



GANGS AND SERIOUS YOUTH VIOLENCE CONSULTATION REPORT

Commissioned by Safer Slough Partnership

REACH EVERY GENERATION LTD
Unit 9a Reeds Farm Estate, Writtle, CM1 3ST
23.06.2018

Contents

Executive Summary	p2
Aims of the Consultation	p4
Work Completed	p5
The Findings	p13
Forecast	p25
Recommendations	p27
Closing Statement	p30
Appendix	p31



Executive Summary

Reach Every Generation LTD, a gang specialist organisation undertook an 8-week consultation within the Borough of Slough from April-June 2018.

The research conducted was in response to Thames Valley Police and Slough Borough Council wishing to identify the current issue with gangs, serious youth violence and potential risk posed to young people locally. This included interviewing professionals, young people, reviewing multi-agency forums and identifying the gaps and needs in service to offer more substantial and specific support to those most at risk. Ensuring changes, where appropriate would take effect and be demonstrated across the borough.

Whilst interviewing professionals we found that there was difference of opinion regarding young people and gangs in Slough, with many suggesting there was a growing issue with this but others suggesting there were no gangs in Slough, rather 'naughty' children. This is believed to be due to professionals comparing Slough's current issues to that of London, which in turn causes a gap in support being offered to those most at risk and a breakdown in partnership working as professionals failed to agree on support needed and thresholds being met.

Interviewing young people gave a broad assessment of the current trend of gang glorification, fear and intimidation being spread across Slough, with London gangs namely 410 from South London and 1011 from North West London frequenting the area and meeting with local young people. Several shared young people were carrying weapons and forming rivalries, particularly Britwell, Manor Park and Burnham against Lismore Park and Wexham with Cippenham becoming more involved as a unitary.

The most concerning find was the age range of 12-16-year-old males expressing their rivalry and willingness to engage in violent acts against their enemies, whilst professionals are believed to be unaware according to young people, as social media is a driving force and platform for this.

Due to the findings, we believe Slough has a current issue with stabbings and drug dealing. The gaps in multi-agency work, professional knowledge of current issues and difference of opinion amongst professionals, coupled with the rivalries amongst young people this could become a growing issue that will become more violent and untamable before too long.

As a direct response to this we have offered recommendations that we believe would strengthen Sloughs approach to the current and forecasted issues locally. Please note: these are the recommendations of Reach Every Generation LTD.



Recommendations

- 1. Make child criminal exploitation a priority*
- 2. Parent awareness around exploitation and gangs*
- 3. School assemblies year 6-11 (awareness/prevention)*
- 4. Secure apprenticeship and employment pathways for young people*
- 5. Risk Assessment toolkit to identify vulnerable young people*
- 6. Specialist service for young people involved in gangs – please refer to recommendations page 27*
- 7. Consider reflective group supervision for frontline staff*
- 8. More use of disruptions in SEMRAC and SYV*
- 9. Strengthen SYV – please refer to recommendations page 27*
- 10. Level 1 and Level 2 Gang Awareness Training for all staff across the partnership*

To close we would like to highlight the professionalism and direct response to the work we brought to Slough was very encouraging. We were challenging a subject many find uncomfortable and don't necessarily agree with. However, the professionals we worked with during our time with you were forthcoming and open to the work - making our role much easier.

Additionally, this gave us all the confidence that Slough had a great passion and desire to make a difference to the lives of young people. Despite the size of Slough in comparison to areas such as London, the strength of the teams and individuals is remarkable and will achieve great things once they are working together at a consistent level.



Aims of The Consultation

Reach Every Generation completed a bespoke 8-week consultation which consisted of 3 days a week for the 8-week period. This consultation comprised of a review of what support and structures were in place to effectively support young people currently involved in gang activity, or to deter young people who are vulnerable or at risk of being groomed by older gang members from the local area and from the surrounding London areas.

One of the criteria for the consultation was around how young people involved in this lifestyle were identified and levels of risk set and to explore how the general use of the word 'gangs' in relations to specific young people was influencing the approach to any work completed with them. To obtain a clearer picture around the formation of gangs in the Slough area and to identify any gaps in service within the borough and areas for development of staff offering frontline services, detached work and strategic levels.

To identifying a clear distinction between enforcement, intervention and diversion, highlighting who was doing what in this area of work and explore ways that this could be streamlined and how multi-agency working, and good practice could be shared amongst all parties involved.

To review what current knowledge and awareness of the identified increase in serious youth violence, gangs and county lines was known. Identifying what resources were available for staff and young people and what exit strategies were being utilised, if any.

To review what role key agencies, play in how the issues of gangs, vulnerability and safeguarding young people are identified, managed and addressed.

Capturing the voice of the young people of Slough and comparing this to those of professionals that work directly with these young people.

Identify and support the reduction of local young people and children being influenced and groomed by older local people and group's crossing over from London. Offer guidance on how specific programmes of intervention can lead to long-term evidence of sustainable impact, that can be measured by a reduction in criminality and use of custodial and secure settings as means of enforcement.

Direct and guide how as a result of intervention and diversion, with a focus of redirecting young people towards realistic and sustainable exit routes from such lifestyle choices, Slough can be in a position of evidencing older reformed teens reinvesting in the next generation that are coming behind them.



Work Completed

Mapping Local Area

Reach Every Generation staff mapped the Slough area in two parts. Initially, we accompanied the local policing team on a drive around the local area. We then interviewed young people and professionals alike. Our aim in doing so was to identify;

- the areas of concern,
- what life was like in Slough for young people
- fears - of both the young people and the residents
- likes
- dislikes
- aspirations
- local hotspots

During our time interviewing staff, we aimed to identify;

- their perception of gangs locally
- trends and patterns (through their eyes)
- what is effective
- what the needs are
- the intensity of the problem
- their knowledge of local resources available to professionals and young people

Police 'Ride-Along'

We accompanied a local police officer from Thames Valley Police, Slough with the aim of identifying hot spot areas, potential soft targets, areas affected by crime and distances between rivals. This enabling us to build an image of life in Slough for young people, based on the geographical outlay of the area.



School Research

Reach Every Generation were able to attend 6 secondary schools in Slough;

- *School 1*
- *School 2*
- *School 3*
- *School 4*
- *School 5*
- *School 6*

During these sessions, we held 30-minute open discussions with pupils from each year group. We met with the staff separately.

With the pupils we explored their experience of living in Slough. We asked them whether they felt there was a gang presence in Slough and, if so, whether they felt professionals were aware, whether there were areas to avoid, whether young people had any aspirations, what they felt would bring change and what resources were available locally.

In this process we also interviewed heads of year, safeguarding leads and behavioral and pastoral care team members. (*Total teachers and young people engaged - please see table 1*).

CCTV Observation

During this visit we spent time at the CCTV hub for Slough. We reviewed footage of a number of incidents involving young people and groups that are known to professionals locally. The incidents reviewed gave us an indication of the level of behavior and some context to the growing concerns within the borough.



SEMRAC Observation

Gavin attended the SEMRAC meeting held at St Martins Place which was chaired by a Social Care professional in The Trust. In attendance were practitioners and/or managers from the following agencies:

- Slough Children's Services Trust – CSE and Missing Manager, Head of Service (Chair), and Virtual School
- Thames Valley Police; Intelligence, Child Abuse Investigation Unit and Missing Person's Coordinator
- Slough Borough Council CSE and Trafficking Co-Ordinator
- Health - Sexual health, Children Looked After nurse and Safeguarding lead
- Turning Point
- Youth Offending Team
- Youth Services including Engage
- Education – Attendance and Welfare
- Additional agencies may be represented on a case by case basis where they have knowledge of a case or may be pivotal in contributing to risk management of a case or assisting in achieving one of the group's stated aims. Attendance of that representative must be agreed in consultation with the Chair prior to the meeting.

The agenda set out for the meeting was as follows;

- Introduction and confidentiality statement
- Missing children
- New CSE risk indicator tools received
- Children at high, medium and low risk of CSE
- Other Local Authority children placed in Slough at risk of CSE
- Persons of interest
- Locations
- Themes
- AOB



Serious Youth Violence Meeting

Gavin and Rob attended the SYV meeting together. The meeting was chaired by John Stanley of Thames Valley Police. In attendance was;

- Police (Neighbourhood and Intel teams)
- YOT
- Education (Safeguarding leads)
- NHS Liaison & Diversion
- Children's Social Care
- Turning Point (drug and alcohol), voluntary sector
- Young People's Services
- SBC Housing and Housing Associations
- Aik Saath
- Innovation Hub

This meeting addressed the concerns of young people that had been referred to the committee and identified areas of concern regarding their behavior, social group, offending and risk factors. A number of young people were discussed individually with some actions being recommended as suggestions for next steps.

LSCB Education Sub Group

Rob attended the LSCB Education Sub Group meeting whilst Gavin was delivering Level 1 Gang Awareness Training. This meeting was chaired by Jatinder Matharu, Education Safeguarding Officer, however she was covering for Cate Duffy, Director of children's learning and skills.

Rob discussed the current work we were undertaking in Slough and what we had found so far, with an intent to offer support in the future.

In attendance were leads from numerous secondary schools across the borough. Many were interested in the work we were undertaking and expressed an interest in the prevention and intervention work we would be offering.



Level 1 Gang Awareness Training

Gavin delivered a full day of training to professionals in Slough. The training session was for all professionals working with young people in any capacity and is designed to raise the general awareness of staff around gangs and how they operate. The training includes enlightenment on the growth of gangs, levels of involvement, signs to look out for and much more. Over fifty of the sixty professionals invited were in attendance. We covered the following topics;

1. What is a gang?
2. How they operate
3. OCG and Street gangs
4. UK wide statistics
5. Identity and Belonging
6. What does a gang offer?
7. Girls in gangs
8. Psychology
9. Trauma
10. Personal testimony

Designated Safeguarding Lead Primary Forum

Gavin and Rob attended this forum which was arranged and led by Jatinder Matharu. We discussed the current work we were undertaking in Slough and what we had found so far, with an intent to offer support in the future.

In attendance were leads from numerous primary schools across the borough. In particular, there was interest shown regarding the transition from primary to secondary school, specifically around awareness and prevention of negative influences.

Aik Saath Debate (DB8) Night

Gavin, Rob and DCI Pierce attended a debate night with Aik Saath, arranged by Rob Deeks and his team. We delivered three individual sub groups with young people who live and attend school/college in Slough. In total, there were approximately 40 young people in attendance.



During our sessions we covered topics such as; gangs, policing and education, training and employment. Young people engaged well during the debate and shared their experiences of all three topics. The event was used as a platform for young people to have their voices heard and effect change in their local area. Many of the younger attendees expressed an interest in attending the summer boot camp that was being proposed. *(Please see feedback section).*

Youth Parliament Meeting

Gavin and Rob attended a youth parliament meeting and met with young ambassadors from the youth parliament. In total we engaged approximately 12-15 young people, all of which live and attend school/college in the area. Like many of our engagements with the young people we were able to hear firsthand from those living in Slough. They gave accounts of their views on Slough with an emphasis on gangs, fear, locations, no-go areas and current issues facing young people in Slough and what changes would make a difference.

OCG Meeting Thames Valley Police

This meeting was chaired by DCI Pierce of Thames Valley Police. In attendance were, intelligence teams, CID, Sargent's, a Community Safety Partnership Manager, a Youth Offending Team Manager, Youth Service Management and Gavin and Rob.

This meeting was strictly confidential, so much of what was discussed is withheld from this report. However, the meeting was very well structured and had clear direction and intention - a good template for other meetings with a strategic approach such as SYV and SEMRAC.

Staff Interviews

The main objective of the staff interviews was to engage with as many professionals as possible across Slough, to identify the following;

- Are there gangs in Slough?
- What is the current picture?
- Strategies to disrupt, intervene and enforce the problems?
- Their job roles?
- Are they satisfied with the approach to Serious Youth Violence (Gangs) in Slough?
- Do they feel appropriately equipped to manage the needs?
- What is working?
- What isn't working?
- What are the needs?
- Current trends and active gangs?



- Do they feel enough is being done to manage the issue locally?
- The history of gangs and gang work in Slough?

During the interview process Gavin and Rob interviewed staff on a 1:1 basis and also in teams, when appropriate. In some cases, individuals who were interviewed in their teams were also invited to speak with us 1:1. Engagement was well approached and came from numerous staff across the borough including, managers, service leads, practitioners, police, youth workers, community project workers, education staff, YOT, Health Care, NHS, CSE team, Social Care, apprenticeship workers, Slough Borough Council staff and Thames Valley Police staff. 30-minute slots were offered to each professional.

Services engaged

Service/Team	Roles	Total
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Young People 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aik Saath • School 1 • School 2 • School 3 • School 4 • School 5 • School 6 • YOT • Youth Parliament 	136
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers/school staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Head of Year • Classroom Teacher • Safeguarding Lead • Pastoral Care • Attendance Officer • Inclusion Team • Teaching Assistant • Designated Safeguarding Lead 	68
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thames Valley Police 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DCI • Inspector • Police Constable • Neighbourhood Policing team • Force Intelligence Team 	10



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Innovation Hub PC • Anti-Slavery Co-Ordinator 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Slough Borough Council 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CSP Manager • Education Safeguarding Officer • Youth Service Manager • Youth Work Apprentice • Team Leader – Young Peoples Service • Return Home Interviewer • Get Berkshire Active x4 • CCTV 	18
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Projects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aik Saath • Slough Integration Service • Britwell Youth Club 	8
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Youth Offending Team 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Head of Service • Police – YOT based • Team Manager • Youth Offending Practitioner • Serious Youth Violence worker • Social work placement 	11
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NHS/Health 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specialist Nurse for Looked After Children • Specialist Safeguarding Nurse Children • Sexual Health Nurse • Gynecologist Doctor 	14
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Trust 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Trust • Social Workers • Team Managers • Operations Managers • Innovation Hub • CSE & Missing Manager • Virtual School Head • Head of Performance & Quality • Operational Director 	19

Total Number of people engaged - 284



The Findings

Undertaking the consultation across The Borough of Slough gave a unique insight into the practice of all the teams and services working with young people, we were able to identify the gaps in service, strengths in partnership working and how individual teams/services both statutory and community were supporting young people, more specifically those that were either involved with crime and violence (gangs) or at risk of exploitation.

Moreover, we investigated what specific interventions were in place for the group of young people identified as above, other than police and YOT which are generally used when a crime has already been committed with some exceptions. We were most interested in prevention and intervention services that would be placed as a deterrent from enforcement.

Slough has different multi-agency meetings; those of interest and relevant to the consultation were SEMRAC, a meeting specifically for sexual exploitation cases led by the Trust, OCG meeting for organised criminal groups and operations, led by Thames Valley Police, and lastly the Serious Youth Violence meeting which is used to discuss the most prolific young people embroiled in crime and violence, led by Thames Valley Police.

As identified in work completed, we undertook a local profiling exercise, we visited the areas which were already identified, this exercise allowed us to view the area through the eyes of an 'outsider'. With the personal experience of gang involvement, it allowed us to understand how areas would be useful for drug dealing, cuckooing and the proximity between rivals, permitting us to put context to what we heard from professionals and young people.

Policing is one of the most important roles within any community, particularly when considering serious youth violence, county lines and exploitation. Whilst reviewing the Borough of Slough we spent time with different police officers in many different settings, which demonstrated their desire to tackle the issues facing not just young people, but the community.

The YOT also play a crucial role within any borough as they engage some of the most prolific young offenders who vary from Anti-social behaviour to serious youth violence and crime. Rob has 20 years' experience working within Barking and Dagenham YOT, with his extensive experience and knowledge he was able to review the practice and use of the service being offered.



This section will highlight the findings during the consultation period, from the 'work completed section'.

Local Area

The Borough of Slough is an area with a history of large quantities of deprivation. However, upon completing our consultation we found Slough to be in the process of a regeneration – an indication that it is moving away from the deprived reputation it once had. There were particular segments which reflected the historic reputation of deprivation, as in every area there are pockets of need and Slough is no exception.

The areas of concern were identified numerous times during interviews with professionals, young people and police. When we undertook the ride along with an officer from Thames Valley Police we were able to explore the areas around Slough, particularly those affected by crime and violence.

Each area listed below, has small segments of crime and violence;

- Britwell/Northborough
- Lismore Park
- Wexham
- Manor Park
- Chalvey
- Cippenham
- Colnbrook
- Langley
- Town Centre

Slough has a history of gangs, from Organised Criminal Groups, Street Gangs, Drug Importation Gangs, Human Trafficking Gangs and drug dealing gangs. When considering county lines, which is a national issue, Slough is unique as the drug lines are predominately operating out of Slough. Despite this, I believe the proximity to London will entice more drug gangs into Slough. Young people explained that local gangs have been merging with London gangs particularly *410* (from South London) and *1011* (from North West London). It is believed that music is the link that has brought them together, with young people stating they have met these gangs.

From the information provided it became apparent that the first 'street gang' was called *GBG (Grey Bandana Gang)* from Britwell. Staff knew more about this gang than the young people. Currently the gangs who are prominent and well known originate from Lismore



Park/Wexham and Britwell/Manor Park. According to young people, they are the current rivals in Slough. The Britwell gang are supposedly called ‘*Crack City Youngers (CCY)*, this seems to be the name they have adopted and are known by this name amongst professionals and young people alike. Their rivals from Lismore Park and Wexham are supposedly called ‘*Lismore Park Killers’ (LPK)*. This name seems to be used by professionals more than young people. Upon meeting a young person from the Lismore Park gang, we asked who LPK were and he laughed explaining “that’s what they call us, that’s not our name”. It became apparent that LPK as quoted in the Home Office Locality Review in 2017 was in fact not a name used by the gang originating out of Lismore Park/Wexham and the gang knew this was a name being used by professionals.

Due to the proximity of Heathrow Airport, Slough has seen a surge of different groups migrate and establish communities, often staying within their own ethnic community. More recently there has been a re-emerging Roma community in Chalvey. Historically there were Pakistani, Somali, African and Eastern European communities that emerged in Slough. Culturally there can be barriers when trying to engage communities such as those listed as above, however there has been some good examples of positive engagement with the more recent Roma and Somali community. Aik Saath have a very diverse group of young people across Slough attending their numerous groups and Slough Integration Service have been engaging the Somali community. Both are heavily involved in Chalvey where it is common for Roma and Somali communities to reside.

Britwell/Northborough

Young people and professionals identified Britwell/Northborough as an area of concern. It is believed cuckooing and drug dealing is prevalent in this area. Properties are known to be cuckooed by local drug gangs and used as a base from which to sell drugs. Children, as young as 14, are believed to be drug dealing in this area. During our sessions with young people in **School 1**, they confirmed they knew friends aged 13/14 involved with gangs and drugs, where others suggested they had enemies in Lismore Park/Wexham.

What was most concerning was a 13-year-old pupil who stated, “*If I saw an enemy, I would not run. I would rather get stabbed then look like a p***y - even if they had knives!*” During our time in **school 1**, we met numerous young people and it was very apparent that both boys and girls from years 7-10 were either involved or very influenced by gangs. Many were closed and withdrawn, whereas others were open and excitable about the topic of conversation. This caused concern for us as they were young children who could easily be groomed into a lifestyle of drugs and violence due to their glorified perception of gangs.

It was at **school 1** that we first became aware that Britwell, Manor Park and Burnham Village young people were allies. We enquired where the young people were from and found they



were either from Britwell or Manor Park, with a few claiming to be from Burnham Village. Some of the older pupils confirmed they were rivals with Lismore Park/Wexham and explained what they had to do if they saw them, this included them having to confront or fight the opposing person from the other gang.

However, when we had a discussion with teachers and staff it was reassuring that they were aware of both the local issues and the young people who could be involved or at risk of gangs. The staff at **School 1** demonstrated a clear understanding of the needs of young people in their school and were willing to receive any help to support this need.

Lismore Park/Wexham

Lismore Park is a housing estate on the opposite side of Britwell, which is home to the so called “*LPK Gang*”. When driving through Lismore Park it didn’t seem like it was a big estate. Based on our interviews it seemed more was known about Britwell than Lismore Park. However, one police officer explained that Lismore, as with Britwell, is a hostile environment for police with the communities sticking together and viewing the police as a negative presence.

It was noted that when we drove through Lismore Park an older male spotted the unmarked car we were in and within the time we turned around he had gone. He had been standing outside a house with two others and another was approaching.

We found that many of the older members of the gang were in prison, leaving the younger members, some who are brothers or cousins of older members to take over and carry the rivalry they once had. It became apparent that the young people of Lismore Park were often in the Town Centre and Wexham, despite it being believed they would be in the Lismore Park area. Some of the members of Lismore gang lived in the high street of Slough and attended school with rivals from opposing gangs. This, at times caused violent altercations and required periods of separation to ensure no clashes took place.

When we attended **School 2** we were made aware that this was very much Lismore Park territory. Staff informed us that the gangs were frequently spotted outside the school gates intimidating others. Staff were aware of certain members of the gang who are well known amongst other young people and services including the Police. Some staff explained that they felt there were rivals amongst each other in school, but that they manage to keep issues away from staff.

When speaking with the pupils, there was a vast contrast in opinions. To begin with, young people were very closed and withdrawn, refusing to discuss any issues with us. After a short time, we managed to engage them and discovered instantly the individuals who were actively involved and had rivals in the same school. It was made known to us that years 9,



10 and 11 were the active members whereas, years 7 & 8 were the vulnerable young people who could be drawn into gangs, crime and violence.

Some pupils discussed their enemies and we found that a young person from Cippenham had a strong rivalry with a young person from Lismore Park. The young person explained that this was due to his older brother having issues with the Lismore Gang. He explained that he was surrounded by rivals but didn't care as he had enough friends to 'back him'. His friends were in the session with us and they all confirmed that they would 'back him' and have had stand offs with their rival's numerous times. It was only at this school that we found Cippenham and Lismore Park were enemies. Professionals were aware of Britwell and Lismore Park rivalry, but little was mentioned about Cippenham, Chalvey, Manor Park and Wexham.

School 3

During a visit to **school 3** Gavin met with 6 young people, all males aged between 12-14 years old. The first group were 4 young people from the Lismore Park/Wexham area. Upon walking into the room, one young person read my badge and saw the word 'gang' and shouted, "*Nah man! I'm not talking to you! I'm not a gang member. The police keep saying I'm a gang member*". Gavin explained that he was there to discuss their views on how it felt to be a young person in the area and whether they believed there were gangs in Slough etc. The young person then agreed to engage in the session.

During the session Gavin asked the young people what they thought about school and living in Slough. They explained that, in school they have '*ops*' (enemies), and they often clash in school, having physical fights and verbal arguments. The young people were quick to suggest their enemies were not a threat and that they should just '*finish them off*', with one saying, "*someone should end that guy*", indicating that someone should kill him.

The young people explained that the olders were in jail and the group below the olders who would be 16+ are '*about*'. One of the young people explained that his brother just came out of jail, whilst another said his brother just went to jail. When asked why police claimed they were a gang, the young people explained that there were people from Britwell that they didn't like, and they even beat one of them up in the high street in front of a professional. Another young person said he was 'labelled' because of his older brother.

Gavin then met the second group of young people, from the Britwell side of Slough. Similarly, they begun discussing their enemies and claimed that they had fights and beat them up. They laughed about it and told me of occasions when they "*got it cracking*". The group of young people seemed to have more intent on fighting the Lismore Park group and suggested it was the Britwell side that have more power over the Lismore side. Gavin



explored the olders and they explained many of them were now in jail, with only a few still out. One young person who was the youngest of the group explained that he had three brothers who were all in prison for long sentences. The young people went on to explain that his brother shot the older brother of one of the young people Gavin met with previously from the Lismore Area.

The most concerning finds were the intent between the two groups, their age and the intense rivalry, which is a common theme nationally. It became apparent that this issue could eventually escalate to more violence and tit for tat attacks. The young people were open about how they view their rivals and the history of rivalry between the two groups.

School 4

Gavin and Rob attended **School 4**. The young people we met explained that the school was once in Britwell and many of the students that attend come from that part of Slough. When asked if they felt at risk attending a school in a different part of Slough, some suggested it was a problem as they often see young people from Lismore Park. Others advised that it was no issue as they are not involved but they knew what went on through social media.

It was the younger pupils who gave more insight into the current issues amongst young people. Many of them were explaining that they didn't have any involvement but knew a lot due to social media. They mentioned names that had been discussed in numerous other forums and sessions.

They confirmed the rivalry between Lismore Park and Britwell. However, one young person gave an account of the situation and said *"the guys are all talk, none of the youngers are on it, they won't do nothing, just fake, thinking they are gangsters. It is the older guys that stab each other, the youngers just chat s**t on social media"*.

School 5

During our time in **school 5**, we were informed that one of the main young people from Lismore Park attended this school and he was informed that we were coming in. However, this young person didn't attend our session. It is believed that the word 'gang' is what caused him to not attend.

We managed to engage with many young people. The most challenging group were the year 8, 12-13-year-old pupils. It was noted that the two young people who were most challenging had older brothers who had been known to engage in 'gangs' and crime, similar to other young people we met in Slough.



The young people we met with aged 15-16 had a different insight to the issue with one young person having disclosed she had a cousin that was murdered in Slough. This was the first young person we engaged with that had experienced a loss. Other young people in the same group explained that they found Slough to be a rough place with no-go areas. Some of the parks were said to be too dangerous at night, which was confirmed by the young female sharing that her cousin was murdered in a local park.

We also engaged with 6th form students who also confirmed Slough had areas which were more dangerous than others, with some explaining it was worse than many thought as social media was used as a platform to share rivalries and violence. One student had a scar on their face and when asked about it he said, "it was a minor accident". Gavin suggested it looked like a knife slash, but no more was said on the matter.

Young people at this school expressed, some more than any others, what they felt was missing for them and other young people locally, with some suggesting that youth clubs in local areas would be good. Due to rivalries many young people chose to stay local. Another young person explained that he liked making music and wanted to pursue this. Rob challenged the type of music he was producing and whether he could make positive music rather than trap and drill (music that is mainly used by gangs to provoke others and boast about violence). The young person said, given the opportunity he would attend a studio and potentially run sessions for other local young people.

School 6

School 6 was unique as many of the young people that attended were aware of the current issues with none directly involved or suspected to be involved. Many of the young people engaged and shared, like others, that social media was the way they knew a lot about gangs and rivalry.

The young people explained that they were in close proximity to **school 9** which had issues with gangs and troubled young people. Some expressed concern about them loitering around near the gates and intimidating others that attend the school.

The older pupils explained that parks and certain areas were known as hot spots and should be avoided at certain times. Others explained there were alley ways and drug addicts in the vicinity and chose to avoid going near them. When asked about their aspirations, the young people explained they had no desire to live or work in Slough as they felt there are limited opportunities for them, so would consider going to London as an option.

During the session we engaged with a 6th form student who lived in London and travelled to Slough for school. He explained that he was unaware that Slough was as bad as it is as he



travels in and out with no problems. However, the young person explained he compared Slough to London and felt they were very different, so didn't see any risk in Slough. He was shocked to learn of what things are shared on social media such as fights and weapons, as he only mixes with peers in school.

Youth Parliament Meeting

During our brief meeting with the youth parliament members we discussed life in Slough and how the young people felt living in Slough. We got the impression we were speaking to young people who are focused and not involved in gangs or crime.

The majority of the young people said they were aware of violence and groups/gangs in Slough, with a few mentioning murders and stabbings they had heard about.

Unlike other young people, this group didn't give specific names, but knew Britwell, Lismore Park, Manor Park and Chalvey to be areas of concerns. Many said the parks were no-go areas.

Others explained that they would never walk through town at night or through the alleyways as they are dangerous and on one occasion they had witnessed a gang fight in the shopping centre.

There was a clear indication that this group of young people were not involved in gangs or violence but felt they couldn't do the usual things young people do, such as going to the park or meeting friends in town.

The young people were passionate about change and suggested they would like to see change come to Slough, whilst others explained it is scary because they hear about the violence and feel scared enough to avoid areas and parks.

Aik Saath Debate (DB8) Night

During this session many young people were in attendance and the age range varied from 11 – 19 years. It was clear and evident from the start that the young people and staff had positive relations. Due to the nature of this event and the publicity around it, many young people came ready to share their views on the borough and what would bring change.

Like with many of the sessions we had with young people, they were fully aware of the present issues within the borough and who it involved. Again, there was a clear indication,



from those that were of school leaving ages, how they view Slough as a borough regarding future aspirations. Although young people acknowledged that the regeneration in Slough was positive, they did not see a way in which they could be part Slough's future.

Both young people and staff had strong opinions about what and how things could and should change within the borough. This forum generated many suggestions which were led by the young people directly and focused on positive outcomes and not enforcement in relation to assisting those directly involved in gangs and serious youth violence.

One point raised which was evident amongst the young people was that, despite many, if not all of them, being involved in some form of education, they did not see a clear pathway into employment in Slough and were not aware of a number of opportunities currently available to them.

Also, a constant theme throughout our engagement with young people and professionals was the huge impact that the closures of a number of youth club facilities around the borough has had on behavior and the lack of things to do for young people locally.

Many of the young people present expressed an interest in the proposed upcoming boot/summer camp, with some of the older ones desiring to be involved in any positive changes that are planned for work with their peers in the future.

Interviews with Professionals

The number of Professionals engaged in this process equated to 148 in total, covering staff from Slough Borough Council, Young People's Service, NHS, The Trust, YOT, Education Staff and Thames Valley Police. The interviews were mainly held on a 1:1 basis for 30mins at a time, however, on some occasions, we met with teams.

Whilst interviewing staff there was a multitude of different opinions. Most staff believed there was an issue with gangs amongst young people, however, others didn't believe there was a gang issue. The root of this stems from staff comparing Slough to major cities like London.

In some cases, there was little evidence of a joint, multi-agency approach to the current gang issues and there were many who expressed concerns over the way others work or operate which has led to a breakdown in relationships, with no real sharing of resources and expertise in many cases.

The apparent difference of opinion regarding gangs in Slough was that professionals working within the community delivering projects and outreach work had demonstrated an understanding of the issues young people face and echoed similar issues to that of the young



people, whilst other professionals not working directly within the community nor on the frontline engaging with young people shared an opposing opinion, particularly those at management level. Thus, causing frustration and an inability for colleagues to work together against the same targets. To illustrate this further, professionals explained that “we would identify a need for intervention for a young person as we feel there is a risk of gang involvement, violence or criminality but when trying to draw in others from social care we were told ‘criteria’ wasn’t met, therefore no support could be offered and the case would be bounced back ending in no appropriate support being offered to the young person”.

In contrast social care professionals, we spoke to believed others were referring cases that didn’t meet criteria as the risk posed to a gang member is absent from the home, therefore meaning that this did not meet the threshold for social care. During LSCB meetings that we attended, a revised threshold document was in draft format and this would rectify and bring clarity. The example revealed some of the difference in opinion and frustration experienced by staff, however it is expected that this new document will now resolve these frustrations.

Having such contrasting differences of opinion on the current picture of young people in Slough and their involvement in ‘gangs’, is an issue, and causes a vast gap in how to best support and protect such young people. It is imperative that professionals working together have the same collective understanding of the local area and the young people that reside in it. Having this gap of different opinions amongst professionals will make it increasingly difficult to bring about change and offer the appropriate support as highlighted in the *Locality Review 2017*. If in the first instance the support needed cannot be highlighted across the board, then no appropriate action can be agreed and put in place. Moreover, this gap does not allow for a multi-agency approach and risks causing an inability to safeguard and protect potentially vulnerable young people.

Despite this, the passion that professionals have in Slough is very evident and contagious. We found that many teams were doing great work in Slough at both statutory and community levels, however, this work was being delivered in isolation.

It became apparent that there had been many changes in Slough over recent years. The gang issue was nothing new to Slough with staff explaining that they had an issue with gangs a few years back namely the *GBG* from Britwell. Thames Valley Police were seemingly proactive in disrupting organised criminal gangs locally and this was evidenced during our research of Slough. There are many positive projects and services in place for young people such as, Aik Saath, Active Slough, Young People Service outreach, Britwell Boys Club and Get Berkshire Active.

Despite many positive opportunities for young people, there was no evidence of specialist prevention/intervention for young people involved in gangs or at risk of gangs other than



YOT which is an enforcement agency by nature. The need for a specific service, locally based is apparent. The staff which were interviewed all showed an interest in this and believed it was needed as the higher risk young people were left until they were arrested or placed on an order with YOT, indicating that there was low level support and high-level support but nothing in between.

Amongst professionals there was evidence, in some cases, of joint working in relation to safeguarding and supporting young people between the Trust and other services, however gaps in understanding of thresholds and expectations from other services amongst some professionals has resulted in a divide.

Our understanding is that a new threshold document is being drafted for services and it is hoped that this will be able to bring clarity for services in making referrals made for supporting young people. As mentioned above, the passion and determination to see positive change for the young people of Slough was tangible in many of the meetings held with professionals, but unfortunately much of this has been lost in translation.

SEMRAC

The SEMRAC was a well-attended meeting. There were many organisations present which demonstrated a strong multi-agency approach to Sexual Exploitation.

Social workers were invited for a specific time and were able to update the attendees on specific cases. Others around the table were able to ask questions and a decision was made on the case with actions put in place.

Whilst reviewing the meeting I was hoping to hear more discussions about perpetrators and disruption. Little was said about this and it seemed to be more focused on the individual and their risk.

I believe a specific focus on perpetrators and disruption would add value to this meeting, as well as discussing Child Criminal Exploitation. CCE is often missed during exploitation meetings or narrowly approached during gang forums. However, I believe that discussing this topic would offer consistency across SEMRAC and Serious Youth Violence. This would strengthen the partnerships and feed into disruption for all types of exploitation not just sexual.

Serious Youth Violence Meeting

The SYV was a well-attended meeting. This meeting was chaired by the police and the direction of the meeting was geared more towards enforcement and disruption. In total 24 young people were discussed who had been identified as medium or high risk of engaging



in serious youth violence. The risk assessment tool being used was available to all attendees but was dated 2009 and was referred to once during the meeting. Many of the professional's present had little or no input into the discussions or proposed actions.

The theme for those young people discussed was referenced by way of NRM referrals and CBO applications or considerations. Other main contributors to this meeting were the representatives from the trust regarding young people known to their services. Aik Saath had some contribution about young people they were aware of, but overall other members were mainly observing.

The numbers attending this meeting was positive and there is a good foundation to build a robust forum which combines enforcement action with diversion and positive outcomes for the young people who are of medium and high levels of concern.

Schools

During the direct contact we had with both young people and staff in schools, there was a general understanding of the nature and context of gangs. The young people had a consistent view and picture of what was taking place within the borough, however there was a contrast between teachers and front-line staff and their grasp on the reality of the issues faced by young people within their care.

Whilst some of the staff members had plenty of knowledge, other staff members admitted that they have no idea about what the young people are dealing with outside of the school setting.

In both the junior and secondary schools, safeguarding board forums and safeguarding leads expressed a keen interest in developing in this area and identified that the young people attending these schools required some intervention which needed to be different to what has been in place previously. They were keen for this work to be a long-term shift within the schools setting rather than a temporary stop gap or pilot programme.



Forecast

The aim of this consultation was to identify the areas of need within the borough regarding crime, gangs and exploitation and offering feedback and recommendations to strengthen and support the work already in existence and the work developed through the consultation.

Thames Valley has seen an increase in criminality and gangs over the years. County lines are now a national issue, and this has seen drug dealers across the UK establish well run drug lines. The drug dealers from Slough are targeting rural areas and locations just outside of major cities - Swindon and Yeovil being named as locations used by the gangs.

The consultation gave us a clear insight into the practice of staff, partnership working, disruption measures, local projects and priorities. It is our professional opinion that Slough has an emerging issue and runs the risk of escalation of serious youth violence if this is not addressed. The young people aged 12-16 are of concern and could become more violent than their predecessors. The prominent concern being that those who are being affected in this way or appear at risk are getting much younger than in the past.

Whilst the Partnership continue tackling gangs and organised crime, the young generation are vulnerable to the vacuum effect, opening the way for older gang members from Slough or London to take them on and occupy them. With many of Slough's older nominals now serving prison sentences it is an essential time to engage the young people who are not currently utilizing the services available. Upon release many who are seasoned criminals build networks and continue where they left off. This is a concern for us as many of the young people we engaged have cousins or brothers in jail.

We believe that if we do not attempt to engage the young people now they will fall prey to older peers upon release and be drawn into serious violence and organised crime, as many try to reinforce their position once back in the community and use young people to do so. At present, there is evidence to suggest that this is already taking place.

During our time in Slough we were made aware stabbing incidents and instances of rivals either chasing others with weapons or being found carrying knives. This highlighted that the young people of Slough were actively carrying knives and using them. The nature of gangs and violence is such that tit for tat attacks exist. With the recent stabbings and summer fast approaching there is a real concern that Slough could see an increase in stabbings and violence between rivals.



Having spoken to many young people across Slough, it was verbalized continuously that many young people fear for their safety and believe it is better to carry weapons and be in gangs to feel safe. This, we believe, is in response to the recent stabbings and lack of alternatives for them or direct access to services. This is the view of the young people.

Taking into consideration the young people who are not involved or associated with gangs; fear was a major factor for them also. Their aspirations were low, and they felt they needed to avoid certain areas in Slough to remain safe. As is common to this type of scenario, young people who are innocent become victims of violence or feel it is better to avoid being a victim and therefore, join gangs or carry weapons.



Recommendations

Based on the findings of this consultation we would like to share our recommendations to support you and your agenda when protecting, supporting and preventing vulnerable young people from being exploited and being involved in serious youth violence.

As per the findings, we have identified areas that could be addressed to strengthen your approach to this work. Please note: these are our recommendations, and this is ultimately your decision.

Recommendations

Create forums to enhance partnership working within the borough (YOT, Youth Service, Social Care, Police and Community Projects)

This could be facilitated in the form of quarterly networking events across the borough to showcase good practice with an emphasis on what is working and offering opportunities to share enhanced resource sharing across teams.

Consider reflective group supervision for frontline staff

Regular forums that offer support and guidance for staff working directly with young people affected by SYV, exploitation and gangs. In doing so enhancing a wider network of support for staff and the challenges that come within this area of work.

Make child criminal exploitation a priority

Having a broader view of exploitation as a whole, much like the process that enhanced the sexual exploitation agenda historically. In the area of gangs and SYV the cross over between this and county lines needs to be put in focus.

More use of disruptions in SEMRAC and SYV

This will allow for the appropriate disruptions to be discussed and shared which will minimize risk posed to others and the community, not just case discussions.



<p>Review of SYV attendance and focus</p>	<p><i>Possibly split this meeting into two sections.</i></p> <p><i>The first section to discuss intel, i.e. current and ongoing operations, sensitive discussions around planned enforcement actions. This would be for relevant, statutory bodies (by invitation only).</i></p> <p><i>Second section would involve review of individual cases, concerns, specific diversions and interventions available to services to tackle or address highlighted issues. Chairing of this section could be on rotation (Trust, Police and one other if appropriate). Review attendee list to ensure appropriate representations are balanced.</i></p>
<p>Parent awareness around exploitation and gangs</p>	<p><i>Information or awareness being made available to parents in several settings. Transition from primary to secondary school, edge of care young people, prevention etc. A parent of a child who has been through this process and come out the other side to assist in facilitating these sessions.</i></p>
<p>School Roadshow - Assemblies around gang prevention/awareness (All year groups)</p>	<p><i>Widespread awareness assemblies for all year groups. This approach will not isolate specific young people.</i></p> <p><i>This approach will give insight to those at risk and challenge those involved in gangs.</i></p> <p><i>Bespoke sessions can be utilized to work 1:1 with those young people of highest concern for the schools.</i></p>
<p>Risk Assessment toolkit to identify vulnerable young people</p>	<p><i>This will be used to enhance professional knowledge of young people, their history and consider appropriate support for them. Moreover, this toolkit is a useful way to identify the levels of risk for young people, being referred.</i></p> <p><i>I would envisage this being used by staff to refer to during the Serious Youth Violence Meeting. It would be scored, discussed and updated with the relevant intervention.</i></p>
<p>Specialist service for young people involved in gangs</p>	<p><i>This would be put in place by a specialist service to fill a gap locally, acting as an intervention for young people being identified through the SYV. Supporting</i></p>



young people at risk of imprisonment, serious youth violence or criminal exploitation. This could be offered across numerous areas once established in Slough as best practice.

Secure apprenticeship and employment pathways for young people

Building on links and networks with local industry to provide pathways for local young people to be part of the regeneration process of the borough.

Mentoring to be in place at these vital stages to ensure retention and long-term futures for both employers and candidates for a minimum of 6 months.

Introduce BAIL project

Building and improving lives project will offer a specialist prevention/intervention service for young people. This involves of life skills, 1:1 mentoring, parenting support and diversionary work.

Level 1 and 2 training for all staff at all levels where appropriate

Level 1 is an awareness session, full day highlighting what a gang is, girls in gangs, child criminal exploitation, UK stats, personal testimony, consequence of gangs and a deeper understanding of trauma and psychology.

Level 2 is a follow on which is much more practical, allowing staff to learn how we as a specialist service risk assess, deliver sessions, identify trauma informed practice, specialist support, risk management for staff and young people and offers practical tips for frontline staff engaging hard to reach young people.



Closing statement

The professionalism and direct response to the work we brought to Slough was very encouraging. We were challenging a subject many find uncomfortable and don't necessarily agree with. However, the professionals we worked with during our time with you were forthcoming and open to the work - making our role much easier.

Moreover, this gave us all the confidence that Slough had a great passion and desire to make a difference to the lives of young people. This made us more passionate about working with the professionals and teams locally. Despite the size of Slough in comparison to areas such as London, the strength of the teams and individuals is remarkable and will achieve great things once they are working together at a consistent level.

Slough is facing a challenge with stabbings and drug dealing; young people are more aware than professionals and refuse to share information, leaving professionals unaware of the true issues young people face. This causes concern as it could breed into a deeper problem which could see Slough dealing with more violence and escalated rivalries.

The consultation period in Slough has achieved positive results and added to some great practices that are already being offered locally.

The borough is a step ahead of other surrounding boroughs, putting you in a stronger position to offer support to young people and instigate cross border working with surrounding areas. The recommendations, we believe, will add to the work already established. Our aim is to come alongside what is already in place and deliver a piece of work that leaves a legacy and empowers the professionals locally to take on new challenges which, we believe, has been demonstrated by the attitude and response to the work we brought to Slough.

Professionals are enthusiastic and passionate about change which we think will continue to set you apart as a borough, making Slough a leading example in this area of work.



Appendix

DB8: Serious Youth Violence

How would you rate tonight?

Outstanding	Good	OK	Poor	Terrible
20	9	1	0	0
66%	30%	3%	0%	0%

Do you feel like you were able to express your opinions?

Yes	No
27	3
90%	10%

Are there any points you would like Gavin and Rob to know that you didn't feel able to share?

- No (x27)
- Mental health (x2)
- Poverty (x1)

If we do another event like this, what would you like to see done differently?

- More time with each person/group (x2)
- More people sharing opinions (x2)
- More physical activity (x1)
- Nothing (x25)

Any further comments?

- More presentations on laws and rights that teenagers have
- We need more sessions like this where we talk about things that relate to us and society
- Do more things like this
- It was very good and motivating



- No (x26)

Please note; More feedback pending

