

# Locality Review

## The local offer

2019/20

## 1 Introduction

Increasingly, crime is being committed in private spaces as well as the public sphere, this type of crime often involves the **criminal exploitation** of children and adults on a physical, sexual and/or financial basis. Groups of offenders variously labelled as street gangs, organised crime groups, dangerous drug networks and disengaged young people carry out this abuse, often via illegal drug markets and for the lucrative profits that can be made from them. Most of this violence and exploitation is not reported and won't always show up in recorded crime statistics.

Vulnerable people, especially children, are subject and exposed to a range of risk factors, making them vulnerable to a range of perpetrators. How they are then subsequently exploited often appears to depend on who gets to them first. Current partnership structures across the country aren't always able to respond to this new threat effectively, often working in silos or duplicating work and resources.

Over the last 4 years, as a result of visiting and working with over 100 areas around the UK and speaking to over 4000 practitioners from a range of agencies both statutory and voluntary, we have found some of the key challenges for partnerships are:

- The need to understand the relationship between serious group offending and local drug markets (including illegal, prescription drugs and new psychoactive substances)
- The links between vulnerable cohorts, locations and gangs e.g. care homes, missing young people, cuckooed adults, school absence and exclusions - safeguarding thresholds are especially relevant here
- Making links between violence and vulnerability, the Prevent programme and local secure estate.
- Vulnerabilities and exploitation experienced by gang-associated women and girls

- The exploitation of children by gangs and organised crime groups (sexual / physical exploitation or exploitation in order to commit crimes such as drug dealing) - this increasingly involves grooming via debt entrapment
- Gang members and associates moving into other areas, such as shire counties or seaside towns, to commit crime
- Links between street gangs and organised crime groups
- The use of social media to facilitate violence and intimidation
- The links between health, particularly mental health, and gang violence
- Youth offending services managing a more violent cohort than previously
- The ability to identify both dangerous gang nominals and young people at risk of involvement in gang crime when there is a lack of police intelligence
- Making sure that resources are effectively targeted, informed and that partnership structures are set up to respond quickly to the new threat without duplication

Often practitioners have many insights into how gangs and groups are operating and exploiting young people and vulnerable adults. They also have a very good idea of what's working and what isn't, along with barriers and blockages to more effective working. This qualitative information, when triangulated across a number of interviews and linked with relevant quantitative data sets can show a richer picture of how gangs and groups work, and help you to tackle them more effectively. This is why a locality review (LR) can help your partnership.

## 2 Purpose of the Locality Review

The LR is a one-day process for local areas as part of the Home Office national Serious Violence Strategy to tackle gangs and serious youth violence. It works as a broad-brush set of interviews and focus groups with front-line practitioners to gather information, knowledge and perception whilst building a qualitative picture of the key issues and drivers around county lines, gangs, youth violence and vulnerability. It is a rapid evidential assessment process that focuses on violence and vulnerability. It will ask the following questions –

- Is there a common understanding of the issue?
- Is the problem accepted?
- How is it understood?
- How is it acted on?
- Are there barriers and duplication within the area amongst partnerships?
- What's working well?
- How could things work better?
- Emerging trends and concerns?

It is crucial to understand that this is not a review of any single organisation's role, but a process that seeks to identify what local practitioners know or believe about vulnerability at an operational level, understand how the partner agencies are working together operationally to deliver the area's gang/group and youth violence priorities and examine what blockages are perceived to effect delivery at a frontline level.

The review reflects the information gathered from the practitioner interview time table and may highlight communication issues where process exist as well as potential gaps and barriers to identification and effective intervention. The client will get a report that summarises each interview, an executive summary, a round-up of good practice identified from the day and practical and realistic recommendations.

The cost of this work is match-funded by the Home Office. The VVU will provide briefing notes, draft invites for potential attendees (and a list of who you may want to invite), and a draft timetable. The client will need to issue the invites and identify up to four rooms over the day for the interviews and interview team. Please contact us for further details and availability.