young people having a first appointment with a Social, Emotional and Mental Health Need (SEMH) service within 4 weeks or less

In order to measure impact, we will establish a Youth Safety Delivery group, composed of statutory organisations and community partners, to assess our progress and drive the change and improvements needed to ensure our young people are safe and that they remain this way.

In addition to these quantitative indicators, we will also ensure that we capture the voices and views of young people in the borough at regular intervals. Some of these young people will be service users, whilst some of them will not be. We aim to create a specific agenda item at the delivery group for this specific area.

In addition, performance in relation to these indicators will be monitored at a number of governance boards in Islington including the Youth Justice Services Management Board, the Safer Islington Partnership Board and the Children's Safeguarding Board.

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