

Item No. 12.	Classification: Open	Date: 29 October 2019	Meeting Name: Cabinet
Report title:		The Southwark Public Health Approach to Serious Youth Violence Prevention	
Ward(s) or groups affected:		All	
Cabinet Member:		Councillor Evelyn Akoto, Community Safety and Public Health	

FOREWORD – COUNCILLOR EVELYN AKOTO, CABINET MEMBER FOR COMMUNITY SAFETY AND PUBLIC HEALTH

Tackling serious youth violence is an on-going focus and a key priority for this administration. This is a social emergency and it is crucial to stop the flow of young people becoming perpetrators and/or victims of serious youth violence. Although we have a number of effective existing initiatives in place to support our young people, we continue to challenge ourselves to find new ways of tackling this epidemic, and reduce the impact it has on our young people, families and communities.

I have always been clear that it will take everyone to play their part in preventing and reducing violence; it is a societal issue as opposed to the responsibility of a single agency or group of agencies. We know that ‘county lines’ and the changing drug market are contributing to the rise in serious violence. Criminals are changing the way they operate and becoming more innovative. We therefore have to be equally innovative and adjust our approaches to protecting and preventing children from being exploited, communities being blighted and young lives being destroyed.

The Public Health approach is centred on working collaboratively across organisations, using information and intelligence on violence and its causes to inform action, and put in place evidence-based interventions over several years. On a daily basis it means working with families and young people to remove the issues in their lives that may make them at risk of being victims or perpetrators of violence. It focusses on the immediate crisis and how we can work collaboratively to prevent the next generation of young people from being affected.

I am determined to work alongside young people, the community and the third sector to tackle the long-term social issues that result in serious youth violence.

I have an aspiration that no young person in our borough will live in fear of their lives in their community and neighbourhood. This level of violence can hinder our young people from achieving their goals and aspirations, and creates a cycle of violence that produces new harm in future years. We all have a responsibility to do more to stop this, and change how we work to safeguard our young people from violence. I’m committed to this task and will use all the tools at my disposal to do so.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That the Cabinet notes the overview of serious youth violence in Southwark.

2. That the Cabinet accepts the recommendations of the joint strategic needs assessment (JSNA) and adopts the framework proposed herein for a public health approach to youth violence prevention in Southwark.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Local context

3. Serious youth violence (SYV) is a particularly pertinent issue in Southwark. Southwark has the fourth highest volume of knife crime among all London boroughs and recognised gang activity, including county lines drug supply.
4. SYV is a complex and multi-factorial manifestation of wider issues, and exposure to violence has significant negative impacts on a young person's mental wellbeing and physical health. Beyond the individual affected, SYV carries a high cost to health and social care, education, communities, police, and the criminal justice system. Young people involved in / at-risk of becoming involved in violence are – principally - vulnerable. In looking to support and safeguard these young people, their wider relationships and environment must be considered. There is clear evidence that the places in which young people live and grow have an important role in determining their risk and vulnerability. Risk for becoming involved in violence also has a strong inequalities gradient, with the most disadvantaged being the most likely to be at risk.
5. The public health approach to any issue relies on a thorough understanding of the data and epidemiology. The public health approach is both upstream (looking at the root causes) and at-scale (looking at the population, rather than the individual). It supports a multi-faceted response that considers underlying risk factors ranging from the characteristics and experiences of the individual, the relationships they have, to the community and society in which they live. The range of factors that affect the likelihood of becoming involved in violence mean that tackling SYV requires a collaborative partnership responsive inclusive of the wider determinants of health. Efforts to prevent SYV should include a range of universal, targeted, and specialist interventions which seek to (1) prevent the development of risk factors, (2) prevent initial involvement in violence, and (3) mitigate the impact of violence and prevent reoccurrence.
6. This JSNA was undertaken to develop our understanding of the determinants of SYV and the epidemiology of violence locally, and to identify opportunities for prevention and improved collaborative working. While recognising the substantial overlap between youth violence and wider vulnerability and exploitation, the scope of the JSNA was limited to SYV, which was herein defined as all incidents of violence against the person involving young people aged 10-24 years. Data were analysed from the Metropolitan Police Service (Met), health, and the Southwark Youth Offending Service (YOS) to develop a picture of the burden of SYV locally. This JSNA is intended to compliment the extensive engagement undertaken as part of both the Cross-Party Youth Violence Panel and the Southwark Extended Learning Review, both of which published recommendations for a local response in early 2019.

Key Findings

7. Southwark has a large population of young people aged 10-24 years. Our adolescents are more deprived and more diverse than the general Southwark population. These characteristics need to be considered when looking at risk of

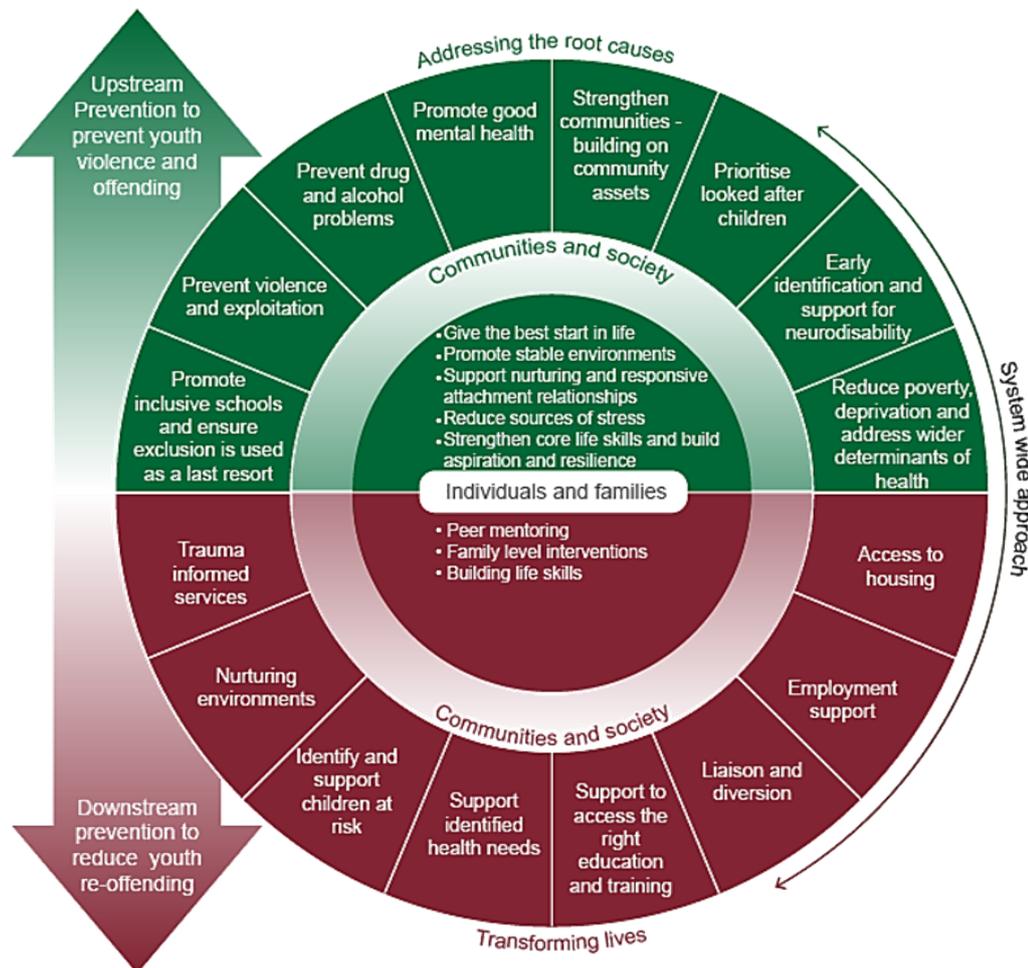
involvement in violence and when looking to implement preventative interventions. Deprivation in particular tends to cluster with other risk factors for violence, such as adverse childhood experiences. Furthermore, living in a deprived area can also mean that developing and fostering protective factors to overcome adversity can be more challenging.

8. Data from the Metropolitan Police Service, health, and Youth Offending Service suggest that SYV in Southwark increasingly involves a sharp object and that the age profile of those involved is getting younger.
 - Southwark has the third highest number of stop & searches among London local authorities. Stop & searches disproportionately affect young people, males, and those of minority ethnic groups. In 14-20% of instances of stop & searches of Southwark young people, further action is taken. Violence against the person (VAP) is the most common offence committed by young offenders in Southwark. Incidents of VAP involving Southwark Young People (YP) have decreased over the past three years but use of an offensive weapon has increased dramatically.
 - There have been no major fluctuations in the overall number of London Ambulance Service (LAS) call-outs to young victims of assault over the last three years. However, the age profile of victims is increasingly younger. Emergency admissions for assault with a sharp object have not reduced in line with assaults overall and are over 5x higher in young people than in those aged over 25 years.
 - Despite high levels of first-time entrants to the youth justice system, Southwark has a low rate of offending and re-offending compared to other London local authorities. Young people involved in the criminal justice system tend to be young males of BAME ethnicity.
9. The JSNA focused on risk factors for violence most commonly identified among Southwark youth offenders. They include:
 - Adverse childhood experiences: local estimates of adverse childhood experiences (ACE) suggest there are more children with > 4 ACEs in Southwark than the national average; prevalence is especially high among young offenders
 - Being a looked-after child, child in need, or subject to a child protection plan: the rate of entry into care as a looked-after child is substantially greater in Southwark than in London or England
 - Having a special educational need or disability: a higher percentage Southwark children are identified as having a special educational need or disability than in London or England
 - Being excluded or having attendance issues at school: Southwark has a higher rate of primary school fixed-period exclusion, secondary school fixed-period exclusion, and secondary school permanent exclusion than the London average
 - Mental and/or physical health concerns: around half of Southwark young offenders had a mental health concern and there was substantial overlap between poor mental health, substance use, and poor physical health.

Recommendations

10. The JSNA makes a number of recommendations derived from the literature, the local epidemiology, and the Southwark Extended Learning Review and Cross-

Party Panel. Recommendations are organised under themes, where within scope, identified by a recent (2019) Public Health England Report *Collaborative approaches to preventing offending and re-offending by children*:



Reference: Public Health England (2019) Collaborative approaches to preventing offending and re-offending by children

Addressing the root causes

Theme(s)	Recommendation	Suggested owner
Promote inclusive schools / Trauma-informed services	Undertake an in-depth review of school exclusions (formal and informal), managed moves, and home schooling in Southwark to understand the profile of young people affected and explore the impact on wider vulnerability	Children's Services

Theme(s)	Recommendation	Suggested owner
	Work with schools to embed a trauma-informed approach (e.g. attachment, regulation and competency) and ACE-awareness, which recognises that disruptive behaviour may be a manifestation of trauma, and clarify support available for those young people	CYP & EI steering group
Prevent exploitation	Undertake needs analysis of vulnerability and violence to develop a fuller picture of vulnerability in the borough	Community Safety
	[See identification and support of children at risk]	N/A
Prevent drug & alcohol problems	Continue to work with schools and school nursing to develop modern and relevant PSHE lessons that promote healthy behaviours	Education / Public Health
	Continue to promote and improve uptake of Healthy Young People (HYP) within schools and youth settings to improve access for young people to substance misuse support services	Public Health
	Further examine the use and impact of cannabis in Southwark adolescents to explore links with offending and exploitation	Community Safety
Strengthen communities	Ensure communities and VCS groups are included in the steering group to take forward the recommendations from this JSNA, the Extended Learning Review, and Youth Violence Panel	LA
Promote good mental health	Support whole-settings approaches to promoting mental wellbeing	LA & CCG
	Support schools (including alternative provision) and school nursing to develop curricula on mental wellbeing and early identification	Public Health
	Develop workstream for the Council on children and young people's mental wellbeing and early intervention, coordinating interventions across children's settings (e.g. children's centres, schools, PRU, etc.)	CYP & EI steering group
	Explore the role of social media in violence, including in inciting violence and transmitting and replaying traumatic events	LA & MPS
	Increase understanding within the Council, CCG, and the community of the impact of ACEs and ways to improve family wellbeing	LA & CCG
	Review support available to parents whose mental health needs do not meet the threshold for clinical support	Children's & Adult's Services / Public Health / CCG
LAC	Review offer of support to care leavers at this critical transition point	Children's & Adult's Services
Relationships /	Review current offer of support available to parents of children	Children's

Theme(s)	Recommendation	Suggested owner
Family-level interventions	of all ages and their families, in a range of settings	Services / Public Health
	Work with schools to develop RSE that is inclusive of vulnerability and exploitation, and of coercive relationships	Public Health / Education
Core life skills	Continue to work with schools and school nursing to develop modern and relevant PSHE lessons that emphasise and support emotional awareness	Public Health / Education

Transforming lives

Theme(s)	Recommendation	Suggested owner
Liaison & diversion	Continue to explore and take up opportunities to trial diversion programmes locally	Youth Offending Service
Support access to education & training	Review support for young people transitioning to secondary education and/or between mainstream and alternative provision	Children's Services / Education
Support identified health needs	Continue to promote and improve uptake of Healthy Young People (HYP) within schools and youth settings to improve access for young people to substance misuse and sexual health support services	Public Health
	Review parental health offers, including pathways into parental mental health and adult substance misuse services	CYP MH Steering Group / Children's Services
	Ensuring strong links between young people's services and young people in alternative provision or being home-schooled	Education / All
Identify and support children at risk	Ensure schools have clear safeguarding pathways and are able to identify and appropriately refer at-risk children	Children's Services / Education
	Ensure a common language around safeguarding is used by parents, schools, and services so that parents are able to identify when a child is at risk / vulnerable and to understand where and how to seek support	Children's Services / Education
	Work with schools to develop RSE that is inclusive of vulnerability and exploitation, and of coercive relationships	Public Health
	Continue with Keeping Families Strong approach, ensuring sustainability and empowerment of families	Children's & Adult's Services
Peer mentoring	Continue to support peer mentoring initiatives, particularly as part of rehabilitation	YOS

Cross-cutting recommendations

Theme(s)	Recommendation	Suggested owner
Coordination	Develop clear governance pathways for SYV work streams across the Council, as per the Southwark Extended Learning review	Southwark Safeguarding Children's

Theme(s)	Recommendation	Suggested owner
		Board
	Develop a directory of services and interventions in place to prevent youth violence (primary, secondary, and tertiary prevention), including Council and VCS initiatives. This directory should be made publically available to improve the accessibility of referrals and should be used as the support offer underpinning the forthcoming community harm and exploitation hub	Community Safety / All
Collaboration	Establish/identify a steering group to take forward recommendations from this JSNA and from the Southwark Extended Learning Review and Youth Violence Panel, ensuring the group is inclusive of a wide range of Council department as well as members from the VCS	ELR board / All
	Encourage steering group members to embed an identification of vulnerable children and young people into all policies	All
	Continue with the wide range of activities currently ongoing to provide early intervention, prevent youth violence, and support those affected	All
Data sharing	Continue to improve data sharing amongst departments involved in serious youth violence and vulnerability, to ensure a shared, complete vision for the borough	All
Dissemination	Develop a communication plan to disseminate the findings of this report more widely alongside reports on the Community Crime and Exploitation Hub and narrative of vulnerability, which will be presented to Cabinet in December 2019	Public Health / Community Safety

KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

11. That the Cabinet notes the overview of serious youth violence in Southwark.
12. That the Cabinet accepts the recommendations of the joint strategic needs assessment (JSNA).

Policy implications

13. Future policies should consider the epidemiology and recommendations in this report, particularly policies concerned with young people, youth violence and vulnerability, and mental wellbeing.

Community impact statement

14. The findings of this JSNA may support and help inform community-led initiatives to tackle and prevent youth violence in the borough.

Resource implications

15. There are no resource implications associated with this JSNA.

Legal implications

16. There are no legal implications associated with this JSNA.

Financial implications

17. There are no financial implications associated with this JSNA.

Consultation

18. Primary qualitative engagement with stakeholders was not completed as part of this report as it is intended to be read alongside the extensive engagement carried out as part of the Southwark Youth Violence Panel and Southwark Extended Learning Review.
19. This report complements the 2018 Annual Public Health Report and consultation work carried out as part of this report, which engaged local young offenders on the topic of mental health and wellbeing.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Background Papers	Held At	Contact
None		

APPENDICES

No.	Title
Appendix 1	The Southwark public health approach to serious youth violence prevention (circulated separately)

AUDIT TRAIL

Cabinet Member	Councillor Evelyn Akoto, Community Safety and Public Health	
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Report Author	Talia Boshari (Public Health Policy Officer), Kirsten Watters (Consultant in Public Health) & Caroline Thwaites (Assistant Director Community Safety & Partnerships)	
Version	Final	
Dated	17 October 2019	
Key Decision?	Yes	
CONSULTATION WITH OTHER OFFICERS / DIRECTORATES / CABINET MEMBER		
Officer Title	Comments Sought	Comments Included
Director of Law and Democracy	No	No
Strategic Director of Finance and Governance	No	No
Cabinet Member	Yes	Yes
Date final report sent to Constitutional Team	18 October 2019	