

Item No.	Classification Open	Date: 9 July 2013	Meeting: Education, Children's Services and Leisure Scrutiny Sub-committee
Report title:		Family Focus team - work with gangs and parents to support the review on Bullying	
From:		Director of Strategy and Commissioning, Children's and Adults Services	

1. Purpose

The report provides an overview of the work undertaken with gangs and parents by the Specialist Family Focus Team (SFFT) to support the Children Services and Leisure Scrutiny review on Bullying.

2. Support Offered by SFFT

- The Common Assessment Framework (CAF) is used to undertake a holistic assessment with the whole family identifying strengths and issues across the family unit
- SFFT provides a range of bespoke packages of support to families with complex needs with an aim of improving resilience and outcomes for families.
- Support is delivered in a strength based, think family way combining a range of practical, hands on support with therapeutic interventions to address underlying issues effecting behaviour
- Practical interventions for young people include:
 - Consequential thinking
 - Restorative Justice
 - Increased resilience
 - Building positive relationships including parental and peer relationships
 - Young Perpetrator Programme for young people who are perpetrators of domestic violence.
- A range of innovative, targeted programmes including a girls group which focused on female empowerment and resilience in young women and a Bike programme for young males which looked at masculinity and respectful behaviour are delivered during the school holidays
- Where there has been a detrimental effect on a young person's mental wellbeing due to being a victim of bullying, SFFT have direct referral pathways into CAMHs, and Functional Family Therapy for clinical involvement. In addition an adult mental health practitioner is now part of the multidisciplinary team offering support to parents.

Gangs and support for parents

- SFFT also offer a range of parenting programmes to support better parenting of children of all ages. All parenting groups include a session ran by the local gangs worker which provides information on the signs to look out for to identify potential gang activity and what to do if parents are concerned about their child and gang activity.
- Bespoke Southwark leaflets for parents who are worried about gang activity provide a range of local information and networks are distributes to all SFFT families
- SFFT Outreach Workers provide advocacy for parents and families in school settings when attendance and behaviour in school is likely to result in exclusion but is a result of bullying or negative relationships.

Sustaining improvements

- Part of the SFFT core offer is to increase engagement of families in community resources and networks to ensure sustainability of improvement.
- Strengthening Families Strengthening Communities (SFSC) parenting programme is co-facilitated by parents who have been trained in the model who have been through the programme themselves and who have, over a significant time, sustained the changes it

has made to their family life which they can share with new parents to the programme. Other benefits include securing employment for parents and the growing numbers of facilitators enable more groups to be provided in the community. Also, the parent facilitators founded the Parent4Parent group to enable parents who have attended the SFSC programme to meet for support and follow-on following the end of any SFSC group, to help them through any difficult times thereafter.

3. Case Study – perpetrator/victim

A 14 year old boy was a victim of a stabbing in the toilets of his Secondary School - the perpetrator was a fellow student of the same age. Although the reasoning for the stabbing was not established there were concerns at the time that the violence may spill out into the community. Support was offered to move the family to a place of safety but the victim did not wish to press charges and so this was not pursued. As a result of the incident, the victim was left feeling angry, miserable and his perception of risk was heightened - CAMHS support was thus sought but after a series of sessions, engagement declined. This boy, who is now 16 years old, has become increasingly aggressive in the family home and there have been a number of police attendances/arrests for violence directed to his mother. There are also concerns about the level of control he exerts within the home, substance misuse and how his demanding behaviour is impacting his mother's and sister's emotional health.

In order to address the cycle of bullying and violence a family assessment was undertaken with the whole family present. As a result of the assessment the following support and interventions were offered:

Naming the behaviour

- Discussions held with the young person and supporting him to identify that his behaviour constitutes bullying/domestic violence and understand the implications of his behaviour
- Assisting mother to also name the behaviour even though the perpetrator is her son
- Identifying expectations of behaviour within the home from all parties and agreeing consequences of non compliance.

Strengthening the Victim

- Convening a network meeting to discuss risk, promote a shared responsibility and identify ways in which risk could be mitigated.
- Supporting mother to deal with her own behaviours which fuelled the violent cycle (mirroring threatening behaviour, losing control, retaliating against verbal insults).
- Exposing mother to and modelling 'use of voice and body language' when dealing with incidents of bullying.
- Supporting mother to adopt strategies to handle demands and to re-exert some control e.g. fixed daily allowance of £3.
- Enabling mother to be receptive to support including referral to Social Services and engagement with Solace (Domestic Violence Service)
- Assisting mother to be firm and consistent in terms of consequences (making contact with the Police).

Mediation

- Southwark Mediation Services were engaged to address underlying issues within the family that were fuelling presenting behaviours.

Support Groups

- Mother and daughter were referred to the Parallel Programme (survival support group facilitated by Solace).
- Young Perpetrator Programme was identified for young person to attend on a voluntary basis.

- Liaison with Youth Offending Service to support young person's attendance on a youth violence programme by making engagement form part of their disposal – Conditional Caution.

As a result of support from SFFT the relationship within the family home has considerably improved with mum taking a more assertive and appropriate role. Mum feels more confident and happy at home. Substance misuse by the son has stopped, his educational engagement and outcome has considerably improved and there have been no further volatile incidents within the home.