Violence and vulnerability -

Strategic framework briefing note

Strategic Framework to reduce violence and vulnerability - briefing note and summary

Increasingly, crime is being committed in private spaces, rather than the public sphere, and this type of crime often involves the criminal exploitation of children and adults on a physical, sexual or financial basis. For many areas in the UK this is becoming a major concern as gang activity based around "county lines" is impacting heavily in a number of areas and leading to increasing reports of serious violence.

Tackling this threat has to be everybody's business.

However, in order to ensure that work to tackle gangs and groups is as effective as possible, there needs to be a common approach across regions and counties in terms of how agencies are involved both operationally and strategically, and how this is managed and planned through a strategic framework.

The VVU's framework is based around 5 themes and looks to establish county wide common principles and activity based around - data/intelligence, governance, enforcement/cross-border working, prevention, safeguarding. The framework itself breaks down into 3 key stages -

Stage 1 – a peer review of strategic managers across the region / force area. This will be directed at senior strategic managers within the various agencies and units (i.e. police, health, children's services, housing, schools etc.) with the key outcome being the production of a county wide strategic framework to address violence, vulnerability and exploitation across the county.

We will set out transparently the views, insights and current positions of those interviewed at a senior level with regards to violence and vulnerability issues, how they currently understand the problem, who they see as responsible for tackling it currently, *and what they believe is possible in terms of a common approach across the county.*

This will include mapping current county and area structures, identifying gaps and barriers to effective identification and management of the respective priorities.

Suggested interviews -

- Police - senior officers, gang leads, analytical lead, ROCU lead
- YOS/Probation/CRCs - regional managers
- Health - Director of Public Health, Drug service leads
- Education - local authority leads, head teachers, PRU heads
- Children and Adult services - heads of service, prevention leads, Troubled Families lead, MASH lead
- Housing - RSL heads (probably most effective if the RSL have large numbers of properties in the area, rather than a couple of hundred)
- Voluntary sector / community engagement leads
- OPCC senior officers
- CSP and partnership chairs (especially safeguarding board chairs)

If at all possible it would be advantageous to speak to some of these collectively, possibly on an agency basis.

We will require a named sponsor at a very senior level who will champion and drive this work. The meetings and workshops proposed for stage 1 and 2 will need to be very tightly scheduled, taking place across a couple of weeks.

Stage 2 - We will hold a series of workshops with practitioners, facilitated by ourselves and a mix of peer reviewers experienced in dealing with practitioners. The workshops will be based around the 5 key themes outlined below. The process is based on the Home Office's proven and highly regarded peer review process. We will end up with an understanding of what's possible, what's realistic and what's achievable across the region through the eyes of practitioners.

We will especially look at existing fora and groups that could be used to incorporate case management of vulnerable people, and anything that can be usefully co-opted, *rather than invent new structure and partnerships*.

Suggested invitees could include -

- Police - Frontline police, gang team members, safeguarding officers, analysts (enforcement workshop, data/intelligence workshop, safeguarding workshop)
- Social workers (from both Children's and Adult services), especially preventative and frontline workers, and those dealing with missing people (safeguarding and prevention workshops)
- Troubled Families staff (safeguarding and prevention workshops)
- Community safety managers / staff (potentially all workshops)
- YOS and Probation staff (enforcement workshop, safeguarding workshop)
- Drug service workers, both voluntary and any linked to Public Health (data/intelligence workshop)
- Teachers, especially safeguarding leads (safeguarding workshop, prevention workshop)
- Housing officers, preferably those directly managing estates (enforcement workshop, data/intelligence workshop)
- Voluntary sector workers and community activists (data/intelligence workshops, safeguarding workshop, prevention workshop)
- Local authority, Public Health analysts (data/intelligence workshop)

As with the senior interviews, the local area will have the best idea of who should attend. The governance workshop should probably have operational managers from a range of agencies.

Stage 3 - the draft strategic framework.

This framework is based around 5 themes as follows and the final framework will consist of key objectives and work based around the themes, directed by the initial interviews with senior managers and the practitioner workshops.

Data/intelligence - understanding the nature of the threat posed by gangs around violence and vulnerability is the key to partnerships being in a position to effectively tackle the problem. Such understanding is crucial to drawing in partners who may not initially see the issue as something they should be involved with.

Key objectives could include -
- The production of a high level intelligence product
- A local intelligence tool for operational purposes covering districts and LPAs, and identifying vulnerable cohorts of young people and adults.
- A terms of reference for this work and a framework narrative
- Communication with MOPAC where appropriate and central government agencies to address the issue around placements within the county.

Governance - This covers all aspects of the work, and is about leadership, vision, partnerships, performance management and target monitoring. The problem of gangs, violence and vulnerability is cross cutting, meaning leadership and governance in a county and regional context (that also involves partners from outside the county) is absolutely crucial.

Key objectives could include -
- Agreed strategic ownership with an appropriate county level stakeholder group.
- An agreed definition to address the key issue of violence, vulnerability and exploitation.
- Local ownership of the issue with clear terms of reference for each key stakeholder.
- Key performance indicators for each stakeholder contributing to overall regional objectives.
- A clear communication strategy that informs all stakeholders of governance at district, unitary and county level.

Enforcement / cross border working - With a national increase in county lines activity, regions and partnerships previously unaffected by gangs have found themselves having to review procedures and activities, and the rise of county lines has led to the need for tools and powers that reflect the rise in exploitation and close links to trafficking and modern slavery. In addition, the need for regions to link both strategically and operationally with large urban areas who are exporting the gang issue is crucial.

Key objectives could include -
- A process that enables police gang leads and CSMs to know who to contact in each London borough or other urban areas responsible for drug supply (including police gang units and council gang leads) and within Trident Central Gang Command if required : a SPOC system based on the Ending Gang Violence & Exploitation model.
- A central menu of interventions and enforcement tools and monitored usage
- Consideration of the focused deterrence tactic, using trafficking and Modern Slavery legislation
- A consistent process to manage gang nominals via a robust case management arrangement.

Prevention - Preventing young people from becoming involved with gangs, violence and vulnerability is crucial if the cycle of gang violence is to be broken.

Key objectives could include -
- Schools to be more fully integrated into work to tackle gangs, violence and vulnerability.
- A clear understanding and better management of the PRU / alt education cohort
- Awareness of vulnerable locations across the county
- A strategic tie in between CSE and Prevent work across the county
- Production of a directory outlining all currently available diversion and support provision across the county.

Safeguarding - This work is also about safeguarding and protecting vulnerable people, who are being exploited by gangs/groups. We know that harm is often hidden and it is not until the full circumstances surrounding a vulnerable person is understood and the potential for harm is identified that an effective intervention can be put in place.

Key objectives include -
- A common position shared by the various safeguarding boards across the county regarding the assessment, threshold levels and identification of those involved in county lines and gang activity.
- A discussion across the county regarding how non social services staff can potentially support families and individuals at risk of county lines, or enhance any current support offered.
- The placement of vulnerable and gang linked children into the county needs reviewing or perhaps incorporating into existing work already underway around out of area placements to better understand the needs and background of individuals and families moving to the county from other areas