



Peer on Peer abuse: Lewisham

Local Assessment Profiles

March 2017

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“Carrying a knife, you are much more likely to be stabbed yourself. Knives are the most common weapons used in youth violence.”

NOTHING KILLS A **FUTURE** LIKE A **KNIFE**

Want an **education**, a **job**, **money**, a **family** of your own, a **future**?

CHOOSE NOT TO CARRY A KNIFE.

“Value yourself - a good relationship is one where you are not afraid, not told what to do, or harmed in anyway

WHEN DID IT BECOME ACCEPTABLE TO BE

AFRAID, CONTROLLED or HIT IN A RELATIONSHIP – IT ISN'T

A **real relationship**, how it's supposed to be, means someone **loving** you, **caring** for you, **trusting** you, **being there** for you, **missing** you, being **vulnerable** with you, **forgiving** you.

CHOOSE TO GET OUT OF A BAD RELATIONSHIP

“Drugs destroys yours and others lives – they are dangerous

DRUGS CAN KILL YOUR **FUTURE, FAMILY, RELATIONSHIP, HOPE & COMMUNITY**

Want an **education**, a **job**, **money**, a **relationship**, a **family** of your own, a **future**?
Want to become a **good mum or dad**, have **money** and a real **home**, for someone to **look up** to you? Want to feel **safe**, be **respected for the right reasons**, a **role-model** to the next generation?

CHOOSE NOT TO TAKE DRUGS.

“Bullying and making you feel scared and unsafe or making you do things you don't want to is unacceptable”

WHEN DID IT BECOME ACCEPTABLE TO BE

AFRAID AT SCHOOL – IT ISN'T

Going to school should be **fun**, **inspiring**, **challenging**, a place to meet **friends**, a place to **learn**, a place you **want to be at**.

CHOOSE TO TELL A TRUSTED ADULT

Be careful what you share Online and with others

WHAT YOU **SAY, WRITE, OR UPLOAD ONLINE** CAN AFFECT YOUR **FUTURE, FAMILY & RELATIONSHIPS**

Want to feel **safe**, be **respected for the right reasons**, a **role-model** to the next generation? Want an **education**, a **job**, **money**, a **relationship**, a **family** of your own, a **future**?

BE CAREFUL WHEN YOU ARE ONLINE AND TELL A TRUSTED ADULT WHEN YOU ARE CONCERNED.

1.1 Introduction

In March 16, the Safer Lewisham Partnership prioritised Peer on Peer abuse of under 25-year olds based on its annual strategic needs assessment and emerging trends where greater consideration of COMPLEX ADOLESCENT was required. The Borough recognised the separate focus on areas such as Serious Youth Violence, Child Sexual Exploitation, Domestic Abuse, Harmful Sexual Behaviour etc but was keen to understand if there were any cross overs, any similar risk indicators, and any learning to be shared in considering young people as complex adolescents and not labelled, often negatively as LAC, Young Offender, Victim of crime etc.

(The following is taken from Carlene Firmin Practitioner Briefing Peer on Peer abuse)

1.2 Definitions

Peer-on-peer abuse is captured in four key definitions (Firmin 2013a):

- The definition for domestic abuse (Home Office 2013) relates to young people aged 16 and 17 who experience physical, emotional, sexual and/or financial abuse, and coercive control, in their intimate relationships
- The definition for child sexual exploitation (DCSF 2009) captures young people aged under-18 who are sexually abused in the context of exploitative relationships, contexts and situations by a person of any age – including another young person
- The definition for young people who display harmful sexual behaviour refers to any young person, under the age of 18, who demonstrates behaviour outside of their normative parameters of development (this includes, but is not exclusive to abusive behaviours) (Hackett 2011, NICE 2014)
- Serious youth violence is defined with reference to offences (as opposed to relationships/contexts) and captures all those of the most serious in nature including murder, rape and GBH between young people under-19 (London Safeguarding Children Board 2009)

The term peer-on-peer abuse can refer to all of these definitions. Any response needs to cut across these definitions and capture the complex web of young people's experiences.

1.3 Who Does It Affect?

- Research consistently tells us that any young person can be impacted by peer-on-peer abuse, but that some are more vulnerable than others
- Research shows that peer-on-peer abuse is experienced by young people aged 10 upwards, with those being abused generally being slightly younger than those who are abusing them (Firmin 2015)
- Girls and young women are more frequently identified as those who are abused by their peers, and report it having a negative impact on their lives, whereas boys and young men are more likely to be identified as abusers and less likely to say that partner abuse impacts them negatively (Barter 2011, Firmin 2011). However, boys and young men report high levels of victimisation in gang-affected neighbourhoods (Pitts 2008, Beckett et al 2013) and there are emerging issues about the sexual exploitation of boys and young men (although this is by adults as well as by peers) (Barnardo's 2014). The most important message to take from the research is that while young men and young women experienced peer-on-peer abuse they do so in gendered ways.
- Black and minority ethnic children are often under-identified as victims (Berelowitz et al 2013) and over-identified as perpetrators (Palmer and Pitts 2006); during the Office of the Children's Commissioner's Inquiry into sexual exploitation many black and ethnic minority young people were hidden in youth justice services as offenders rather than being supported for their victimisation (Berelowitz et al 2012).
- Young people with intra-familial abuse in their histories, or those living with domestic abuse, are also said to be more vulnerable to peer-on-peer abuse (Berelowitz et al 2012, Catch 22 2013)
- Young people in care, and those who have experienced a loss of a parent, sibling or friend through bereavement, also feature as those who have abused, or been abused by, their peers (Berelowitz et al 2012).
- However, many of these factors make young people more visible to professionals, as well as those who abuse them, and as such it may be that those without characteristics that bring them into contact with professionals are vulnerable as a result of invisibility. For example, when a young person goes missing from care (even for a small amount of time) a professional will know about it, whereas not all parents know to notify services when their child comes home later than a set curfew.
- In all of these cases it is important to remember that peer-on-peer abuse can occur to

young people without these characteristics, and these alone do not cause abuse. For peer- on-peer abuse to occur there has to be someone who abuses these vulnerabilities to harm a young person, and they need to have the opportunity or be in an environment where this is possible.

1.4 Environmental Influences

Increasingly research is evidencing associations between young people's experiences of peer-on-peer abuse and the environments in which they spend their time. In addition to abuse in their homes:

- Violence in young people's peer groups has been linked to the abuse of their partners and peers (Barter et al 2009, Chung 2005, Letourneau and Borduin 2008)
- Young people experience violence and sexual harassment in schools (EVAW 2010, Girlguiding 2014), where they are exposed to harmful social norms related to gender, relationships and consent (Frosh et al 2002)
- Exposure to violence on the streets has been routinely linked to young people's involvement in street gangs (Beckett et al 2013, Hallsworth and Young 2011, Pitts 2008), and young people have been sexually exploited in parks, transport hubs, shopping centres and other public spaces (Berelowitz et al 2012)

When they encounter harm in these public environments, young people with, and without, pre-existing vulnerabilities can be affected by peer-on-peer abuse. As young people grow up and spend increasing amounts of time with their friends, at school and in their local neighbourhood, what happens in these environments will be reflected in the nature of the abuse they experience.

1.5 Consent

Concepts of abuse are built upon notions of 'power' and therefore 'consent', not to be confused with the age of consent to sexual activity:

- Young people over the age of consent (16 and 17-year olds) can be abused by their peers
- Many young people who abuse their peers are themselves below the age of consent

The definition of child sexual exploitation is particularly helpful in this regard in acknowledging that the abuse is 'characterised in the main by the child's limited availability of choice'.

The abuse of children is often constructed around an age differential between the abuser and the abused, but in cases of peer-on-peer abuse this may not be the case. In such circumstances power imbalances can manifest in other ways sometimes related to gender, in other cases social status within peer groups, intellectual ability, economic wealth, and social marginalisation and so on.

It is also important to note that while young people who abuse their peers have power over the young person they are harming they may be simultaneously powerless in relation to some peers who are encouraging their behaviour or in the home where they are being abused. As children themselves we have to recognise the risk they pose to others as well as the risk they may face and resist the urge to apply rigid victim/perpetrator divides that may not accurately reflect young people's experiences or our responsibilities towards them.

It is important for practitioners to interrogate how they understand choice and consent, and what this means for the young people they are working with. While young people may appear to be making choices, if those choices are limited they are not consenting.

2. Research and Evidence

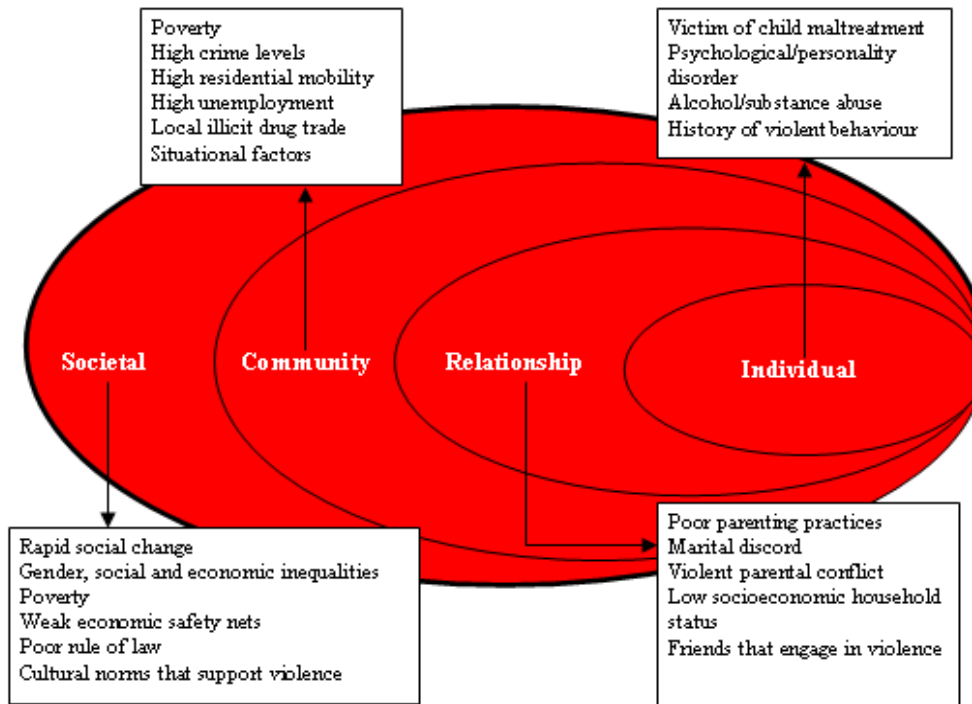
Violence and Deprivation- The ecological framework- The ecological framework is based on evidence that no single factor can explain why some people or groups are at higher risk of interpersonal violence, while others are more protected from it. This framework views interpersonal violence as the outcome of interaction among many factors at four levels—the individual, the relationship, the community, and the societal.

- At the **individual level**, personal history and biological factors influence how individuals behave and increase their likelihood of becoming a victim or a perpetrator of violence. Among these factors are being a victim of child maltreatment, psychological or personality disorders, alcohol and/or substance abuse and a history of behaving aggressively or having experienced abuse.
- Personal **relationships** such as family, friends, intimate partners and peers may influence the risks of becoming a victim or perpetrator of violence. For example, having violent friends may influence whether a young person engages in or becomes a victim of violence.
- **Community** contexts in which social relationships occur, such as schools, neighbourhoods and workplaces, also influence violence. Risk factors here may include the level of unemployment, population density, mobility and the existence of a local drug or gun trade.
- **Societal** factors influence whether violence is encouraged or inhibited. These include economic and social policies that maintain socioeconomic inequalities between people, the availability of weapons, and social and cultural norms such as those around male dominance over women, parental dominance over children and cultural norms that endorse violence as an acceptable method to resolve conflicts.

The ecological framework treats the interaction between factors at the different levels with equal importance to the influence of factors within a single level. For example, longitudinal studies suggest that complications associated with pregnancy and delivery, perhaps because they lead to neurological damage and psychological or personality disorder, seem to predict violence in youth and young adulthood mainly when they occur in combination with other problems within the family, such as poor parenting practices.

The ecological framework helps explain the result—violence later in life — as the interaction of an individual risk factor, the consequences of complications during birth, and a relationship risk factor, the experience of poor parenting. This framework is also useful to identify, and cluster intervention strategies based on the ecological level in which they act. For example, home visitation interventions act in the relationship level to strengthen the bond between parent and child by supporting positive parenting practices.

The Ecological Framework: Examples of Risk Factors at Each Level



2.1 The Lewisham Profiles

In 16/17 Local Assessment Profiles were undertaken for:

- Serious Youth Violence
- Child Sexual Exploitation
- Domestic abuse under 25-year-old

(Full Local Assessment Profiles are available)

In addition, a number of other work has been undertaken which has fed into this report:

- VAL workshop to discuss on peer on peer abuse (Appendix A)

- Roundtable discussion in early May/ September 16 (Appendix B)
- Safer Neighbourhood Board led Youth Conference on Knife Crime (Appendix C)
- Child Death overview panel review (Appendix D)

The hypothesis set was to understand each category separately considering Victim/ Perpetrator and context (geographical and individual) and then to understand the interdependency and inter relationship between the 3 aspects if any existed. The outcome was to provide a Lewisham landscape and a response to the issue of peer on peer abuse.

3. Findings and Conclusions

3.1 Serious Youth Violence (SYV)

High levels of gang and youth violence are invariably correlated with high levels of deprivation and a 'youth bulge' and the SYV trends across London highlight the importance of this connection. Lewisham in common with most inner London boroughs has a relatively youthful age structure with 20.7% of the population under the age of 15 and a median age of 34.8. With approximately 73,500 in the 0-19 age bracket it has one of the larger teenage populations in London and this is the demographic cohort to keep in mind when gauging the extent of youth violence.

Despite improvements in some key poverty indicators continues to be one of the most deprived boroughs in London. Its teenage pregnancy and youth unemployment rates remain the second highest in London and its percentage of pupils attaining 5 GCSEs at grades A-C is similarly low. As might be expected for an inner-city borough with Lewisham has relatively high levels of violent offences, and its Violence with Injury rate has been rising significantly over 2016, fuelled in part by large increases in Domestic Violence. Lewisham also has one of the highest rates for sexual offences. Though these are not youth specific indicators, but consideration needs to be had about the long term¹ consequences of these issues

It is recognised by the Home Office that changes in offender behaviour have made this postcode gang definition increasingly obsolete in many parts of the country. In Lewisham this trend is particularly pronounced and has been accompanied by lower overall levels of violence. Much of this, perhaps counter-intuitively, is a feature of the increasing prominence of the drugs trade.

At the height of Lewisham's problem with Serious Youth Violence in 2010/11 where levels reached a peak of 331 offences - few of the nominals were associated with drug dealing and

¹ The joint thematic inspection on safeguarding children in households affected by domestic abuse will focus on some of these risks. Suffice to say – exposure to violence is a strong predictor of future violent tendencies.

Baldry, A.C., 'Bullying in Schools and Exposure to DV', Child Abuse and Neglect, vol.27, no. 7, 2003, pp. 713-732

postcode gang identification was high; in the current climate gang identification is muted and involvement in drugs markets is high. As was noted in the previous year's assessment the overt paraphernalia of gang insignias and attendant conflicts are considered an undesirable distraction and there is an unwritten rule on the county lines that postcode gang conflicts are put on hold². Well-ordered county lines avoid police attention and the violence associated with enforcing discipline over runners/couriers is typically less likely to ignite the kind of running street battles associated with postcode gangs though increasing competition between different lines, mostly originating in different London boroughs is displacing much of the violence.

The overall consequence of this diversion into county lines has been (considered in the long term) declining levels of violence in the borough but the emergence nevertheless of more intractable safeguarding problem extending to a wider range of children and young adults. There is also trends that have emerged recently which considers the drugs market available in Lewisham and London which may stem the County lines phenomenon and increase the exposure in London itself.

The following shows the Police data since 2013, however it is important not to rely exclusively on police recorded crime when assessing overall levels of serious violence in the borough, which is why the partnership also tracks London Ambulance Service data for Lewisham.

Serious Youth Violence is defined as any offence of Most Serious Violence and Assault with Injury or Weapon Enabled Crime, where the victim is aged 1-19

Serious Youth Violence	2013	2014	2015	2016
		299	217	251
Youth Violence	641	636	731	722
KCI under 25	66	54	81	75

3.2 County Lines

'Going country' is a recognised career path for many young people and the welfare issues for young people going missing are a major concern in respect of safeguarding. There are significant physical and mental health issues associated with children who are used as runners. It is common for runners to conceal drugs internally; they spend prolonged periods

² On several lines – nominals from different gangs have been known to work together

in unhygienic and unsafe environments and can be subjected to varying degrees of violence and intimidation³. There are additional concerns in relation to young women who may be subject to sexual violence though it has not been possible to draw any confident conclusions.

A 'county line' denotes an arrangement where an individual, or more frequently a group, establishes and operates a telephone number in an area outside of their normal locality in order to sell drugs directly to users. This generally involves a group from an urban area expanding their operations by crossing one or more police force boundaries to more rural areas, setting up a secure base and using runners to conduct day to day dealing. The groups involved are often described as Urban Street Gangs though it is important to note they may bear little relation to the conventional understanding of such groups and operate more like a loose franchise. Though cases involving very young children have come to light most runners are aged 14-17 years old.

There are a number of factors that help determine why groups might embark on county lines activity. These include the perception of 'space' in drug markets outside of urban areas and the anticipation of increased profits because of less capable competition. County lines involve the sale of heroin and crack cocaine. The locations are myriad with new lines appearing constantly.

The absence of reporting regarding cocaine and other 'party' drugs is judged to reflect their different customer base.

The experience of Lewisham supports this conclusion – runners arrested in the counties and on borough have invariably been caught in possession of crack-cocaine and heroin, and operations typically revolve around the cuckooing of drug addicts where nominals will move into the property and take it over as a base. Qualitative information indicates that the drug addict in turn frequently carries the drugs to other users and the runner oversees the operation (this finding is also consistent with practice identified by the National Crime Agency Intelligence Assessment which highlights the use of drug addicts as runners) It is important to note in this context that counties most affected by county lines have seen a decrease in street dealing an increase in dealing from houses⁴. A premium will usually be placed on obtaining the phone contacts of addicts who will then be the subject of bulk texting.

The line (i.e. the telephone number that is marketed and that the users call) is the lifeblood of

³ A certain amount of violence is inevitably displaced. One Lewisham nominal was murdered in a south coast town, and several runners have been stabbed and/or arrested for violent offences in the counties

⁴ Weymouth and Portland Police have issued press releases on the trend. Small semi-rural locations such as Bridport have been targeted by Lewisham and other London nominals

http://www.dorsetecho.co.uk/news/11850726.Police_want_help_to_combat_drugs_gangs/?ref=mry

the group's activity in the county force and represents a brand rather than an individual. Unlike other criminal businesses where phone numbers are changed regularly to avoid police detection, drugs lines do not change frequently. In most cases the line is guarded closely and kept well away from the county location with a relay or exchange system operated locally so that runners can be directed accordingly but it is not unusual for the phone to be kept locally especially where trust and discipline is high within the gang/OCN and a master sim retained in London.

In cases where these conditions are attained transacting business is much smoother and it is not surprising that the NCA has noticed an increase in this practice. Stealing lines under these conditions, is a high-risk strategy and can be countered by the simple expedient of contacting numbers on the line and setting up attacks. From debriefs of victims it is known that many of the young people with stab wounds to the buttocks will have been implicated in phone line thefts and other discipline infractions. **It is important for key safeguarding agencies to also realise that an individual who has been arrested in possession of drugs will be liable for the debt and become a high-risk target.**

It was noted in the last assessment that the shift to the counties is market driven and may not be permanent if similar profits can be made within the borough. Lewisham has a large number of opiate-crack cocaine users concentrated in some wards and information gained from young people indicates that profits are comparable with the counties. There is an emerging area in Lewisham that is a major locale for drug dealing. In 2016 Lewisham had the second highest rates for aggravated burglaries (see below) in London – the young person's comment on robbing a 'skunkhouse' to get rich is also an indication this is a phenomenon for future consideration.

'The subject was visited after contact we received from another organisation about their drug dealing. The subject stated he had recently come back from where he was dealing for less than a month. In that time made just over £500. He was meant to make more but due to a robbery, his money was dropped. He stated runners are generally put in a house owned by a drug user or a rented flat. The amount of runners in one flat can go up to ten. When in the drug den he stated you cannot wash. Throughout his time down there he was chased by police and other gangs numerous times'.

3.3 Child Sexual Abuse

In 2016, Dr Carlene Firmin from the University of Bedfordshire undertook an audit of the Boroughs CSE approach. This report is due to be completed at the end of March 17 and will help shape future work in this area for the Borough.

The Data on CSE is limited and has been an area highlighted for further analysis.

We know this is significantly under reported and requires careful consideration about the desired outcomes. There is often focus on the Criminal Justice outcomes at court, where as in the context of peer on peer abuse, we understand the complexities and inter-relationships between victims and perpetrators and living within the same community / peer groups.

To gain a more realistic picture of risks and prevalence a more qualitative analysis involving young people has been undertaken.

The following snapshot is based on a wide range of multi-agency datasets, which in Lewisham is streamlined through Missing Exploited and Trafficked Meetings and gives a broad picture of the issues:

Between 01/08/2014 - 31/07/2015 there were 466 reported incidents of sexual activity with a child (aged 17 and under) which either occurred in Lewisham or whose victims resided in Lewisham.

- 122 of these were recorded as Non-Crime Child Sexual Exploitation
- 17% of total reports of CSE and sexually related reports were raised externally.
- The CSE problem in Lewisham is predominantly peer-on-peer.
- 82% of victims are female. The peak age of victims is 14 - 15 years. 42% of victims were Black and 41% were White.
- 96% of suspects were either male or unknown. The peak age of suspects is 18 - 19 years. Where ethnicity was known 52% of suspects were Black and 37% were White.

There are no geographical hotspots identified to date.

The Recent Audit of our CSE approach was undertaken by the University of Bedfordshire. The following areas were highlighted:

The MET process and Serious Youth Violence Prevention Panel was seen as a strength. With the Frequency people connected to understand what is going on and the changing nature of the problems. There was recognition that the peer on peer abuse and its different forms and different responses were clear and had the link up for adolescent risk

There was comment about the Language used by practitioners with positive reflection. The chairing of meetings was recognised as strong, balancing sympathetic approaches to professional approaches.

It was noted that professionals really care about the young people and really know the cases. There was Drive and commitment in senior management and clear agreement to ensure the

contextual engagement agenda was developed going forward

It is evident from the Single List, which weekly monitors cases where young people have been identified as Missing, Trafficked, CSE that there is some level of cross over with those involved in Serious Youth Violence.

Young people identified within the Missing, Exploited and trafficked Cohort (which includes CSE) spoke about their experiences:

“I know probably at school they have PHSE so they talk about sex education blah, blah, blah but actually talk about sex education because they just think, oh yes, but they just go and do it. They need to know those values in themselves, they're not just a mug, they're not just someone that holds a baby, they're not just someone that's going to be used, there is more value to women, we're not just carriers. We're not just someone that are played with like toys, we're worth more than that.”

NSPCC - Child Sexual Abuse - Review of provision of therapeutic services and identification of gaps within the boroughs of Bromley, Lambeth, Lewisham and Southwark - November 2016

The National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) was commissioned by the Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) of Bromley, Lambeth, Lewisham and Southwark to undertake a mapping exercise across their boroughs relating to child sexual abuse (CSA) and child sexual exploitation (CSE).

This exercise intended to:

- map current therapeutic provision;
- identify gaps in mental health and therapeutic services;
- develop a directory of services of specialist organisations working with survivors of CSA and CSE;
- estimate prevalence of CSA and CSE; and, building on this information,
- make assumptions for staffing levels should a Child House be developed in London for the South East sector.

3.4 Main Findings – Prevalence

- There are potentially 13,295 victims of contact sexual abuse across the 4 boroughs. There are currently 1,989 known to statutory and 3rd sector services, which is approximately 15%.
- In relation to relative need across all London Boroughs it is estimated that Lewisham has the highest need out of the 4 boroughs reviewed which makes it 3rd out of all London Boroughs, Southwark 6th, Lambeth 12th and Bromley 17th. (Morgan Stanley Strategy Challenge 2016).

- Data from the Review of pathways following sexual assault (Goddard 2015) where relative 10-year rate of attendances at the Havens for forensic medical examination among female under 18yrs per 1000,000 population was reviewed and showed that: Southwark was 32nd out of 32 with the highest number of attendances, Lewisham was 31st, Lambeth 30th and Bromley the lowest at 10th.
- The British Crime Survey suggests that 53% of sexual abuse happens before age 9. This would suggest that there are approximately 7,000 primary school age victims of CSA in the four boroughs. There were 37 primary school age children identified during this review either in CAMHS or 3rd sector provision.
- CAMHS audits suggest that 7% of children currently receiving treatment in generic CAMHS teams have been subject to CSA or CSE.
- On average 0.5% of potential contact sexual abuse victims subject to CSA/CSE have attended the Children and Young People's Haven for a forensic examination.
- We estimate attendance at a South East Child House would be between 624 and 1,989 child victims.

3.5 Provision

- There are pockets of good practice but no coordinated strategic approach to the problem of CSA.
- There is no commissioning framework for mental health or trauma-based services for CSA victims unless they have enduring mental health issues. Schools in all four boroughs have spot purchased specialist support for child victims.
- Southwark is the only borough with specialist provision for child sexual abuse victims based within the CAMHS service. There is currently a waiting list.
- There are no specialist sexual abuse commissioned services for primary school age children, except for those with enduring mental health issues.
- There is some 3rd sector provision for specialist support to parents of child sexual abuse victims.

3.6 Operational Capacity

- There is no spare capacity in specialist trauma-based services free at the point of need in any of the four boroughs for children or young people who have suffered sexual abuse unless they have enduring mental health issues.
- There is small amount of capacity for young people subject to CSE

3.7 Workforce

- There appears to be a lack of confidence in universal services about how to respond to a disclosure.

3.8 Children and Young People

- There is no child or young person-friendly information about how to access local support

3.9 Key Recommendations

Strategic

- To explore the potential for a cross-borough strategic plan for CSA and CSE, ensuring that the plan takes into account all elements of the Public Health model for CSA, including within it CSE work and all relevant commissioning or funding routes.
- For CCGs to explore the potential to develop a commissioning model to support the strategic plan, particularly focusing on specialist sexual abuse services.
- For the CCG strategic plan to support schools in ensuring that they are able to commission or access safe, suitable services, with guidance on how to define and measure outcomes. This should include provision for supporting non-abusing parents.
- To develop commissioning guidance and expectations on the best evidence-based programmes for supporting CSA victims.
- To explore the potential of auditing local provision and activity in relation to harmful sexual behaviour (HSB) using the HSB audit tool.
- To include in future plans an allocation of CAMHS workers for the Child House/sexual abuse hub.

Operational

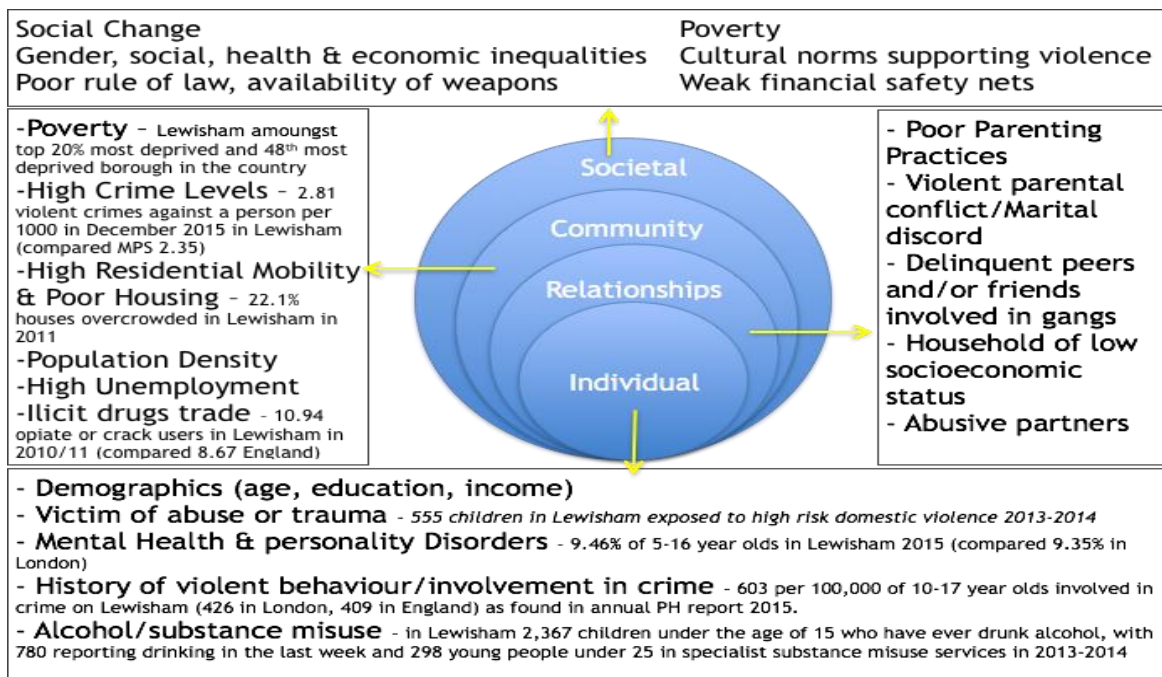
- To support the development of practitioner networks to build on the current expertise, to support workforce confidence in dealing with CSA and CSE. This could act as a virtual hub, to ensure a quick response to any disclosures until the Child House is in place.
- To agree CAMHS and therapeutic provision within any Child House developed in the sector. This needs to be agreed across all commissioners in the South East sector (Lambeth, Southwark, Lewisham, Bexley, Bromley and Greenwich).

3.10 Domestic Abuse: Under 25-year olds

Definition - “Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are, or have been, intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. The abuse can encompass, but is not limited to psychological, physical, sexual, financial and emotional abuse”.

The partnership focussed on the children and young adult’s cohort as it was felt there may be wide spread unreported issues which may be linked to other associated risks within peer on peer abuse.

It is interesting to note the significant overlap between inequalities and risk factors associated with violence and domestic violence.



3.11 National Data Indicates the Impact of Domestic Abuse on Families:

- 20% of children and 26% of 18 to 24 years olds in the UK have been exposed to domestic abuse between their parents/carers⁵
- 64% of high and medium risk domestic violence victims have children, on average 2 each⁶

⁵ Partner exploitation and violence in teenage intimate relationships; Incidence and impact of partner abuse in young people, Christine Barter, Melanie McCarry, David Berridge and Kathy Evans, NSPCC (2009)

- A quarter (25%) of children in high-risk domestic abuse households are under 3 years old. On average, high-risk abuse has been going on for 2.6 years, meaning these children are living with abuse for most of their life⁷
- 62% of children living in domestic abuse households are directly harmed by the perpetrator of the abuse, in addition to the harm caused by witnessing the abuse of others⁸

3.12 Domestic Abuse Between Young People

- Over half of young women aged 18-21 surveyed in 2011 reported experiencing at least one abusive incident from a boyfriend, husband or partner⁹
- In a national survey of 13 -17-year olds conducted by the NSPCC in 2009¹⁰:
 - 27% of girls and 18% of males had experienced a form of physical violence in their relationships, with 11% of girls having experienced severe physical violence
 - Three quarters of girls and half of males reported experiencing emotional abuse.
 - Younger children, aged 13 to 15, were just as likely to experience abuse as the young people aged 16 and over.

Lewisham has the second highest domestic abuse incident rate in London (22 incidents/1000 of the population). In the 12-month Metropolitan Police crime figures data up to July 2016 there have been 3165 domestic crimes, this is an 8.7% increase compared with the previous 12 months. Lewisham's comparator neighbours have reported a similar increase of domestic crimes. On average 26% of victims of domestic abuse in any given month in Lewisham are repeat victims of this kind of abuse, with each victim reporting an average of 2.8 incidents in the past year.

With reference to Lewisham MARAC data looking only at high risk cases (normally representing 10% of all reported cases) showed a total of 656 children under 18 were involved in 2015, with 28% of victims at high risk aged 16-25, an average age of 31.

Research in the UK has identified significant **risk factors** associated with domestic violence, albeit not focused specifically on children and young people. All but one of the risk factors below show an increased prevalence in Lewisham in comparison with the regional and national averages.

^{6&7} SafeLives (2015), Getting it right first time: policy report. Bristol: SafeLives.

⁸ Caada (2014), In Plain Sight: Effective help for children exposed to domestic abuse. Bristol: Caada

⁹ Starting in schools to end domestic violence, Refuge/YouGov (2011)

¹⁰ Partner exploitation and violence in teenage intimate relationships; Incidence and impact of partner abuse in young people, Christine Barter, Melanie McCarry, David Berridge and Kathy Evans, NSPCC (2009)

3.13 Domestic Abuse in Childhood

- **Experiencing other forms of abuse**
- **Younger age:** Domestic violence and abuse prevalence is highest in victims aged 16 – 24 (women) or 16-19 (men)
- **Marital status:** Women who were separated had the highest prevalence of any domestic abuse
- **Lone parent households:** 1 in 5 women living in lone parent households were victims of domestic abuse
- **Income:** Women living in the lowest income households (less than £10,000) were much more likely than those within higher income brackets to have experienced domestic abuse
- **Deprivation:** Women living in households in the 20% most deprived areas of England were more likely to be victims of domestic abuse (9.9%) than women in the 20% least deprived areas (6.1%),
- **Sexuality:** Gay and bisexual men are three times as likely to have experienced domestic abuse as heterosexual men (49% vs 17%). Female rates of abuse are similar in heterosexual, lesbian and bisexual women¹¹.
- The **“Toxic Trio”**: substance misuse and mental health issues

3.14 Focus Groups – Key Emerging Themes

- Young people had a good understanding of what constituted a healthy and unhealthy relationship. Their perceptions of domestic violence differed from the cross –party definition (2013) in that most participants did not feel that if the violence was perpetuated by both people in the relationship, that it was still domestic violence, with groups describing this as “fighting”.

***“It (domestic violence) would never happen to me...because I hit back”
“It’s just fighting – it’s equal”.***

- Psychological abuse was felt by some participants to be potentially more damaging than physical abuse:

“Words are worse than physical... if he was to hit you, you would forget that in

¹¹ Domestic abuse: Stonewall Health Briefing 2012

a few weeks. With words...you remember that for years”

- Sexual violence, even when severe (e.g. rape) was not felt to be domestic violence: *“rape is rape”*.
- Some participants also felt that domestic violence was at times understandable as a response to perceived provocation:

“Some people, they push and they push and they push...I don’t think it’s right but sometimes it’s understandable when they can’t take it anymore”

“There might be some kind of domestic going on in every kind of relationship...until you’re out of the relationship you don’t realise what’s going on”

- All participants who had experienced violence in their own relationships reported an insidious onset of violence, often starting with emotional abuse and then escalating with increasing, controlling activities and physical violence. Several participants reported that even if they were aware of a potential partner’s history of perpetrating domestic violence in other relationships, this would not necessarily prohibit them from starting a relationship with them – either because they felt perpetrators could behave differently in different relationships, or if they felt the potential benefits of the relationships outweighed the negatives. These benefits could be material, financial, in status (from a perceived cachet of being in a relationship with a high-status individual), or simply avoidance of being alone.

“Some people think they’re worthless without another person...they get so deluded and wrapped up they don’t see it...they don’t just have the balls to get up and leave”

“The person you’re most scared of in the world is often also the person you trust most in the world”

- Participants universally said they would seek advice or help internally amongst their friendship circle if they or a friend was affected by domestic violence, rather than by speaking to teachers, parents or statutory services. Reasons cited included wanting privacy: *“it’s my business and no one else’s”*, or respecting a friend’s privacy
- Unexpectedly the majority participants were sceptical regarding the value of web-based resources, social media, or apps relating to domestic violence. There was some enthusiasm regarding the use of these web campaigns for awareness-raising, but not for actual support. Participants cited concerns regarding privacy (i.e. that they would be concerned that their partner would see that they had searched for domestic violence sites, and also reported that they would not download an app due to the phone memory it would take up, and they were generally suspicious of any virtual support that was effectively *“faceless”*.

“I know for a fact that no one is going to go onto the internet to type something

about domestic violence”

“With an app or the internet, you don’t know who you’re talking to – they might be judging you”.

Discussing participants’ experiences of domestic violence on television, the internet and social media, the programme *Murdered by my boyfriend*¹² (a drama closely based on real life and first screened on BBC3 in 2014) was mentioned by every focus group and unanimously positively received, with 90% of all focus group attendees having watched it, often at school.

“I’m in supported accommodation... there’s the numbers (for DV help) everywhere and in colleges, and in the doctors”

“I’ve seen it happen where friend’s boyfriends have gone to jail. They they’re together again. What is the point of going through all those court cases”

“I had to go to a woman’s refuge. My boyfriend didn’t care about the police”.
“There’s only so much that the police can do, unless they witness it. The police do a lot, but the courts just don’t. The police are really nice guys”.

“PHSE is meant to teach you stuff like that, but it’s not” “Growing up, I never learnt what a healthy relationship was”

3.15 Online Dangers

The Navigate Project – Engaging Young People on Internet Safety

The Navigate Project comprised of two events (In 2015) for young people looking at using social media safely and critically. These events were attended by groups from 9 educational establishments in the borough.

The aims were to:

- 1) Learn more about the ways in which young people are using social media and the potential risks they are facing
- 2) Raise awareness of those risks and steps to mitigate against them, with particular focus on terrorist group recruitment/propaganda, gang activity & personal information security (including sexting).

A small sample group (67 14-18-year olds) were surveyed to find out more about their social media habits:

¹² <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b047z198>

Findings:

- Private messaging apps/platforms such as Whatsapp and Snapchat are used more than more traditional “content feed” style social media platforms such as Facebook.
- Young people are primarily using social media to keep in touch with existing friendship networks, very few use social media to meet new people.
- Despite this, 45% of respondents had either met up with someone in real life they had met online or had considered doing so. There is no indication from the survey that these meetings had negative consequences or resulted in harm.
- Online bullying/harassment and receiving unwanted sexually explicit messages were the most common negative online experiences for the sample group.
- 17.5% of respondents had come across terrorist material or content online. While still a minority, this represents a significant shift since before the innovation of social media, when terrorist propaganda would have been much more difficult to find or be exposed to.

10% of respondents had had sexually explicit images of them shared without permission. This issue effected female respondents primarily. It is possible that the true figure is actually significantly higher.

Following a Peer on Peer Abuse Conference held in Feb 17 the following themes and lines of enquiry were discussed:

- The definition of abuse is still considered as an adult on a child ad not in the context of peer on peer
- Group dynamics are underestimated – do we fully understand those who are the leaders / followers/ the trauma caused within the group etc. It is often not perceived as serious
- The relationship between public and social spaces – harmful attitudes are Present; the behaviour becomes normalised and parents/ practitioners can’t protect them
- Early responses to victimisation is critical to dealing with peer groups
- Peer influences are very powerful and important – these can and should be positive factors. Are there safe spaces?
- How do current assessment forms enable assessing peer dynamics?
- Is there a joint partnership approach to dealing with contextual risk?
- Programmes and projects within the community should not be duplicating what social workers do – it should not be focused on the outcome for individuals but the outcome for the community

- Disruption at all angles is essential; we have to change the situation not just the young person. It's critical to not just displace the people. The importance of the notion of a safe environment is important in bringing long term change.
- These new challenges need new approaches. The workforce need leadership buy in and giving permission to deliver in this new way (Trauma approach)
- Trauma is not being able to put language to something which is addressed through fear, shame or injustice.
- Highly stressed professionals do not lend themselves to working positively for traumatised people
- How services are presented is important
- Building a trustworthy relationship for a child is imperative

(See appendix E)

3.16 Conclusions

Given these findings it is important to consider whether:

- Our response to peer-on-peer abuse is focused on all of the forms
- Our assessments of risk, and interventions with young people, recognise that individual experiences do not cause the abuse that they experience, but may be used by others who have power over them
- A focus on individual risk factors is resulting in some young people being under-identified by your service or multi-agency partnership
- Environmental influences are sufficiently accounted for in both risk assessments and interventions – do we intervene with contexts or just individuals?
- There is confidence in your understanding of consent, and recognise the ways in which environments, contexts and relationships can limit the safe choices available to young people
- Our interventions attempt to control young people's choices or open up safer choices for them to consider

3.17 Next Steps

The risks and harms that some young children are exposed to is significant in their abilities to lead positive lives. It impacts on their ability to learn and engage in positive social engagement. The trauma experienced as a victim of crime, as a witness of Domestic Abuse, as a member within the community where serious violence has occurred as all impacting on the young people. The Partnership has through this work now understood the issues, the

local profile and some of the options for tackling this issue.

The following areas are considered as requiring partnership commitment for focus:

- A full understanding about the issues of Peer on Peer abuse in Lewisham Across the whole Children's Economy
- Commitment to supporting the Trauma Informed Approach in our collective response to this client group
- A universal programme for schools covering all aspects of peer on peer abuse
- Continued development of the work of the MET (Missing, Exploited and trafficked) and the Serious Youth Violence Prevention Panel.
- Review of all partners' assessments and consideration of contextual / environmental risks.
- Partnership commitment to considering contextual risks in all the work on Peer on Peer Abuse.
- Mapping of peer groups and drugs markets as it impacts in Lewisham
- Support training for all practitioners along with on line briefings to support ongoing knowledge building and information sharing.
- Building on a community trauma informed approach/ restorative approach / building network of Trusted Adults within communities.
- In order to effectively raise awareness of issues facing young people online this social media gap must be closed to the greatest degree possible, without this facilitators and educators lack credibility when addressing the issue from the perspective of young people.
- Many young people expressed surprise to learn of the permanence and long-term effects of information which is put online. Effective education may include using case studies of people adversely affected by the release of private information online.
- Ensure the 5 key messages developed by young people are shared and used proactively to support this agenda

These recommendations will be agreed at the Safer Lewisham Partnership in March 17 and will be supported by all relevant other Boards including Safeguarding Children's Board, Safeguarding Adults Board, and Health and Wellbeing Board.

This will be reviewed alongside the Safer Lewisham Annual Plan 17-18.

Appendix A: Voluntary Action Lewisham (VAL) Workshop: Peer-on-Peer Abuse

The following captures a summary of the session.

Reflections

- School involvement – recognising the issues early
- Programmes in schools
- Tackle this with younger children

- What training is there for teachers and others?
- Harder to understand organisational structures in boroughs
- Scale of the problem – volume of exploited local children and young people and not equally dispersed amongst schools
- Family support
- Training for teachers and others

Issues

- Girls - take on a male role/sexually exploited
- Parents with mental health issues
- Drugs dealers are increasingly younger
- How do we lobby funders to fund Lewisham issues?
- Exclusions

- Scale of the problem – volume of exploited local children and young people and not equally dispersed amongst schools
- Family support
- Parents/other parents colluding

Continuum

how to make it holistic, the responsibility of all, step up/step down

Solutions

- Everyone to be curious about young people lives – why is someone missing?
- VAL to support funding applications
- All to share messages (VCS)
- Joint funding bids
- Use plain English – communicate in a way that enables young person to gain access to services

- Activities/programmes young people want to engage with
- Use risk indicators
- Focus on missing children
- Care packages around child and family
- Exclusions – e.g. go into Abbey manor – do not lose track of young people

Actions and suggestions

- Mapping of parenting services
- More VCS representation on Safer Neighbourhood Board
- Change our vocabulary
- VAL to help organisations fundraise
- Who is going into schools?
- Share organisational structures in LBL etc
- Information sharing/share information on young people addresses and names
- Mapping – who is doing what in VCS

- What LBL services are available

Appendix B: Round Table Discussion

There was a **Roundtable discussion in early May** – chaired by Cllr Janet Daby, where the following themes and actions were agreed:

- Stop and search and the relationship between police and young people
- Social media, the difficulties of managing this.
- Who do young people trust? Relationship building
- Young people to lead on this discussion and solutions- peer on peer support
- Parents, how to support parents and how to get young people to engage/do they have up to date knowledge and information
- Effective communication is key across young people, agencies, partners/3rdparty reporting
- Health and how this can play a stronger role in prevention, intervention etc. linking to GPs
- Trauma that young people are experiencing – how can this be considered
- Mapping interventions that exist
- Role of schools – support/bridging the opportunities

At this meeting officers agreed to:

- facilitate smaller groups to further explore the issues raised
- facilitate a young person's discussion forum
- consider a market place/network method for sharing and improving knowledge
- set up follow up meeting in 6 months' time (November 2016).

Appendix C: Safer Neighbourhood Board Led Youth Conference on Knife Crime

Held on the 1st July 16, brought together young people from a number of Lewisham schools in an effort to work collaboratively to address this issue from different angles and to raise awareness of existing provisions available, while also highlighting the need for greater community involvement in addressing Youth Violence.

The objective was:

- To educate youth on knife crime and its effect on the families, friends and community
- To empower Youth on options of conflict resolution
- To celebrate and promote diversity amongst youth in order to increase acceptance and sense of belonging that will lead to youth crime reduction.
- To promote collaborative work between the Police, Youth Workers and Young people
- To bring young people and community together to showcase different support services in the borough.
- To recognise and encourage positive Youth efforts and contribution in the Borough of Lewisham
- To identify Young people, who would be interested in working with the SNB in developing workshops for schools and youth clubs?
- To encourage young people to be part of a solution
- To promote involvement of young people with SNB.

From the evaluation forms filled in by the young people (more than 50 young people from six schools) attending the conference there was a clear need for more open discussion and the need for more factual information to give people the confidence to discuss. They wanted to know what the police were doing and how they operated and to bridge the gaps with them.

The SNB are looking to develop a piece of work with parents to improve their understanding and encourage their participation in supporting their children and an event with teachers as well to be able to better understand issues on youth violence from their view point and what schools are doing.

Summary

Tackling SYV requires a comprehensive understanding of the issues which are multiple and complex, it is fact paced and daily challenges of managing young people/ young adults who are at risk and at risk to others. It requires a single and simple message that all agencies, all adults and all young people understand and agree. It requires a multi layered, multi-agency, and approach that is supported and embedded within communities.

The approach outlined above is part of the solution with a recognition that there is much more to be done.

Appendix D – Child Death Overview Panel Review

Thirty-eight attendees to A&E over a 7-month period with injuries related to violence

- 21% thirteen years old
- 39% female
- 26% occurred in March
- 34% attendees from SE13 and SE6- they remain two of the most well represented
- Big increase in the number of assault cases presenting to A&E
- Still a significant number of knife wounds seen
- Sharp rise in the number of female attendees
- An eight-year-old child was harmed by a knife found in a play park.

Further recommendations were made for further development.

Appendix E – Navigate



NAVIGATE the Social Media Revolution

Golden Rules:

- 1. Don't add people you don't know
- 2. Learn to feel OK to say NO
- 3. Be selective + critical
- 4. Your actions have consequences
- 5. USE ZIP IT when you feel uneasy

WANT TO DO SOMETHING?

- For advice and support, or to report abuse online please visit: www.thinkuknow.co.uk
- Abusive, harmful or violent/terrorist material online can also be reported using 'Flag' and 'Report' functions on social media platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, Instagram and YouTube
- If you have been affected by Gangs or would like to talk to someone visit: www.gangline.com
- Violent extremist or terrorist material online can be reported using: www.gov.uk/report-terrorists
- For advice and support on staying safe both online and offline please visit: www.childline.org.uk

Remember - you can always talk to your teachers or parents if you need help!