

Safeguarding Children and Young People Affected by Gang Activity
And / or Serious Youth Violence

***Serious Youth Violence is
3 times more likely to be committed
by gang members than by non-gang,
anti-social children and young people***

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Dear Colleagues,

We would like to introduce you to Liverpool's first multi agency procedure in relation to safeguarding children and young people affected by gang activity and serious youth violence.

This document has been created with the full commitment of all members of Liverpool Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB). Following its launch in April 2010, it will be reviewed within one year so we can continually improve and develop those services required to safeguard and prevent children and young people from involvement in serious crime.

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1. Introduction

Recent years have seen increasing national and local concern in relation to the use of firearms as a means of committing crime. In response to this national concern, the Home Office launched a Tackling Guns Action Programme (TGAP) in 2007, and identified 4 forces nationally who had a gun crime problem. Merseyside Police was identified as one such force.

In Merseyside Police, TGAP activity is focused in three policing areas, two of which fall within the Liverpool City Council area - Liverpool North and Liverpool South. The tragic recent murders of young people in Liverpool, as a result of violence amongst factions raised concern on Merseyside about young people with access to firearms.

In 2008, again as a result of increasing national and local concern in relation to the use of knives, the Home Office launched a Tackling Knives Action Programme. Fourteen forces were identified nationally as having a knife crime problem; Merseyside Police was identified as one such force, with Liverpool North and South recognised as being affected. In 2008 3 young people died in Liverpool as a result of knifings in incidents of serious youth violence. In 2 of these incidents the perpetrators were also young people.

1.1 This Procedure

This procedure provides guidance for frontline professionals and their managers in all agencies, and individuals in Liverpool's local communities and community groups on identifying and safeguarding Children and Young People who are vulnerable to or at risk of harm from involvement in or targeting from:

- Anti-social behaviour, emergent criminality or serious youth violence perpetrated by their peers in gangs; and
- Serious youth violence perpetrated by Children and Young People acting on their own.

This procedure should be read in conjunction with the *Liverpool Safeguarding Children's Procedures* (Liverpool Safeguarding Children Board, 2007).

1.2 Definition of a Gang¹

Groups of Children and Young People often gather together in public places to socialise and peer association is an essential feature of most children's transition to adulthood. Groups of Children and Young People can be disorderly and/or anti-social without engaging in criminal activity.

The diagram below sets out a tiered approach to defining gangs. This guidance is focused on those young people on the periphery of becoming involved with street gangs and those young people already involved in some way.

"A relatively durable, predominantly street-based group of young

¹ Defining what a 'gang' is is extremely difficult and although this is the accepted definition, it is important for us to be open to new understandings that rigorously attempt to understand the phenomena in the UK and do not duplicate knowledge and practice from the U.S.

people who see themselves (and are seen by others) as a discernible group for whom crime and violence is integral to the group's identity"

Pyramid of Gang Involvement

Safeguarding should focus on young people on the cusp/vulnerable of making the transition to gang involvement as well as those already involved in gangs

Level 3:
Criminal
Gangs

Level 2: Street Gangs

Level 1: Peer Group

Increasing crime and violence and risk of harm

Organised criminal group – A group of individuals for whom involvement in crime is for personal gain (financial or otherwise). For most, however, crime is their 'occupation'. These groups operate almost exclusively in the grey and illegal marketplace where market transactions are totally unregulated by the law.

Gang – Relatively durable group who have a collective identity and meet frequently. They are predominantly street-based groups of young people who see themselves (and are seen by others) as a discernible group for whom crime and violence is integral to the group's identity.

Peer group – A relatively small, unorganised and transient group composed of peers who share the same space and a common history. Involvement in crime will be mostly non-serious in nature and not integral to the identity of the group. School children will usually be part of a peer group.

Adapted from Hallsworth S and Young T (2004) 'Getting Real About Gangs'. Criminal Justice Matters (55) 12-13

Hallsworth and Young² and Robert Gordon³ set out the following definitions:

- **Peer group:** a small, unorganised, transient group of Children and Young People who 'hang out together' in public places such as shopping centres. Crime is not integral to their self definition;
- **Wannabee group:** includes Children and Young People who band together in a loosely structured group primarily to engage in spontaneous social activity and exciting, impulsive criminal activity, including collective violence against other groups of children. Wannabees will often claim 'gang' territory and adopt 'gang-style' identifying markers of some kind;
- **Gang:** a relatively durable, predominantly street-based group of Children and Young People who see themselves (and are seen by others) as a discernible group for whom crime and violence is integral to the group's identity.
- In some cases Children and Young People may be involved in more than gang', with some cross-border movement, and may not stay in a 'gang' for significant periods of time;

² Adapted from *Three Point Typology of Urban Collectives* (Hallsworth and Young (2004)

³ Robert Gordon's Five Point Typology of Youth Groupings

- Organised criminal group: members are professionally involved in crime for personal gain, operating almost exclusively in the 'grey' or illegal marketplace.

Gordon also suggests that definitions may need to be highly specific to particular areas or neighbourhoods if they are to be useful. Furthermore, professionals should not seek to apply this or any other definition of a gang too rigorously; if a child or others think s/he is involved with or affected by 'a gang', then a professional should act accordingly in assessing the risk to the child as both a potential perpetrator and a victim. See Section 6. Professional Response onwards.

1.3 Definition of Serious Youth Violence

- 1.3.1 Youth violence, serious or otherwise, may be a function of gang activity. However, it could equally represent the behaviour of a child acting individually in response to his or her particular history and circumstances.
- 1.3.2 'Serious youth violence' is defined by the Home Office Assessment of Policing and Community Safety (APACS) measure, and this definition is used by Merseyside Police. It is defined as - 'any offence of most serious violence or weapon enabled crime, where the victim is aged 1-19', i.e. murder, manslaughter, rape, wounding with intent and causing grievous bodily harm. 'Youth violence' is defined in the same way, but also includes assault with injury offences.

Appendix 1 sets out the full Merseyside Police Service's definition of Serious Youth Violence.

1.4 Terms

- 1.4.1 The terms in this procedure conform to those set out in the *Liverpool Safeguarding Children and Young People Procedures* (2007), section 1.6. Glossary; in particular, a 'child' is defined as Children and Young People 0 to 17 years and adolescents up to their 18th birthday; and a 'professional' as any individual working in a voluntary, employed, professional or unqualified capacity, including foster carers and approved adopters.
- 1.4.2 Where a child is "affected" by gang activity or serious youth violence, the risk or potential risk of harm to the child may be as a victim, perpetrator or both.

2. Legislation and Policy

- 2.1 The UK Government's Every Child Matters: Change for Children and Young People Programme, which includes the Children's NSF⁴ and is supported by the Children and Young People Act 2004, requires all agencies to take responsibility for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of every child to enable all children to:

- Be healthy;

⁴ National Service Framework for Children, Children and Young People and Maternity Services:
<http://www.dh.gov.uk/PolicyAndGuidance/HealthAndSocialCareTopics/ChildrenServices/ChildrenServiceInformation/fs/en>

- Stay safe;
- Enjoy and achieve;
- Make a positive contribution;
- Achieve economic well-being.

2.2 Supported by The Children and Young People Act 2004, the Government guidance *Working Together to Safeguard Children and Young People* (DCSF, 2006)⁵, states that 'multi and inter-agency work to safeguard and promote children's welfare starts as soon as there are concerns about a child's welfare, not just when there are questions about possible harm.' Working within this policy framework, professionals from all agencies have a statutory responsibility to safeguard Children and Young People affected by gang activity and/or serious youth violence.

3. Principles Supporting This Procedure

3.1 The following principles should be adopted by all agencies in relation to identifying and responding to Children and Young People (including unborn children) at risk of or being affected by gang activity and/or serious youth violence:

- Children and Young People who are harmed and Children and Young People who harm should both be treated as victims;
- The safety and welfare of the child is paramount;
- All agencies act in the interests of the rights of the child as stated in the UN Convention (1989)⁶;
- All decisions or plans for the child/ren should be based on good quality assessments and be sensitive to the issues of gender, nationality, culture and sexuality; and
- All agencies should work in partnership with members of local communities, to empower individuals and groups to develop support networks.

4. Context

4.1 The Origins of Violence in Children

4.1.1 Empathy is the single greatest inhibitor in children and young people of the development of propensity to violence⁷.

4.1.2 The experience of love, affection and nurturing are core requirements for a child to develop the ability to have:

- Empathy / to care about other Children and Young People / people / creatures; and

⁵ <http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/workingtogether/>

⁶ <http://www.unicef.org/crc/>

⁷ *The Wave Report 2005: Violence and what to do about it*

- Positive self-identity / esteem.

4.1.3 These experiences are not sufficient in themselves. A pattern of parent-child relations and positive child-rearing practices are required, which include:

- Positive guidance;
- Discipline; and
- Learning by participation.

4.1.4 Thus the factors which influence a child's propensity to **initiate** violence include:

- Parenting which is cold / uncaring, non-nurturing and neglectful⁸;
- Parenting which includes harsh disciplining⁹;
- Maltreatment, such as physical or sexual abuse in childhood (abuse by adults and peers within and outside of the family)¹⁰; and/or
- Trauma such as domestic violence or involvement in or witnessing conflict violence.

4.1.5 One factor which influences a child's propensity to **imitate** violence is:

- Parenting which is permissive and neglectful, resulting in a lack of guidance and creating ineffectiveness and poor self-control for a child. The child is then not equipped to resist an environment or group which instigates violence.

4.1.6 Crucially, the impact of the factors listed in point 4.1.3 (above) may be partly or wholly mitigated for an individual child through contact with caring adults¹¹, peers or later in life¹².

4.1.7 In addition, some Children and Young People may respond to the factors listed in point 4.1.3 (above) by becoming fearful and avoidant, rather than aggressive¹³.

4.1.8 See also the executive summary of the Wave Trust report in Appendix 2.

4.2 Serious Youth Violence

4.2.1 The overwhelming majority of Children and Young People do not become violent overnight. Their behaviour represents many years of [increasingly] anti-social and aggressive acts¹⁴, with aggressive habits learned early in life often the foundation for later behaviour¹⁵. Where a child succeeds at low-level anti-social acts, such as verbal abuse and bullying, violating rules and being disruptive, s/he may feel emboldened to perpetrate increased violence.

⁸ *The Psychology of Adversity* (Robert S. Feldman, 1996)

⁹ (Dodge, Bates & Pettit, 1990) and (Youngblade & Belsky, 1990) in *The Psychology of Adversity* (Robert S. Feldman, 1996)

¹⁰ (Dodge, Bates & Pettit, 1990) and (Youngblade & Belsky, 1990) in *The Psychology of Adversity* (Robert S. Feldman, 1996). See also *For Your Own Good: Hidden Cruelty in Child-Rearing and the Roots of Violence* (A. Miller, 1990)

¹¹ Garnezy & Rutter, 1983 in *The Psychology of Adversity* (Robert S. Feldman, 1996)

¹² *For Your Own Good: Hidden Cruelty in Child-Rearing and the Roots of Violence* (A. Miller, 1990)

¹³ *The Psychology of Adversity* (Robert S. Feldman, 1996)

¹⁴ *Youth Aggression and Violence a Psychological Approach* (Thomas G. Moeller, 2001)

¹⁵ *Social and Cultural Experiences that Affect Youth Violence*, Report of the American Psychological Association Commission on Violence and Youth, Vol. I

Children and Young People who kill

4.2.2 Research suggests that Children and Young People who kill can be divided into two groups:

- Psychotic children, although it is rare that this psychosis will limit their understanding of reality and lead them to kill without an appreciation of what they are doing;
- Aggressive children, constituting the largest group, who are often anti-social youths, whose aggression escalates over time and results in killing. These are the Children and Young People referred to in point 4.2.1 (above).

4.2.3 A recent USA study¹⁶ suggested that there is no single personality style or dynamic found in Children and Young People who commit homicide. The study concurred, however, with a UK study¹⁷ of a sample of Children and Young People convicted under Section 53 of the Children and Young People and Young Persons Act 1933 (i.e. for murder, manslaughter, rape, arson and robbery) which postulated with some confidence that ninety percent of the Children and Young People had been subjected to abuse in their early and/or recent past. In addition, the Children and Young People had experienced the loss of a significant family member or friend with surprising frequency. Research by the Behavioural Science Unit of the Federal Bureau of Investigation has indicated that the existence of two of three behaviours in young people can be strongly indicative of future homicidal traits. The three behaviours are:

- Cruelty to animals
- Enuresis (bed-wetting) beyond an age deemed normal
- Commission of Arson

Environmental factors

4.2.4 Several factors are important contributors in increasing an individual child's propensity to act violently:

- Exposure to violence;
- Access to weapons;
- Involvement with alcohol and other drugs; and
- Involvement in a gang.

4.2.5 Exposure to media images of violence increases a child's fear of becoming a victim, with a resultant increase in mistrust of others. It desensitises the child to violence, resulting increased callousness toward violence directed at others

¹⁶ Kaser-Boyd (2002)

¹⁷ 'Waiting for change: The experiences and needs of Section 53 offenders' (Boswell 1991)

and a decreased likelihood to take action on behalf of the victim when violence occurs. It also increases a child's willingness to become involved in violence¹⁸.

In families where children's viewing is not regulated, they can readily access graphic violence, often with sexual content, through cable TV, the internet and on DVD.

- 4.2.6 For comment on weapons and involvement with alcohol and other drugs, see section 5. Serious Youth Violence, below.

4.3 Gang Involvement

*Recognition and Respect*¹⁹

- 4.3.1 A recent study of street crime confirms that much of it is primarily concerned with respect and recognition rather than monetary gain²⁰. Gang members will sometimes video their offences and post them on websites. While this renders them more vulnerable to prosecution (these sites can be a good source of intelligence)²¹, it serves to consolidate their reputation for toughness and hence the 'respect' to which they aspire.
- 4.3.2 Respect matters to Children and Young People in relation to gangs because to be 'disrespected' makes a child a target for anyone who wants to make a name for themselves. An act of 'disrespect' that goes unpunished can be perceived as inviting a challenge from rivals within their own gang as well as members of other groups. In certain neighbourhoods, being 'mugged' is often a prelude to a career of street crime prompted by fear as Children and Young People endeavour to rebuild respect in their social milieu in the wake of an attack²².
- 4.3.3 Violence is also a way for gang members to gain recognition and respect by asserting their power and authority in the street, with a large proportion of street crime perpetrated against members of other gangs or the relatives of gang members²³.
- 4.3.4 Gang members also tend to be socially and emotionally isolated individuals with a very low level of mutual trust. Their relationships are put under even greater strain when gang members assault or rob friends, relations or one another – a not infrequent occurrence²⁴. However, it is worth noting that some high profile gang members have excellent social and communications skills, and can be intelligent and articulate.
- 4.3.5 There can be a discrepancy between the apparent normality of some gang-involved Children and Young People and the violent acts they commit or commission:

¹⁸ USA: Surgeon General's Commission Report (1972), National Institute of Mental Health Ten Year Follow-up (1982) & Report of the American Psychological Association's Committee on Media in Society (1992)

¹⁹ *Reluctant Gangsters* (Pitts, 2007)

²⁰ Richard Wright et al, 2006

²¹ Efforts have been made to close these down through internet service providers (ISPs) but this has proved difficult as the site may be moved very quickly to different ISP.

²² Bill Sanders (2006)

²³ Pitts, 2007, Young, 1999, Sanders 2004, Wright et al, 2006

²⁴ Palmer & Pitts, 2006

"I grew up with them. Some of them were really nice blokes, but that's just the drugs business, everyone does it. It's kind of expected. It's terrible but these blokes aren't nutters"²⁵.

Group Behaviour²⁶

- 4.3.6 A loss of individual self plays an important role for those who participate in group violence. Giving oneself over to the group may be experienced as a falling away of the limitations inherent in the self and of the boundaries restricting connections to other people. The resulting feelings of abandon, together with feelings of group connection and oneness, can be intensely satisfying. At the same time, the anonymity of becoming one with a group may promote violence by leading to a diffusion of responsibility for others' welfare and less fear of blame and punitive consequences.
- 4.3.7 In some circumstances, those who participate in group-instigated violence are not known to be aggressive or anti-social. Rather, they can be Children and Young People whose permissive parenting did not equip them to resist the group (see point 4.1.3 above).
- 4.3.8 In the course of group violence, the members enter into a process of change along a 'continuum of destruction'. Escalating violence can evolve quickly, through a process of 'contagion'. This contagion may result from sensitivity to other people, perhaps because of identification with others who are seen as members of one's group or shared dissatisfactions, concerns and values, or shared antagonism toward a potential victim group.
- 4.3.9 'Bystanders' within the group have the ability to influence a gang by their action or passivity. Group violence sometimes seems leaderless, but individuals often emerge as leaders who initiate and guide the violence.
- 4.3.10 In the same fashion, bystanders who attempt to interrupt the continuum of violence can take on a de-facto leadership role. The earlier that bystanders act while the mob is forming, the greater their potential influence.
- 4.3.11 While only a small percentage of Children and Young People join gangs, and the absolute amount of violent behaviour by gang members is small, some studies suggest that homicide and aggravated assault are three times more likely to be committed by gang members than by non-gang anti-social children²⁷.

4.4 Formation of Gangs

Community and Family Circumstances

- 4.4.1 Circumstances which can foster the emergence of gangs include:
- Areas with a high level of social and economic exclusion and mobility (which weakens the ties of kinship and friendship and the established mechanisms of informal control and social support);

²⁵ *Reluctant Gangsters* (Pitts, 2007)

²⁶ *Youth Aggression and Violence a Psychological Approach* (Thomas G. Moeller, 2001)

²⁷ *Social and Cultural Experiences that Affect Youth Violence*, Report of the American Psychological Association Commission on Violence and Youth, Vol. I

- Areas with poor performing schools – in terms of leadership, positive ethos and partnership working;
- Lack of access to pro-social activities (e.g. youth service) and to vocational training and opportunities;
- Areas with a high level of gang activity / peer pressure and intimidation, particularly if the family is denying this or is in fear of the gangs; and
- Family members involved in gang activity and criminality.

4.4.2 Many parents are aware of the widespread perception that the gang problem is ultimately a product of poor parenting and that the solution lies in assuming responsibility for their children. However, they feel unable either to control or to protect their children²⁸.

4.4.3 Gang-involved families are vulnerable to attack, reprisal and burglary. A London youth offending team worker reported that: "...parents are also told to hide guns and drugs²⁹", and parents forced to decide whether their child's best interest is served by resisting the gang or joining it sometimes collude with gang membership as the safest option for their child. Intimidation from gang members silences would-be complainants and witnesses.

4.4.4 Families who are exposed to violent crime can suffer long term negative impact on their health and well-being. Homicide can cause shock, denial, anger and fear, which may be heightened if the victim or family know the offender and/or live in the same neighbourhood. Victims, families and communities can also be stigmatised by homicides through being (or feeling) blamed for the situation³⁰.

Reluctant or Naive Gang Members

4.4.5 Children and Young People become reluctant gang members as a means of self-protection. Non-affiliation may mean that it is dangerous to use certain services or facilities like an FE college or the local park, either located in gang territory or where access is only possible if one traverses gang territory. Feedback from residents has been that *'to stay out of trouble Children and Young People would have to stay at home'*³¹.

4.4.6 Children and Young People can become involved in anti-social behaviour and gangs (and high-risk behaviours of all types) through impulsiveness, lack of experience and failing to foresee consequences (see also point 4.1.4 above).

4.4.7 However, gang members who want to leave a gang not only lose its protection, becoming vulnerable to other gangs with whom they have previously come into conflict, but may also be at risk from their former associates because of the disrespect or disloyalty implied by their departure.

²⁸ *Reluctant Gangsters* (Pitts, 2007)

²⁹ *Reluctant Gangsters* (Pitts, 2007)

³⁰ *The experience of gun crime in Liverpool* (Victim Support Liverpool, 2006)

³¹ *Reluctant Gangsters* (Pitts, 2007)

- 4.4.8 One gang member said: *"If I want to be out of the gang, I must leave this area. No way I could stay round here man. There is always someone to come after you with a blade or something"*³².

5. Serious Youth Violence

5.1 Weapons

- 5.1.1 Fear and a need for self-protection is a key motivation for Children and Young People to carry weapons – carrying a weapon affords a child a feeling of power. Neighbourhoods with high levels of deprivation and social exclusion generally have the highest rates of gun and knife crime³³.
- 5.1.2 Knives and other weapons are far more prevalent than firearms, especially in the case of children. The Offending, Crime and Justice Survey (Home Office, 2005) highlights that:
- Four percent of Children and Young People had carried a knife in the last 12 months;
 - Less than one percent reported having carried a gun in the same period; and
 - Eighty-five percent of those that had carried a knife said the main reason was for protection, and a further nine percent said it was in case they got into a fight. Unfortunately, carrying weapons increases the risk of serious injury or death while defending oneself or fighting, and the risks multiply in group situations.
- 5.1.3 The Home Office reports that in 2005-06 the most common method for all killings was use of a sharp instrument³⁴; twenty-eight percent of all victims were killed by a sharp instrument; and seven percent of victims had been shot (50 victims) in 2005/06.
- 5.1.4 In the three months to September 2005, Children and Young People between the ages of 10 and 17 years accounted for over a quarter (28%) of those legally proceeded against for a gun or knife enabled crime³⁵.
- 5.1.5 Many Children and Young People do not seek active involvement in gun crime and if they do use a gun are horrified by what they have done e.g: *"...he was crouched up in the corner crying because he'd brought the gun out to protect himself and had been challenged so he pulled the trigger. He hadn't wanted to pull the trigger."*³⁶
- 5.1.6 Professionals working with Children and Young People who may have reason to be fearful in their neighbourhood or school / FE College should be alert to the possibility that a child may carry a weapon.

5.2 Alcohol and Drugs

³² *Reluctant Gangsters* (Pitts, 2007)

³³ Merseyside Police Service recorded crime

³⁴ *Home Office Statistical Bulletin: Homicides, Firearm Offences and Intimate Violence 2005/06* (Kathryn Coleman et al, 2007)

³⁵ Merseyside Police Service recorded crime

³⁶ *Othering the Brothers, Youth and Policy* (Palmer S. & Pitts J, 2006)

- 5.2.1 The use of alcohol plays a major role in interpersonal violence involving young people. According to a recent Youth Justice Board survey of Children and Young People known to Liverpool Youth Offending Teams³⁷, many of the Children and Young People who were involved with gang activity used illegal drugs and alcohol. Binge drinking as a group was common and was strongly associated with violence.
- 5.2.2 The children's use of drugs brought them into contact with adults who are involved in organised crime, supplying drugs. The drugs business tends to attract career criminals who regulate the market through often extreme violence or the threat of violence³⁸.
- 5.2.3 Children and Young People often carry drugs (or weapons and stolen property) for the older gang members, so that the adults can be stopped and searched with impunity. Children and Young People will also serve jail terms for older gang members.

5.3 Sexual Violence

- 5.3.1 Liverpool YOS has reported concerns about the number of young women who regard abusive behaviour from young men as a 'normal' part of adult relationships³⁹. Abusive young men are often acting out their own childhood experience as victims of domestic violence and/or abuse (see point 4.1.4).
- 5.3.2 An American study of gang behaviour on college campuses concluded that group sexual assault (and other types of assault) mainly occurs in an environment where group behaviour and acceptance is important to the young men involved. The theory of diffusion of responsibility suggests that individuals who might otherwise not have perpetrated a sexual assault may do so in situations where the presence of others acting in a similar fashion diminishes the individual's feeling of responsibility for the harmful consequences of his own behaviour⁴⁰ (see also points 4.3.6 – 4.3.9).
- 5.3.3 Very few rapes by gang members are reported, with girls extremely reluctant to identify their attackers and often intimidated and threatened not to talk. One head teacher reported:

"One of my year 10 students was recently gang-raped by some gang members. I talked to her and her mother. They are obviously very frightened and the mother insists that it was consensual. The girl won't come to counselling because she is afraid of being seen to talk to anyone in authority about it".⁴¹

Grooming

³⁷ *Groups, Gangs and Weapons* (YJB, 2007) , available at <http://www.yjb.gov.uk/publications/Scripts/prodView.asp?idProduct=342&eP=>

³⁸ Arlacchi, 1998 in *Reluctant Gangsters* (Pitts, 2007).

³⁹ Information from Liverpool YOT

⁴⁰ Bechhofer & Parrot ed. 144 -148

⁴¹ *Reluctant Gangsters* (Pitts, 2007)

- 5.3.4 Anecdotal evidence from multiple sources suggests that gang members can often groom girls at school and encourage / coerce them to recruit other girls through school / social networks. There is also anecdotal evidence that younger girls (some as young as 10 or 12) are increasingly being targeted, and these girls are often much less able to resist the gang culture or manipulation by males in the group. The girls often do not identify their attackers as gang members and tend to think of them as boyfriends. They may also be connected through family or other networks.
- 5.3.5 Girls may be groomed using drugs and alcohol, which act as disinhibitors and also create dependency. Girls may also be used as mules to transport a drug, which frequently involves trafficking within the UK. There is also evidence of young females hiding guns and drugs and laundering the proceeds of crime.

6. Professionals' Response

6.1 Identifying a Child at Risk from Gang Activity and/or Serious Youth Violence

- 6.1.1 A child could be:
- Non-involved, but at risk from becoming involved and harmed from gang activity or serious youth violence; or
 - Involved with gang related activities and/or serious youth violence and at risk both of harming others and being harmed him/herself.
- 6.1.2 Potentially a child involved with a gang or with serious violence could be both a victim and a perpetrator.
- This requires professionals to assess and support his/her welfare and well-being needs at the same time as assessing and responding in a criminal justice capacity.
- 6.1.3 See the quick referral flowchart in Appendix 4.

6.2 Signs and Symptoms

Gang Involvement

- 6.2.1 Children and Young People as young as 7 years old can be gang-involved. Professionals who have contact with Children and Young People should be competent to identify the signs and symptoms which, particularly when clustered together, can raise concerns that a child may be either reluctantly or willingly involved with a gang. These include a child having family experiences and circumstances as outlined in Sections 4. Context and 5. Serious Youth Violence, and presenting indicators such as:
- Major / negative behaviour changes (e.g. a heightened sensitivity to threat and a constant preparedness for action);
 - Withdrawal from family members;
 - Unaccounted for monies and/or goods;

- Unaccountable injuries and/or refusal to seek / receive medical treatment for injuries;
- Being emotionally 'switched-off', but also containing frustration / rage;
- Breaking parental rules consistently;
- Changes in apparel such as wearing a specific colour or particular item of clothing or jewellery;
- School attendance becoming sporadic / exclusion (although it should be noted that some gang members will maintain a good attendance record to avoid coming to notice), or general alienation from statutory services;
- Gang type graffiti on schoolbooks, bedroom walls etc;
- Receiving calls from others who refuse to identify themselves or identify themselves by nickname only. They also may refer to the child by a nickname;
- Constantly talking about another young person who seems to have a hold or a lot of influence over them
- Dismisses old friends and hangs around with one group of friends
- Significant resistance to or fear of travelling to certain places or crossing particular geographical boundaries; and/or
- Associating with known or suspected gang members, closeness to siblings or adults in the family who are gang members.

Note As many of the above indicators are also indicators of possible sexual exploitation, the Investigations Support Unit should also be consulted, to ensure all relevant information regarding such threats to a young person's welfare are shared, assessed and managed appropriately (see Appendix 10 for relevant contact details).

6.2.2 Looked after Children and Young People are particularly vulnerable due to their low self-esteem, low resilience, attachment issues and the fact that they are often isolated from family and friends (see also Section 12, Looked After Children)

There are risks specific to different types of placements such as secure units, children's homes, foster homes, or living in semi-independent accommodation.

6.2.3 It seems that the more heavily gang-involved a child is, the less likely s/he is to talk about it. However, if a child does talk about gang involvement, professionals should always take what the child tells them seriously.

A Child at Risk of becoming a Serious Violent Offender

6.2.4 Professionals who have contact with Children and Young People should be competent to identify the combinations of signs and symptoms which can place Children and Young People at risk of becoming serious and violent offenders. These include a child having experiences and circumstances as outlined in Section 4. Context and Section 5. Serious Youth Violence and presenting indicators such as:

- Hyperactivity – the relationship between hyperactivity and later violence has been found consistently across studies, regardless of the measurement methods used;
- Concentration problems – which can predict later violent behaviour as well as academic difficulties, which themselves are risk factors for violence. This can be linked with the first point above in the form of attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD)
- Aggression - the earlier anti-social and violent behaviour presents, the more likely a child is to display chronic and serious violence in later childhood and adolescence;
- Acceptance of violence, carrying weapons and substance misuse and sexual exploitation – which weakens a child's internal controls against these behaviours;
- Dishonesty, anti-social beliefs and attitudes, and hostility toward police – all of which have all been found to predict violence, particularly among boys⁴². Oppositional defiant disorder (ODD) is a common co-morbidity with ADHD and manifests itself in anti-authority behaviour

Sexual Exploitation

6.2.5 Children and Young People at risk of sexual exploitation linked to gang activity and/or serious youth violence may also present with:

- Running away;
- Overt sexualised dress / attire;
- Internal injuries, multiple sexually transmitted infections (STI's), miscarriages and/or termination;
- Chronic drug dependency (particularly crack / heroin); and/or
- Expressions of despair such as self-harm – cutting, overdosing, eating disorders, sexualised risk-taking.

6.2.6 See the Liverpool procedure for Safeguarding Children and Young People abused through sexual exploitation (Liverpool Safeguarding Children Board, 2007).

6.3 Children and Young People at Risk of Significant Harm

6.3.1 Significant harm is defined as a situation where a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, a degree of physical, sexual and/or emotional harm (through abuse or neglect), which is so harmful that there needs to be compulsory intervention by child protection agencies into the life of the child and their family.

See the Liverpool Safeguarding Children and Young People Procedures (2007), Recognition of abuse and neglect.

⁴² J. Fraser in *Serious and Violent Juvenile Offenders: Risk Factors and Successful Interventions* (R. Loeber & D.P. Farrington eds. 1998)

- 6.3.2 In relation to gangs and serious youth violence Children and Young People could be at risk of harm from:
- Their peers; or
 - Gang-involved or affected adults in their household (including because their parent cannot protect them).
- 6.3.3 Professionals should always take what the child tells them seriously.

7. Assessing Levels of Need

- 7.1 Professionals should assess the presenting behaviours / what a child is telling them in the context of whatever information they know or can gather from the child about the risk factors which contribute to the child's vulnerability to gang involvement and serious youth violence.
- 7.2 See also the risk assessment framework for Children and Young People affected by gangs and serious youth violence, in Appendix 3.
- 7.3 The tools for making an assessment are:
- The Common Assessment Framework; and
 - A specialist / statutory assessment (including LA children's social care initial and core assessments).
- 7.4 See the quick guide to assessments and levels of intervention in Appendix 5, according to which the four continuum of need levels, which an assessment could indicate for a child, are:
- Level 1: Universal
 - Level 2: Vulnerable – Common assessment
 - Level 3: Complex – Common assessment or LA children's social care assessments
 - Level 4: Acute – LA children's social care assessments
- 7.5 When a professional is concerned that a child may be at risk of being significantly affected by, or involved in, gang activity and/or serious youth violence, the child is likely to be vulnerable (level 2) or at risk of harm (levels 3 or 4).

Weapons

- 7.6 Professionals working with Children and Young People who may have reason to be fearful in their neighbourhood or school / FE college should be alert to the possibility that a child may carry a weapon Liverpool Safeguarding Children's Procedures (Liverpool Board, 2007) **Reference required**

8. Vulnerable Children and Young People (and Some Children and Young People with Complex Needs)

8.1 Common Assessment Framework (CAF)

Deciding to Undertake a CAF

- 8.1.1 **A common assessment should be undertaken by the service or agency which first has concerns that a child is vulnerable to, or at risk of harm from, gang involvement or activity. There may be a need to assess (and convene meetings) about more than one child. In all circumstances when undertaking a CAF, consent should be obtained from parents/carers and the child/young person
- 8.1.2 A professional who has concerns about a child should discuss these with his/her immediate/line manager, nominated safeguarding Children and Young People adviser [\[link\]](#) and local professional with specialist knowledge in relation to gangs and serious youth. The decision to undertake a common assessment is a matter for professional judgement, taking into account whether:
- The child appears to have needs which are not being met but it is not clear what these are;
 - A child is not progressing as expected and the reasons for this are not clear;
 - It appears likely that the child will need help from more than one agency;
 - Additional information is required to meet needs which have already been identified; and/or
 - A parent, carer or child requests an assessment.
- 8.1.3 Where available, a pre-assessment checklist can be used to assist the professional in deciding whether or not a common assessment would be appropriate. The professional should check whether a CAF has already been done by contacting the local officer responsible for co-ordinating the CAF (using Contact Point when available), or asking the child and parents.
- 8.1.4 If a CAF already exists, the professional will need the consent of the child / family to access information from the lead professional (see Section 9.4, below) about the child's needs and about services already in place or adding information.
- 8.1.5. The exception to this is where professionals have concerns that to involve parents would risk further harm to a child, see Section 10. Parental Engagement, below.

***See also the Risk Assessment Framework for Children and Young People affected by Gangs and/or Serious Youth Violence in [Appendix 3](#), Level 2: Vulnerable – Common Assessment and Level 3: Complex – Common Assessment or LA Children's Social Care Assessments, and [Section 8](#). [Assessing Levels of Need](#) and [Appendix 5](#). [Quick Guide to Assessments](#)*

Undertaking a CAF

- 8.1.6 The professional undertaking a CAF should:

- a) Discuss the benefits of the CAF with the child/family and offer the assessment;
- b) If the child / family consent the assessment can go ahead;
- c) See the CAF flowchart for action to take if the decision is not to go ahead with CAF or if an assessment is refused;
- d) Use the local CAF form as a prompt:
 - aim to gather information about all aspects of the child's life, not just those that fall within this service remit
 - concentrate on information which is most relevant to this episode (additional information for other sections of the CAF form can be included later by other professionals)
 - focus on strengths and positives in the child's life as well as concerns
 - base the assessment on evidence (what has been observed or what the child or parent has said) rather than opinion
- e) Record the results of the assessment and decide, in discussion with his/her immediate/line manager and nominated safeguarding Children and Young People adviser, on the level of response needed (see Appendix 5. Quick Guide to Assessments);
 - is this a level 2a case: single agency or maximum 2 agencies; is it a level 2b case: multi-agency or is it level 3 complex or level 4 (see Section 9.4. Children and Young People at Risk of / or Experiencing Significant Harm, below)
- f) Agree and record the actions, timescale and anticipated outcomes on the CAF form (e.g. if the child needs multi-agency support, who will convene the multi-agency / team around the child (TAC) meeting – see also Section 8.2. Multi-agency Professionals / Team Around the Child Meeting below)
- g) Record consent to share the assessment information with other agencies and any limitations on that consent;
- h) Check that consent has been obtained to send a copy to the local officer responsible for co-ordinating the CAF;
- i) Give a copy of the assessment to the child and family;
- j) Agree a meeting date to review progress against the CAF action plan;
- k) Review progress against the CAF action plan;

Reviewing the CAF Action Plan

8.1.7 The outcomes could be one of the following:

- a) Child and family are now receiving the services identified and there are no more additional or unmet needs No further action required at present. Consult with manager and agree decision. Close CAF;

- b) Not all the actions agreed have been carried out and some needs remain:
 - record non-completed actions
 - identify people and resources needed to complete them
 - set a date for completion and arrange a further review meeting
- c) Needs have changed or further needs have been identified and other support or services required:
 - continue with CAF process
 - complete revised action plan
 - arrange a further review meeting
- d) Circumstances have changed and/or needs have become more severe. Consult with manager and make referral to the appropriate agency. Record their response and set date to review.

8.2 Multi-agency Professionals / Team Around the Child Meeting

8.2.1 If a common assessment indicates that more than two agencies should be involved in meeting the child's needs, then the initial CAF holder (the person starting the CAF) should set up a 'team around the child' (TAC) meeting. The professional will need to reach agreement with the child and family about which agencies will be invited. The professional should also consult the local professional with specialist knowledge in relation to gangs and serious youth violence

8.2.2 Any agency concerned about the welfare of a child or young person has a responsibility to call a CAF meeting

8.2.3 Agencies invited to attend the meeting may include:

- Local professional with specialist knowledge in relation to gangs and serious youth violence / multi-agency gangs and serious youth violence team, if there is one
- Liverpool Anti-social Behaviour team (LASBU);
- Appropriate School representation drawn from school pastoral staff, assigned Pupil Attendance & Education Welfare Officer and a Safer School Police Officer.
- Youth offending team or youth inclusion support panel (YISP) / youth inclusion programme;
- LA children's social care if appropriate⁴³;
- LA housing;

⁴³ LA children's social care are likely to be involved in cases which are assessed as complex child in need cases (see Quick guide in Appendix 5.), which are nevertheless most appropriately managed by another agency

- LAC specialist nurse;
- Local Police Neighbourhood Inspector;
- Health representative;
- Probation service;
- Representatives from CAMHS.
- Local youth service (possibly targeted youth support team); and
- The referrer.

8.2.4 Agencies currently involved with the child or young person, or agencies who have previously worked with the family and who have appropriate contributions to make, will also be invited to attend (e.g. youth / voluntary sector services).

8.2.5 The child and family will also attend TAC, and professionals must ensure that they are able to participate fully in the meeting.

8.2.6 The purpose of this meeting is to enable professionals to work together with the child and family and agree a co-ordinated plan of action to meet the needs identified. At the first TAC, a lead professional should be appointed (see Section 8.4 Lead Professional).

8.2.7 Where the Child/young person is already open to an agency (this will most commonly be Children's Social Care or The Youth Offending Service, that agency should call a multi agency meeting to address an holistic response to risk issues

8.3 Multi-agency Decision Making and Signposting

8.3.1 The multi-agency meeting has a number of responsibilities and functions to fulfil:

- Share information about the child and their family. Under Section 115 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, all agencies are empowered to share information without consent for the purpose of crime prevention and/or detection (although obtaining consent is good practice);
- Identify key contacts and lead professional;
- Plan the most appropriate services to intervene and support the child and their family;
- Modify plans in the light of information shared;
- Ensure accountability;
- Increase mutual understanding and use risk assessment techniques;
- Identify other Children and Young People who might be at risk;
- Increase understanding of different agencies' ability to and constraints about taking action; and
- Increase understanding of the success of different interventions.

8.3.2 The outcome of meeting may be that:

- There is no need to proceed further at this point;

- There is a need to invoke child protection procedures;
- There is a need for further assessment;
- There is a possibility of criminal action against an adult;
- Counselling is required to divert the child from involvement;
- There is justification for criminal action against the child;
- There is insufficient information at this stage, but concerns remain and further work is required to clarify them; or
- A referral to a voluntary project / organisation should be made.

8.3.3 Multi-agency case plans should have clear outcomes, assigned responsibilities and be led by the lead professional.

8.4 Lead Professional

8.4.1 The lead professional will be chosen, from among those practitioners forming the team around the child, to take the lead in co-ordinating provision and to be a single point of contact for a child and their family for the range of services represented by the TAC.

8.4.2 It is the responsibility of the initial CAF holder (in agreement with his/her line manager) to ensure that there is a clear handover of responsibility to the lead professional or to another professional. This ensures continuity and is part of ordinary good practice.

8.4.3 Some examples of the tasks a lead professional may need to carry out are:

- Build a relationship with the child and family (or other carers) to secure their involvement and engagement in the process;
- Co-ordinate the delivery of a set of actions which provide a package of support and a process by which this will be regularly reviewed and monitored;
- Support the child through key transition points and, where necessary, ensure a careful and planned handover takes place if it is more appropriate for someone else to be the lead professional; and
- Identify where additional services may need to be involved, including making a referral to LA children's social care if they think that a child is suffering or is likely to suffer significant harm (see Section 9.1, Referral to LA Children's Social Care, below).

8.4.4 Other members of the team around the child are expected to support the lead professional in carrying out their role by:

- Delivering the specific actions they agreed to in the plan;
- Keeping the lead professional up-to-date with developments, actions and any delays relating to the plan;
- Attending meetings called by the lead professional;
- Contributing to the planning, delivery and review of actions agreed; and
- Contributing to decision making around closing the CAF.

- 8.4.5 All staff undertaking the role of lead professional need to have access to suitable professional support and supervision.

9. Children and Young People at Risk of / Experiencing Significant Harm

9.1 Referral to LA Children's Social Care

- 9.1.1 **If a professional is concerned that a child is at risk of significant harm – as a victim or a perpetrator of serious youth violence, gang-related or not – the professional should:

- Wherever possible, consult with their agency's nominated safeguarding Children and Young People adviser, their manager and
- Consider section 5. Harming others, in the Liverpool Safeguarding Children's Procedures (Liverpool Board, 2007) **Reference required**
- If the threshold is met at level 4 for significant harm (see Appendix 5. Quick Guide to Assessments), then a referral must be made to Careline, in line with Section 6. Referral and Assessment and Section 7. Child Protection Enquiries, in the Liverpool Safeguarding Children's Procedures (Liverpool Board, 2007).

9.2 LA Children's Social Care Response

- 9.2.1 LA Children's Social Care will respond in one of three ways following receipt of a referral to Careline and will advise the referrer which plan is in place:

- An initial assessment will be undertaken to identify the child's level of need and service provision;
- The initial assessment may identify the child or young person as being at risk of significant harm and in need of protection. This will necessitate a child protection enquiry and a core assessment of need under section 47 of the Children and Young People Act 1989; Consideration should also be given to convening a Child Protection Case Conference, in accordance with Liverpool Safeguarding Children's Procedures, 2007.
- Where no concerns are identified, there will be no further action. In these cases, Careline will advise the referrer verbally and in writing as to why they are not taking action.

- 9.2.2 When an agency receives notification that LA Children's Social Care will not be taking action, the professional who made the referral to LA Children's Social Care should consider a common assessment for the child (see Section 8.1. Common Assessment Framework).

- 9.2.3 In cases where LA Children's Social Care identify a risk of significant harm or are aware that an offence may have been committed against a child, they will hold a strategy discussion with the police in line with Section 6. Referral and Assessment in the Liverpool Safeguarding Children's Procedures (Liverpool Board, 2007) **Reference required**

- 9.2.4 Once concerns are raised about harm from gang activity and serious youth violence, there should also be consideration of possible risk to members of the child's family and other Children and Young People in the community. Professionals should be alert to the fact that other Children and Young People could be identified as being at risk of harm from gang involvement / activity and will then need to be responded to as a child in need or a child in need of protection.

***See also the Risk Assessment Framework for Children and Young People Affected by Gangs and Serious Youth Violence in Appendix 3, Level 3: Complex – LA Children's Social Care Assessments and Level 4: Children and Young People in Need of Protection – LA Children's Social Care Assessments, and Section 8. Assessing Levels of Need and Appendix 5. Quick Guide to Assessments.*

9.3 Strategy Discussion / Meeting

- 9.3.1 See also Section 6. Referral and Assessment in the Liverpool Safeguarding Children's Procedures (Liverpool Board, 2007)
- 9.3.2 The strategy meeting must first establish if either parents or child has had access to information about the harmful aspects of gang activity and serious youth violence. If not, the parents/child should be given appropriate information regarding the harmful consequences of gang activity and/or serious youth violence.
- 9.3.3 If necessary, an interpreter, appropriately trained in all aspects of gang activity and serious youth violence, must be used in all interviews with the family – this person must not be a family relation or member of the local community.
- 9.3.4 Every attempt should be made to work with parents on a voluntary basis to minimise the harm (see Section 10. Parental Engagement). It is the duty of the investigating team to look at every possible way that parental co-operation can be achieved, including the use of community organisations and/or community leaders to facilitate the work with parents/family. However, the child's interest is always paramount.
- 9.3.5 If no agreement is reached, the first priority is protection of the child and the least intrusive legal action should be taken to ensure the child's safety.
- 9.3.6 The primary focus is to prevent the child suffering significant harm, rather than removal of the child from the family.

9.4 Children and Young People at Risk of Immediate Harm

- 9.4.1 See also the Risk Assessment Framework for Children and Young People Affected by Gangs and/or Serious Youth Violence in Appendix 3, Level 4: Children and Young People in Need of Protection – LA Children's Social Care Assessments, and Section 7. Assessing Levels of Need and Appendix 5. Quick Guide to Assessments.
- 9.4.2 If the strategy meeting decides that the child is in immediate danger and should be removed to or kept in a safe place, then an emergency protection order (EPO) or PPO. See Section 7. Child Protection Enquiries, in the Liverpool Safeguarding Children Board Procedures (Liverpool Board, 2007).

10. Parental Engagement

- 10.1 Wherever possible, professionals in all agencies should involve parents as early as possible in cases where there are concerns that a child may be affected by gang activity and serious youth violence; and the child and his/her parents should be invited to any multi-agency meeting to discuss the concerns.
- 10.2 The exception to this is where professionals have concerns that to involve parents would risk further harm to a child. If the parents are not invited, the reason should be recorded in the minutes of the meeting together with a written undertaking that a named person informs them of the outcome of the meeting.
- 10.3 Parental consent is required in order to undertake a CAF.
- 10.4 Where a referral is made to LA Children's Social Care for an initial assessment, parental permission is required by LA Children's Social Care in order to seek information for assessment purposes. See Liverpool Safeguarding Children's Procedures (Liverpool Board, 2007)
- 10.5 In instances when LA Children's Social Care initiate s47 (child protection) investigations, the social worker should inform parents at the earliest opportunity of concerns, unless to do so would place the child at risk of significant harm or undermine a criminal investigation which involves the parents, family members and children, please refer to Liverpool Safeguarding Children's Procedures (Liverpool Board, 2007)
- 10.6 Staff should work to maintain parental involvement throughout.

Difficulties in Engaging Parents

- 10.7 Staff have a duty to look at every possible way that parental co-operation can be achieved, including the use of community organisations and/or community leaders to facilitate the work with parents/family (whilst keeping the child's interests paramount).
- 10.8 Where a child is not involved with the Youth Offending Service (YOS) and the parents are unwilling to engage, professionals should consult Section 10.

YOS Parenting Programmes and Orders

- 10.9 Parenting programmes, run or commissioned by YOTs, provide parents with an opportunity to improve their skills in dealing with the behaviour that puts their child at risk of offending. They provide parents/carers with one-to-one advice, as well as practical support in handling the behaviour of their child, setting appropriate boundaries and improving communication. By improving the parenting skills of parents/carers, these programmes address one of the biggest risks associated with young people offending. See Section 4. Context.
- 10.10 Parents should be offered the opportunity to attend a parenting programme voluntarily if their child becomes involved with the Youth Justice System or

attends a project such as a Youth Inclusion and Support Panel (YISP)⁴⁴ or Youth Inclusion Programme (YIP)⁴⁵

- 10.11 YOS may use a Parenting Order to require parents, who do not attend voluntarily, to do so in order to stop their child offending.

⁴⁴ Youth Inclusion and Support Panels (YISPs) aim to prevent anti-social behaviour and offending by Children and Young People 8 - 13 years considered to be at high risk of offending. See <http://www.yjb.gov.uk/en-gb/yjs/Prevention/YISP/>

⁴⁵ Youth Inclusion Programmes (YIPs), are tailor-made programmes for 8 to 17-year-olds to reduce offending, truancy, and exclusion for 8 to 17-year-olds in disadvantaged neighbourhoods: see <http://www.yjb.gov.uk/en-gb/practitioners/Prevention/YIP/>

11. Risk to Professionals

- 11.1 Professionals should be aware of any potential threats to the social workers' safety during interaction with a child before or during section 47 enquiries and should make a decision on the suitability of a home visit. It may be more appropriate to interview the child and/or parents and carers in a neutral setting.
- 11.2 Risk of harm may also exist for other professionals, who may be visiting a household without knowledge of the gang context, or to follow up concerns about a child's involvement in gangs. Information-sharing about high-risk families and individuals (such as those who carry lethal weapons) should be considered across all agencies that might have interaction with that individual, such as health professionals, social workers and the police.
- 11.3 All professionals must consult with their individual line managers if it is perceived that a situation/visit/contact with an individual will place the professional at risk. The individual agency must ensure that they adhere to their own procedures for protecting staff, however information about any risks must be shared with multi agency partners and consideration must be given to the facilitation of a multi agency meeting where information can be shared and preventative actions planned
- 11.4 Liverpool LSCB has an agreed protocol for assessing the risks to professionals when a child is subject to a child protection plan

Please see *Liverpool Safeguarding Children's Procedures* (Liverpool Board, 2007)

12. Looked After Children

- 12.1 Looked After Children and Young People say that bullies, gangs and the risk of serious youth violence are the worst thing about where they live⁴⁶.
- A fifth of Children and Young People had concerns about gangs and bullies; and
 - Over half of the Children and Young People had been bullied – with 20% of them as frequent victims.
- 12.2 Whilst LA Children's Social Care professionals have a key 'corporate parenting' role for Looked After Children and Young People and also care leavers, professionals in universal services also have regular contact with these Children and Young People. In addition the police, YOS and the voluntary sector can, in some cases, have relatively high levels of contact with these Children and Young People.
- 12.3 In some parts of Liverpool, Looked After Children and Young People may be recruitment targets for gangs. Professionals in all agencies who have contact with Looked After Children and Young People should be alert to their increased vulnerability to becoming gang-involved, targeted by gangs or adversely

⁴⁶ Roger Morgan, Children's Rights Director, 2007 *Looked After in Care* (consultation with 300+ Children and Young People in care)

affected by gang activity. These Children and Young People could potentially be at risk of harm from serious youth violence.

LA Children's Social Care

- 12.4 When Children and Young People are known to be involved with or affected by gangs, professionals need to take into account gang territory and gang membership when planning placements for Looked After Children, to avoid placing a child in a situation which exposes him/her to serious youth violence.
- 12.5 At LAC reviews, the Independent Reviewing Officer should recommend to the Child Safeguarding Unit that a multi-agency professionals or network meeting is convened if there are concerns that a child may be vulnerable to gang involvement and/or serious youth violence. The overall intention is that there will be clear lines of accountability for any looked after child who is vulnerable to or affected by gang activities and/or serious youth violence.

13. Different Professionals' Roles and Responsibilities

13.1 All Agencies

- 13.1.1 Safeguarding Children and Young People (in this instance from harm through gang activity and serious youth violence) is everyone's responsibility⁴⁷
- 13.1.2 Accordingly, professionals in all agencies must follow the procedures in Sections 6 to 12 above if they identify vulnerability or risk of harm to a child through gang activity and/or serious youth violence.
- 13.1.3 Professionals in all agencies should also be aware of the significance of issues such as those listed in Section 4.1 The Origins of Violence in Children, which may provide an opportunity for early intervention and prevention.
- 13.1.4 Professionals in all agencies should be confident, competent and easily able to access support from:
- Their agency's nominated Safeguarding Children and Young People Adviser (see section 2.3.5 of the Liverpool Safeguarding Children's Procedures (Liverpool Board, 2007))
 - Their agency's nominated Common Assessment Framework Adviser (if different to the nominated Safeguarding Children and Young People Adviser); and
 - The local professional with specialist knowledge in relation to gangs and serious youth violence or gangs and serious youth violence team, if there is one
- 13.1.5 Each agency should ensure that their staff are receiving the information / training required to enable them to identify risks of harm to Children and Young People from gangs and serious youth violence. Staff should have access to any specialist support needed from the professional/s in point 12.2 above, to respond appropriately.

⁴⁷ Making Arrangements to Safeguard and Promote the Welfare of Children and Young People (DfES 2005), www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/resources-and-practice/

13.2 LA Children's Social Care

- 13.2.1 LA Children's Social Care professionals need to be alert to the possibility that a child referred to them or a child they are already working with may, in addition to any of the child's other presenting issues, be or become vulnerable to / involved with, a gang or serious youth violence.
- 13.2.2 LA Children's Social Care professionals should initiate engagement with parents early and maintain it throughout, particularly for Looked After Children. See also Sections 4. Context. 10. Parental Engagement and 12. Looked After Children, above.

13.3 Youth Offending Service (YOS)

- 13.3.1 Liverpool Youth Offending Service works with young people who may be involved in gangs/ serious violence at different levels. Some young people are regular, active and willing gang members. Others may be involved unwillingly and there will be some young people on the periphery of gangs and / or violence who are at risk of becoming involved in such behaviour.

Liverpool YOS staff attend the MARV (Multi-agency Response to Violence) again in full meetings and will share information about young people in this forum. In addition YOS staff will share information with Children's Services regarding any issues concerning gangs/ serious youth violence for each young person they are working with and their siblings at the earliest opportunity. YOS staff will make referrals via Careline in respect of all young people (and their siblings) who are considered to be at risk due to gang activity/ serious violence.

YOS professionals must liaise with establishments to ensure that the secure estate staff have knowledge of an inmate's gang affiliations, any risks they pose to other young people and any known risks to them from other young people.

13.4 Police

- 13.4.1 The Police, especially Neighbourhood Policing Teams, should be aware of Children and Young People living in households which are affected by gang activity and/or serious youth violence. This also includes parents who are adult gang members. The Neighbourhood Policing Teams should share this information internally with child abuse investigation teams (Family Crime Investigation Units) and externally by referral to LA Children's Services, at the earliest opportunity, for an assessment to be undertaken.
- 13.4.2 The Police should inform LA Children's Services, wherever possible, of victims of gang-related crime and serious youth violence, given the correlation between victims and future gang members

Osman Warnings

- 13.4.3 A warning regarding threat to life, or an Osman Warning, is so named after the Osman v United Kingdom case (1998) which placed a positive obligation on the authorities to take preventive measures to protect an individual whose life is at risk from the criminal acts of another individual. In the context of gangs, this may occur as a result of gang rivalry or because of an incident occurring within a young person's own gang (for example threatening to leave or refusing to commit an act of violence).
- 13.4.4 If the Police give an Osman Warning to a young person or an adult who was residing with a child they should inform Careline and consider whether:
- There is a need for immediate action (see Section 9.4 Children and Young People at Immediate Risk of Harm, above); or
 - There is risk of significant harm (see Section 9.1 Referral to LA Children's Social Care, above); or
 - The child should be referred for a common assessment (see Section 8.1 Common Assessment Framework, above).
 - That this is a need to inform all professionals who are involved with the family.

Disarm/ MARV (Multi Agency Response to Violence)

Within Merseyside Police there is a Gun Crime Joint Agency Group (JAG) that meets on a weekly basis, chaired by the Head of Matrix, Merseyside Police. This is attended by police officers from the gun crime affected policing areas, CPS, Probation, and YOS. This group is primarily enforcement focused. Whilst the JAG has had some success in diverting individuals away from gun enabled criminality through the offer and provision of employment, education and training opportunities, in order to provide sustainability and long-term reductions, the Liverpool MARV was introduced in December 2008. The MARV (Multi Agency Response to Violence) exists to further develop the prevention and rehabilitation strands of the DISARM strategy. The partnership consists of Merseyside Probation Service, particularly Novas Scarman (Probation Floating Support Service), Liverpool Youth Offending Service, Lee Valley Housing, Arena Housing, Cobalt Housing, Riverside Housing, Connexions, Merseyside Violent Crime Offender Unit, Liverpool Mutual Homes (North & South), Liverpool Anti Social Behaviour Unit, Liverpool Primary Care Trust, and Merseyside Police.

13.5 Schools and FE Colleges

- 13.5.1 For many young people being in a group is a key part of forming their sense of identity, building social skills and support networks. Being part of a group is a powerful and positive part of the school experience. The use of the term 'gang' by professionals should be used with caution as it can be misleading and glamorise or reinforce the group identity.
- 13.5.2 Schools and FE colleges can be well placed to pick up signs of anti-social behaviours, aggression / bullying and gang activity amongst Children and Young People and identify those at risk of harm as victims and/or perpetrators (including siblings, girls at risk of sexual exploitation etc). By listening to young

people, parents and families, school staff may be able to judge how significant the signs are as indicators of more serious activity. The development of Locality Teams and the Team Around the School (TAS) in Liverpool will offer further opportunity to establish additional local intelligence.

- 13.5.3 Poor academic achievement is one of the most consistently-reported risk factors found to increase the likelihood of violent behaviour and crime. Recent USA research found that primary school boys with low achievement were convicted of a violent crime when an adult twice as often as other boys⁴⁸.
- 13.5.4 Where professionals in schools or other educational establishments have concerns about the risk of harm to a child from anti-social behaviour, bullying and potential or actual gang activity and/or serious youth violence, they should inform their nominated safeguarding Children and Young People adviser and follow the procedures in Sections 8 to 12, above.

Achievement and Exclusion

- 13.5.5 In recent UK studies⁴⁹, almost two thirds of 23 active gang members interviewed had been permanently excluded from school, with the exclusions often resulting from gang involved and gang-affected Children and Young People attempting to bring weapons onto school premises. The studies confirmed that Children and Young People involved in anti-social behaviour and gangs tend to see academic striving as 'uncool' and, as a result, educational failure can come to be accepted as the norm amongst them. Liverpool Fair Access Protocol and Panel will support schools in identifying appropriate placements for Children and Young People drawn into the gang "culture"

Schools as Safe Places

- 13.5.6 Liverpool's annual Bullying and Feelings of Safety Audit indicates that pupils consider schools as the safest place to be, apart from within the family home
- 13.5.7 Schools affected by gang issues and potential or actual serious youth violence will need to work in partnership with the police (the Safer Neighbourhoods Policing Team), YOS and LA Children's Services. Safer School Partnerships can be an effective forum for this multi-agency working. The Safer School Partnership cites steering young people away from involvement in criminal gangs as one of its key quality standards. An early evaluation found that pupils in participating schools felt significantly safer than their counterparts in comparator schools.
- 13.5.8 A Headteacher recently interviewed⁵⁰ said:
- "I think the Children and Young People are relieved to leave gang culture outside. We have a zero tolerance policy on knives. We*

⁴⁸ Early predictors of adolescent aggression and adult violence, in *Violence and Victims*, 4, 79-100. (D.P. Farrington, 1989).

⁴⁹ *Reluctant Gangsters* (Pitts, 2007)

⁵⁰ *Reluctant Gangsters* (Pitts, 2007)

use security wands and conduct random searches. We agreed this with the parents. We have rules: No hoods, No hats, No caps and No bandanas. We say to them that the street stays on the street."

She argued that in this way the Children and Young People are given the option of embracing school values rather than street values because they feel safe inside the school and are freed from their dilemma about gang loyalty.

- 13.5.9 Gangs and Group Offending Guidance for Schools (DCSF, 2008); the full document is available at:
<http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/docbank/index.cfm?id=12639>.

The purpose of this guidance is to help schools in areas where "gangs" or offending by groups of young people may be of particular concern. It provides the following:

- Information on the prevalence and characteristics;
- Advice on prevention, how to create a safer school environment, identification and intervening with pupils at risk
- Advice on what to do if an incident occurs, including emergency planning

General guidance on emergency planning for schools is available at

<http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/emergencies>

This guidance gives examples of how to work with external partners and provides examples of good school practice and resources.

13.6 Health

- 13.6.1 Health professionals, in particular GPs and A&E staff, may become concerned about a child's involvement in serious youth violence due to injuries or wounds, particularly those caused by sharp instruments or knives.
- 13.6.2 Through their home visiting, health visitors and other health professionals may become aware of gang involvement by the parents, older siblings or other adults linked to a household, or that the Children and Young People in a household are being affected by gang activity and/or serious youth violence in the neighbourhood.
- 13.6.3 Health professionals may also come into contact with girls who they suspect may have been sexually exploited or abused, perhaps through Genito-Urinary Medicine (GUM) clinics, sexual health services and GPs. The professionals should be alert to a child's likely reluctance and fear of discussing this.
- 13.6.4 If a person is admitted to hospital and the injuries sustained are suspected of being part of a gang related incident, information should be shared appropriately as soon as possible, a risk assessment conducted and risk-reduction strategies put into place.
- 13.6.5 In all cases where there is concern all staff should follow their own agency procedures

13.7 Merseyside Probation Service

- 13.7.1 Professionals in the probation service are in a position to identify Children and Young People at risk of harm from gang activity and/or serious youth violence through their work with adults who are violent and/or gang members. These adults may be parents, older siblings, people engaged in recruiting Children and Young People into gang activity and/or serious youth violence, or living in households with children.
- 13.7.2 Probation service professionals should share information about Children and Young People at risk of harm from gang activity and/or serious youth violence by referral for a common assessment and/or to LA children's social care at the earliest opportunity.

13.8 Community Groups / Voluntary Agencies and Youth Work

- 13.8.1 Community groups / voluntary agencies can be well placed to know the profile and location of local gang activity and potential or actual serious youth violence through their community links and the work they do to support Children and Young People and their families. In addition, community workers and professionals from voluntary agencies can be best placed to reach Children and Young People who are at risk of harm from their peers.
- 13.8.2 All community group and voluntary agency staff and volunteers should be aware of their responsibilities for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of Children and Young People. They should respond to child protection concerns in line with this Procedure and the *Liverpool Safeguarding Children's Procedures (Liverpool Board, 2007)*
- 13.8.3 An example of a youth service strategy for working with Children and Young People and gangs / serious youth violence is a three-level hierarchical model of intervention distinguishing between:
- Gang-involved Children and Young People and those potentially or actually engaged in serious youth violence – worked with by the YOS;
 - Anti-social and aggressive Children and Young People and those at risk of gang involvement – worked with by the YOS and the Youth work service; and
 - Children and Young People affected by anti-social behaviour, bullying and gangs, and at risk of reluctant involvement – worked with by the youth work service worry that this will not be linked to the para above maybe a reword?.

13.9 Information Sharing

- 13.9.1 Professionals in all agencies need to be confident and competent in sharing information appropriately to safeguard Children and Young People at risk of harm through gang activity and/or serious youth violence.
- 13.9.2 Professionals in all agencies should share information in line with Section 3. Information Sharing, in the *Liverpool Child Protection Procedures (Liverpool Board, 2007)*.
- 13.9.3 All agencies are empowered to share information without consent for the purpose of preventing or assisting the detection of crime in accordance with

section 115 of the *Crime and Disorder Act 1998*, although obtaining consent is good practice

- 13.9.4 See also: *Sharing personal and sensitive personal information on Children and Young People and young people at risk of offending – a practical guide* (Youth Justice Board & ACPO, 2005) at www.yjb.gov.uk.

14. Role of the Local Safeguarding Children Board

Responding to Anti-Social Behaviour, Youth Violence and Gangs

- 14.1 Asked to reflect on what might have prevented their own involvement in offending / group offending, children and young people cite:

- Having a significant, respected adult they could turn to;
- Having a chance to develop their skills and potential.

- 14.2 In areas where Children and Young People are particularly at risk from gang activity and/or serious youth violence, the Local Safeguarding Children and Young People Board (LSCB) should work with partners such as the DISARM group, the Liverpool Anti Social behaviour Unit, the neighbourhoods, schools and youth service to audit local activity to tackle anti-social behaviour, youth violence and gangs in relation to these main areas:

- Tackling the supply of knives, guns and ammunition for criminal use;
- Reducing the level of glamour associated with anti-social behaviour, youth violence and gang membership and the use of weapons;
- Partnership with Children and Young People and parents to build community capacity for making anti-social behaviour, youth violence and gang membership less attractive;
- Promoting YOS-led multi-agency support for parental self-help groups in the community to support parents prior to their Children and Young People becoming involved with the youth justice system;
- Transforming deprived neighbourhoods, futures and opportunities to provide alternative activities to make anti-social behaviour, youth violence and gang membership less attractive;
- Increasing the confidence of communities affected by anti-social behaviour, youth violence and gang-related crime that the problem is being properly addressed;
- Increasing the willingness of potential witnesses to come forward to give evidence / information to the authorities;
- Ensuring effective engagement and cross-agency risk management of anti-social behaviour, youth violence and gang related activity and those at risk;
- Increasing the sustainability of funding of initiatives and projects which tackle anti-social behaviour, youth violence and gang related activity;

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- Encouraging effective partnership-working and information-sharing in relation to anti-social behaviour, youth violence and gang related activity; and
- Improving partner knowledge of the evidence base relating to causal factors and what works in tackling anti-social behaviour, youth violence and gang related activity.

14.3 The Audit will be presented in an Annual Report to both LSCB and DISARM, however the LSCB Performance Management Sub Group will collate relevant information which will include the number of young people injured/ killed, number of young people who are convicted and sentenced, number of young people who are repeat offenders (linked into data around the childhood of the perpetrator group e.g. previous child protection history and number of young people missing from home/ care). Information will also be obtained from the Child Death Overview Panel and Critical Incident Group.

14.4 See Interventions Appropriate for Groups of Children, in Appendix 8.

14.5 See *Tackling Gangs: a practical guide for local authorities, CDRPs and other local partners* (Home Office, 2008), which sets out the lessons learnt from the Tackling Gangs Action Programme launched in 2007 and is available to download from <http://www.crimereduction.homeoffice.gov.uk/violentstreet/violentstreet011.htm>

14.6 See also the Youth Crime Action Plan (Home Office, 2008), which sets out the government's programme for tackling youth crime and can be downloaded from <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/documents/youth-crime-action-plan/>.

Preventing Anti-Social Behaviour, Youth Violence and Gangs

14.7 In order to contribute to the prevention agenda, best practice advises that the LSCB should:

- Promote awareness of the relationship between “good enough” parenting and aggression in Children and Young People.
- Promote Early Years Service - led parenting support.
- Promote capacity-building in the community for parental self-help groups to educate and support “good enough” parenting.

14.8 See the Executive Summary of the Wave Trust Report in Appendix 2.

14.9 In areas where Children and Young People are particularly at risk from gang activity and/or serious youth violence, the LSCB should:

- Ensure that preventative work in relation to gangs and serious youth violence is a key part of the LSCB's strategy. The LSCB should link up with other preventative work in the area, establishing strong partnerships with social exclusion teams, City safe (Liverpool's crime and disorder reduction partnership), the police and other agencies.
- Have an overview of the work of agencies such as the voluntary and community sector in the area to minimise the risk of other Children and Young People becoming involved in gang activity and serious youth violence

- Collect data on Children and Young People who have been identified as needing additional services due to gang-related and/or serious youth violence concerns, and feedback from Children and Young People and their parents at high risk from gang-related activity and/or serious youth violence, in order to inform provision of services in the future.

Training

- 14.10 The LSCB should ensure that single agency and multi-agency training is provided for all professionals who work with Children and Young People on:
- Child development – the relationship between ‘good enough’ parenting and the pro- and anti-social coping mechanisms Children and Young People develop as a consequence.
- 14.11 In areas where Children and Young People are particularly at risk from gang activity and/or serious youth violence, the LSCB should ensure that single agency and multi-agency training is provided on:
- Safeguarding Children and Young People and promoting their welfare in relation to gang activity and serious youth violence is provided; and that professionals are confident working with local prevention and intervention programmes relating to gangs

Child Death Overview Panel (CDOP) & Critical Incident Group (CIG)

In accordance with *Working Together to Safeguard Children and Young People* (Chapters 7 and 8), LSCB's undertaking Serious Case Reviews and child death review processes in relation to individual incidents, where gang activity is a factor, consideration should be given to the safeguarding needs of any siblings in the victim's family, or those of other associated children and young people and, where appropriate, take action to safeguard their welfare.

All children and young people who have been subject to a serious injury and/or who have died as a result of gang related activity or serious youth crime will be discussed in both the Critical Incident Group and at the Child Death Overview Panel.

A recommendation as to whether an injury or a death meets the criteria for a Serious Case Review will be made by the Chair of the Critical Incident Group and endorsed by the Chair of LSCB

Maintaining the focus on Safeguarding Children and Young People affected by gang activity and /or serious violence

- 14.12 While this remains the joint responsibility for all agencies in the partnership, the LSCB Policy, Practice and Procedure (PP&P) sub group will have specific responsibility for maintaining and developing practice to protect children and young people at risk from gang activity and/or serious youth violence. In so doing it will co-opt of members of the partnership with specific expertise to lead in this area. This group will be responsible for the development of the annual report as identified in 14.3 above.

15. Professional conflict resolution - dissent at referral and enquiry stage

Professionals providing services to children and their families should work co-operatively across all agencies, using their skills and experience to make a robust contribution to safeguarding children and promoting their welfare within the framework of discussions, meetings, conferences and case management.

All agencies are responsible for ensuring that their staff are competent and supported to escalate appropriately intra-agency and inter-agency concerns and disagreements about a child's wellbeing.

Concern or disagreement may arise over another professional's decisions, actions or lack of actions in relation to a referral, an assessment or an enquiry.

Professionals should attempt to resolve differences through discussion and/or meeting within a working week or a timescale that protects the child from harm (whichever is less).

If the professionals are unable to resolve differences within the timescale, their disagreement must be addressed by more experienced / more senior staff.

Appendix 1

Merseyside Police Service Definition of Serious Youth Violence and Youth Violence⁵¹

1. Definitions

- 1.1 Serious Youth Violence is defined as any offence of Most Serious Violence or Weapon Enabled Crime, where the victim is aged 1-19.
- 1.2 Youth Violence is defined in the same way, but also includes Assault with Injury offences.

Counting Rules

- 1.3 The Serious Youth Violence and Youth Violence measures count the number of victims (aged 1-19) of offences, rather than the number of offences. This means that if a record has either an original main classification or a subsidiary classification that meets the relevant definition, all victims aged 1-19 will be counted.
- 1.4 If a record falls into more than one category (i.e. if a homicide is committed using a gun), then each victim will still only be counted once.

Youth Strategy

- 1.5 Youth Strategy success measures are presented as the number of victims per 1,000 youth population. To produce meaningful ratios, groupings of victims aged 10-19 for Serious Youth Violence and 10-17 for Total Youth Crime (for both victims and the comparator populations) have been used. These age ranges will provide more insightful ratios than the 1-19 and 1-17 groupings. The majority of youth victims fall within these aged 10+ groupings, so comparing to a broader population with more “younger” victims will produce misleading figures.

2. Most Serious Violence

- 2.1 Most Serious Violence Offences consist of the following classifications:
- Homicide and Child Destruction (excl corporate manslaughter)
 - Attempted Murder
 - Wounding or other act endangering life and GBH with intent
 - Causing Death by Dangerous/Careless/ Inconsiderate Driving
 - Causing Death by Aggravated Vehicle Taking

Assault with Injury

- 2.2 Assault with Injury consists of

Weapon Enabled Crime

- 2.3 Weapon Enabled Crime consists of both Gun Crime and Knife Crime, which are defined as follows:

⁵¹ Source: Performance Directorate © MPA

- 2.4 Gun Crime – any offence that meets both the criteria below:
Major category of Violence Against the Person (excluding the minor category of Offensive Weapon), Sexual Offences, Robbery or Burglary
Includes a gun feature code
- 2.5 Knife Crime – any offence that meets both the criteria below:
- Murder Attempted Murder
 - Threats to Kill
 - Manslaughter
 - Infanticide
- Wounding or carrying out an act endangering life
- Wounding or GBH with Intent
 - Sexual Assault
 - Rape
 - Robbery; and
 - with a knife/sharp instrument feature

Appendix 2

Violence and What To Do About It

Executive Summary of the Wave Trust Report 2005⁵²

The following is the executive summary from this report.

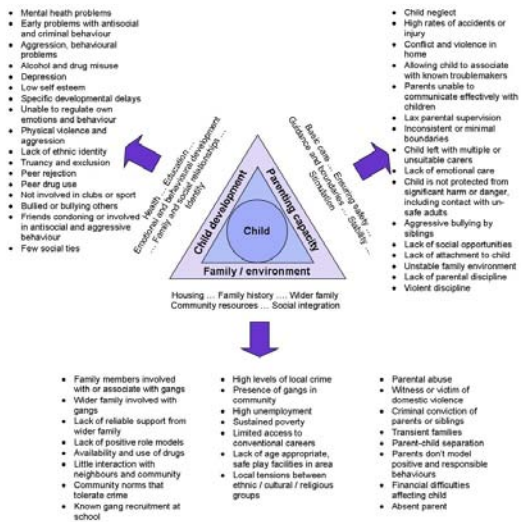
1. Although violence is increasing alarmingly in our society, it is neither universal nor inevitable, but a behaviour that is caused and can be prevented. Many societies have existed without discernible inter-personal violence.
2. A violent act results from an interaction between two components: an individual's propensity (personal factors) and external triggers (social factors). Social factors alone, however undesirable, lead to violence only when the internal propensity is also present. In the absence of a weapon, a trigger is harmless.
3. The propensity to violence develops primarily from wrong treatment before age three.
4. The structure of the developing infant human brain is a crucial factor in the creation (or not) of violent tendencies because early patterns are established not only psychologically but at the physiological level of brain formation.
5. Empathy is the single greatest inhibitor of the development of propensity to violence. Empathy fails to develop when parents or prime carers fail to attune with their infants. Absence of such parental attunement combined with harsh discipline is a recipe for violent, anti-social offspring.
6. Violence is triggered in high-propensity people by social factors such as unemployment, poor housing, over-crowding, economic inequality, declining moral values and stress. Alcohol plays a significant role in the timing of violence. Since these factors reflect long-term cultural trends that are difficult to reverse, investment in reducing the number of people with propensity to violence is a strategic imperative.
7. Violence costs the UK more than £20 billion per annum. A tiny fraction of this is spent on prevention, and most of that on the least effective age groups (e.g. 5-15 years). Early (0-3 years) intervention is fruitful and cost-effective. Negative cycles can be transformed and Children and Young People given the opportunity to grow into contributing, personally fulfilled adults (and future parents).
8. The single most effective way to stop producing people with the propensity to violence is to ensure infants are reared in an environment that fosters their development of empathy. The surest way to achieve this is by supporting parents in developing attunement with their infants.
9. A search for global best practice in prevention of violence identified many effective early interventions. These include programmes which develop attunement and empathy in:

⁵² See: www.wavetrust.org/WAVE_Reports/index.htm

- Tomorrow's parents while they are still in school;
 - Current parents; and
 - Parents-to-be.
10. Recognition of the importance of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and investment in its diagnosis and treatment could play a major role in combating the cycle of violence.
 11. This report recommends large-scale implementation of a series of pilot studies of approved early intervention programmes.
 12. This report recommends the selection of one British town or city as a large-scale test area for simultaneous implementation of a full range of effective intervention strategies, to see if their combined effects might be cumulative.
 13. This report invites debate on the merits of a focused, national crime prevention agency to co-ordinate, fund and drive effective early prevention strategies.

Appendix 3

Risk Assessment Framework for Children and Young People Affected by Gangs and/or Serious Youth Violence

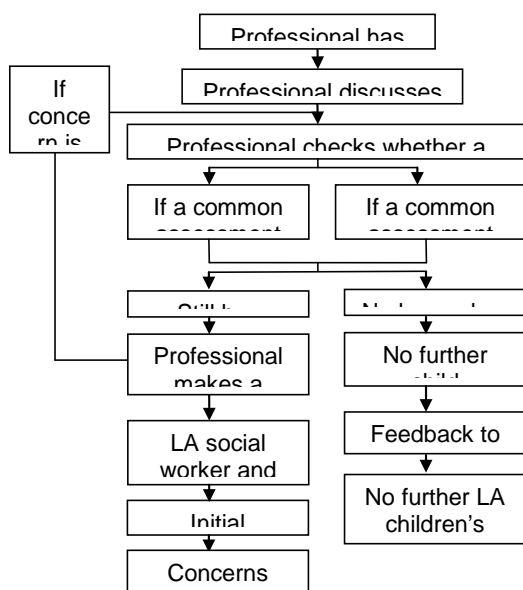


Appendix 4

Quick Referral Flowchart

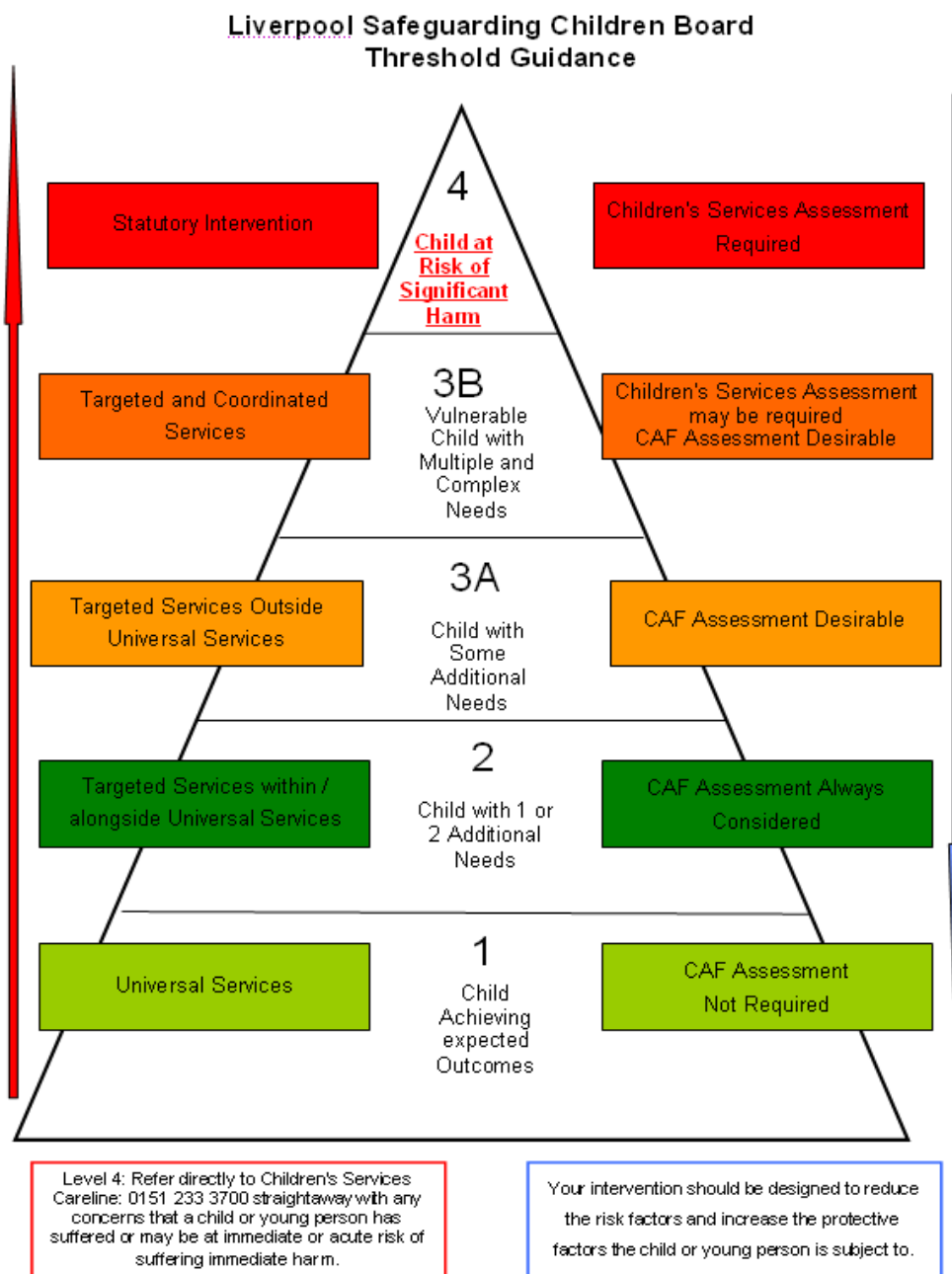
(Extracted from Liverpool Child Protection Procedures)

If at any point in this process, professionals suspect or find that a child is suffering or at risk of suffering significant harm – STOP the CAF process and make a referral to LA children's social care in line with the [Liverpool Safeguarding Children's Procedures \(Liverpool Board, 2007\)](#)



Appendix 5

Quick Guide to Assessments and Levels of Intervention



The 4 Levels of Need

Level 1

Level 2 Child with 1 or 2 additional needs

Child needs are not clear, not known or not being met. This is the threshold for

Level 3

Child with some additional needs - Level 3A

Children likely to require longer term intervention from statutory and or specialist services. A CAF assessment may still be desirable at this level. Children with additional needs may require a targeted integrated response which will usually include a specialist or statutory assessment.

Child with some complex needs Level - 3B

Children with multiple or complex needs may require a Child in Need assessment. If it is agreed that a child may be a child in need under the Children Act 1989 then a referral to children's social care should be discussed with the child and parents. If they consent, then the child should be referred to the local authority children's social care.

Level 4 Child at risk of significant harm

Has suffered or is likely to suffer significant harm or has suffered significant impairment to their health or development. The four categories of harm: Physical, Emotional, Sexual, Neglect.

Appendix 6

Merseyside Police Contribution

1. The police recognise that responding appropriately to Children and Young People who are involved with or affected by serious youth violence requires a long-term, joined-up strategy involving high-level, multi-agency strategic leadership. Police, working in partnership, will also make use of effective problem solving interventions and diversionary activities, alongside rigorous enforcement options where appropriate.
2. Officers and police staff who interact daily with young people are best placed to recognise the signs displayed by young people that

may either already be involved in serious youth violence or most at risk of becoming involved. A responsibility rests with all to ensure that intelligence around those young people is accurately recorded and then shared with partner agencies, in order that appropriate strategies can be implemented.

3. Neighbourhood Teams, Schools Officers, and Police Community Support Officers are building up trust with communities in order that local concerns around serious youth violence is shared with police. The presence of police officers within schools is broadly welcomed and local partnership programmes within schools outline the risks of gun and knife crime to young people.
4. The local MPS contribution can include:
 - Police membership of local Safeguarding Board and support/membership of Preventions Sub Group to ensure the issue of gangs is addressed from a strategic preventions perspective in addition to enforcement activity;
 - Effective use of force intelligence systems to bring Children and Young People at risk of gun and knife crime activity and/or serious youth violence to notice;
 - Deployment of dedicated Schools Officers taking responsibility for policing schools environs and exchanging information and intelligence on gun and knife crime activity and/or serious youth violence.
 - Use of schools officers to build strong relationships with educators to address offending and behavioral issues within the school environment;
 - Develop effective links between neighborhoods and Family Crime Investigation Units (FCIU) to ensure that Children and Young People being exploited within a serious youth crime context are supported;
 - Use Schools Officers to deliver messages to Children and Young People warning them of the physical and emotional dangers of allowing themselves to become involved in gun and knife related crime, and/or serious youth violence;
 - Work cross border in order to tackle gun and knife crime gang activity and/or serious youth violence both operationally and to ensure joined up working with partners in long term problem solving;
 - Share information with partner agencies through the JAG and MARV meeting structures to monitor levels of intervention, diversion and enforcement targeted at identified individuals;
 - Train front line staff in *Every Child Matters* and ensure that they ask, "Is this linked to serious youth violence" when dealing with incidents and to record this information;

- Police Officers working in YOTs to target individuals involved in gun and knife criminality or those at risk of becoming involved for intervention work and restorative justice programmes;
- Deploy resources to identified hotspot areas where groups of young people congregate in order to engage and prevent offending;
- Use of Sec 30 and Section 60 of the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994, and Section 37 of the Powers of Criminal Courts Sentencing Act 2000.
- Provide police support for Education Welfare Officers to ensure school attendance through Truancy Patrols and home visits;
- Support, manage, develop and publicise the success of diversionary schemes such as the *KICKZ Project* to provide young people with positive alternatives to criminal activity and/or serious youth violence;
- Seeking to sponsor and support mediation between rival factions and individuals particularly at the conclusion of criminal justice proceedings;
- Provide a co-ordinated approach for enforcement, rehabilitation and prevention activities through the Matrix Co-ordination Unit, Merseyside Police.

Appendix 7

Preventing the Impact of Gangs and Group Offending on Schools

Prevention of Risk: A Whole School Strategy

1. Pupils

- 1.1 Schools could assess the readiness of their systems for dealing with gang and group offending issues.

School Systems	Purpose
Common Assessment Framework	To assess children's needs for services earlier and more effectively - ensuring a holistic, joined up approach.
Pupil support systems	To ensure that systems for behaviour and attendance improvement - including use of Pastoral Support Plans,

School Systems	Purpose
	fixed term and permanent exclusions and managed moves - are assessed against risk of gang impact.
Personal protection	If a pupil is targeted, are there agreed strategies with pupils and parents between school and agencies to protect the child in school and while travelling to and from school?
Safeguarding	Siblings or gang members and especially those at risk of sexualised behaviours may be referred into the safeguarding processes.
Screening systems for referral to other agencies	Place 'markers' of gang activity and/or serious youth violence on behaviour systems and set up transfer thresholds to police or YOS systems.
Information sharing with the police and YOS	Under the principle of 'what protects the child', agree how information (soft and hard) will be collected, used and shared.
Self-referral systems	Confidential systems for pupils, parents to seek assistance. Some police, LA and extended schools have set up such phone, e-mail or web based systems. Junior Crimestoppers may also play a role locally
Home- school liaison	What family support systems are there for victims? Be aware if families are the recruitment route to gang membership.
Peer support / mentoring	Personal support strategies to keep Children and Young People clear of harm.
Restorative approaches	Have restorative approaches available (e.g. through YOS, police or LA) for informal and formal conflict resolution.

2. Curriculum

The Whole Curriculum

- 2.1 This includes the learning which pupils undertake through the ethos of the school as well as the taught curriculum. Approaching gang issues through the curriculum requires careful handling to ensure that gangs are not inadvertently glamorised, or gang membership reinforced.

The Targeted Curriculum

- 2.2 Schools may also choose to undertake one-off themed curriculum activities on gang issues sometimes using the national curriculum framework or resources developed or supported by LA or voluntary groups:

The Specialist Curriculum: Individual or Group Work

- 2.3 Many schools use small group learning sessions with young people at risk:
- As potential or actual victims of crime – to learn protective behaviours perhaps taught by police or other groups;
 - As potential gang members – to understand both the emotional draw to the gang and the potential consequences;
 - To promote positive options using mentors as role models to divert pupils from the gang brand.

3. Families

See: [\[www.direct.gov.uk/gangs\]](http://www.direct.gov.uk/gangs) Home Office has produced guidance for parents and carers on gangs.

Targeted support

- 3.1 Schools can benefit from targeted parenting and family support interventions for pupils at risk of negative outcomes, including pupils at risk of being involved with or targeted by gangs:
- An early intervention project for 8-13 year olds to ensure parents receive a coordinated package of support to help with their child's behaviour – being expanded by 2011 to most local authorities;
 - Family intervention project – for identified young people and their families at highest risk;
 - Targeted youth support coordinated by a lead professional including family support when appropriate;
 - A YOS parenting programme;
 - Support from parenting advisers – every la will have at least two, working through extended schools and across the la, and individual schools may have a parent support adviser;
 - Parenting contracts – a voluntary instrument drawn up between the parent and either the school or la. Parenting contracts help parents or carers improve their parenting skills (e.g. by enabling them to attend parenting classes, counselling or one to one sessions) so as to improve their child's behaviour and attendance.

4. Other Partners Including the Police

Police

- 4.1 It is vital that all schools work closely with local police services. There are varied models of school-police working. These include Safer School Partnerships (SSPs) - a form of provision that is structured and well-evaluated. Schools should discuss developing the school-police joint

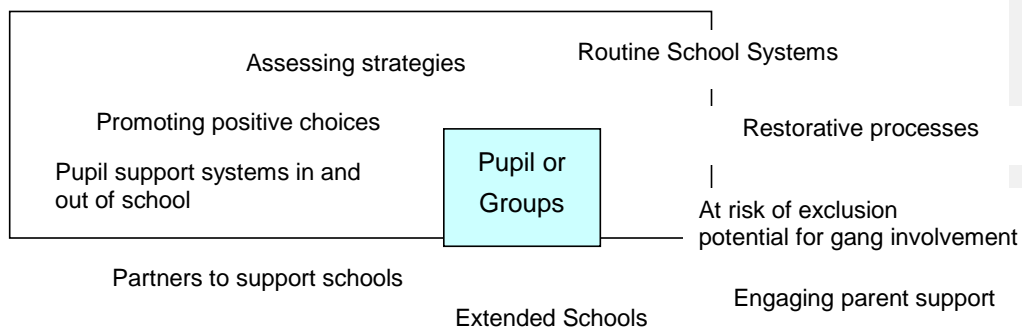
working strategy with LA Children's services. For further information see <http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/resources-and-practice/IG00050/>

Other partners

- 4.2 There are a number of other partners that can support schools in tackling gang and group offending issues.

Dealing with individual pupils or groups at risk of being involved in gangs

- 4.3 Schools may wish to review their work in the following areas in order to manage down the risk or impact of gang engagement.



Legal Powers Available to Schools

- 4.4 Schools have a duty through Governors and Headteacher to establish a behaviour policy which can be reviewed to ensure that it covers actions relevant to preventing and tackling gang impact.

Emergency Planning

- 4.5 Schools should review their existing emergency plans in the light of possible scenarios relevant to their community, for example if:
- There is immediate threat of gang conflict on site or immediately off site; or
 - There is credible information about a pupil/adult carrying a weapon with serious intent to do immediate harm.
- 4.6 General guidance on emergency planning for schools is available at: <http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/emergencies>.

Appendix 8

Interventions Appropriate for Groups of Children

Level	Profile	Interventions
1	Peer Group: a small, unorganised, transient group of Children and Young People who 'hang out together' in public places such as shopping centres. Crime is not integral to their self definition.	Youth support services / Positive activities
2	Wannabe group: includes Children and Young People who band together in a loosely structured group primarily to engage in spontaneous social activity and exciting, impulsive, criminal activity including collective violence against other groups of children. Wannabees will often claim 'gang' territory and adopt 'gang-style' identifying markers of some kind.	Targeted youth support

- | | | |
|----------|--|--|
| 3 | Gang: a relatively durable, predominantly street-based group of Children and Young People who see themselves (and are seen by others) as a discernible group for whom crime and violence is integral to the group's identity. | Criminal justice / Police-base interventions: YOS, YISP, PAYP, ASB and ABA work, parenting |
| 4 | Organised Criminal Group: members are professionally involved in crime for personal gain operating almost exclusively in the 'grey' or illegal marketplace. | Criminal justice / Police-base interventions |

Adapted from Hallsworth and Young⁵³ and Robert Gordon⁵⁴

Appendix 9

Further Information

1. **Police:** <http://www.met.police.uk/>
2. **Youth Justice Board:** www.yjb.gov.uk/
3. **Home Office:**
 - 3.1 Tackling Gangs: a practical guide for local authorities, CDRPs and other local partners (May 2008):
www.crimereduction.homeoffice.gov.uk/violentstreet/violentstreet012.htm
 - 3.2 Tackling Gangs Monitoring report (May 2008):
<http://www.crimereduction.homeoffice.gov.uk/violentstreet/violentstreet011.htm>
 - 3.3 Youth Crime Action Plan (July 2008):
<http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/documents/youth-crime-action-plan/>
 - 3.4 Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships (CDRP):

⁵³ Hallsworth & Young (2004) Three Point Typology of Urban Collectivities

⁵⁴ Robert Gordon's Five Point Typology of Youth Groupings

<http://www.crimereduction.homeoffice.gov.uk/regions/regions00.htm>

- 3.5 Guidance on multi-agency working on gangs:
www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/pdfs05/dpr45.pdf
- 3.6 Guidance for parents and carers on gangs: [www.direct.gov.uk/gangs.....]
- 3.7 Guidance for young people:
www.teenissues.co.uk/saygoodbyetoschoolgangs.html
and: <http://www.teenissues.co.uk/SayGoodbyeToSchoolGangs.html>
- 3.8 Being Gang Bullied: **Childline** (0800 1111)
- 4. DCSF:**
 - 4.1 School behaviour policies guidance:
<http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/wholeschool/behaviour/schooldisciplineupilbehaviourpolicies/>
 - 4.2 'Dealing with Troublemakers' guidance:
<http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/docbank/index.cfm?id=9232>
 - 4.3 Parental responsibility guidance:
<http://www.dfes.gov.uk/publications/guidanceonthelaw/dfeepub/jun00/050600/index.htm>
 - 4.4 Anti-bullying guidance:
<http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/wholeschool/behaviour/tacklingbullying/>
and:
<http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/wholeschool/behaviour/tacklingbullying/safetolearn/>
 - 4.5 Cyber bullying guidance:
<http://publications.teachernet.gov.uk/default.aspx?PageFunction=productdetails&PageMode=publications&ProductId=DCSF-00685-2007>
 - 4.6 Weapons searching guidance:
<http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/docbank/index.cfm?id=11454>
 - 4.7 Drugs guidance:
<http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/wholeschool/behaviour/drugs/>
 - 4.8 Violence reduction guidance:
www.teachernet.gov.uk/doc/12187/ACFD89B.pdf
and:
www.teachernet.gov.uk/.../behaviour/npslba/modules.cfm?moduleID=AddressingPoorAttendance§ionID
 - 4.9 Guidance on the use of force to control or restrain pupils:
<http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/docbank/index.cfm?id=12187>
 - 4.10 Safer School Partnerships guidance:
<http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/resources-and-practice/IG00050/>

- 4.11 Extended Schools guidance:
<http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/wholeschool/extendedschools/>
and: <http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/ete/extendedschools/>
- 4.12 Statutory guidance on the duty to secure positive activities for young people. Positive Activities for Young People guidance:
<http://www.dfes.gov.uk/localauthorities/index.cfm?action=content&contentID=13319&categoryID=75&subcategoryID=106>
- 4.13 Guidance on Targeted Youth Support Services:
www.ecm.gov.uk/deliveringservices/tysemergingpractice
- 4.14 Guidance on school travel and transport: **Home to School Travel and Transport Guidance**
- 4.15 Guidance on community cohesion:
www.teachernet.gov.uk/wholeschool/communitycohesion/
- 4.16 Guidance on emergency planning:
<http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/localauthorities/index.cfm?action=subsubject&subjectID=7&subsubjectID=105>
- 5. **NASUWT:** Guidance on gangs and schools:
<http://www.nasuwt.org.uk/Templates/Internal.asp?NodeID=7579>

www.safeguardingchildrenboard.liverpool.gov.uk

Appendix 10
Relevant Contact Details

www.safeguardingchildrenboard.liverpool.gov.uk