

Young & Safe in Lambeth:

*(The Deliberations of the Executive Commission on
Young People & Violent Crime, Aug.-Nov. 2007)*

Presented by John Pitts

Vauxhall Professor of Socio-legal Studies,
University of Bedfordshire

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Members of the Executive Commission

Cllr Lorna Campbell (Chair)	LB Lambeth
Viv Ahmun	In-Volve
Lambert Allman	CYPS
Twilight Bey	Social Solutions
Ivelaw Bowman	CPCG
Jean Carpenter	Flipside (LCPT)
John Corrigan	MPS
Mike Franklin	Local resident
Leroy Jackson	SOS
Lee Jasper	GLA
Roger Matthews	London South Bank University
John Pitts	University of Bedfordshire
Paul Reid	BCA
Junior Shabazz	CYPS
Kevin Sheedy	YOS
Mike Stewart	CESI
Claudia Smith	Social Inclusion
Anna Tapsell	CPCG
Wesley Walters-Stephenson	CPCG Lambeth, Your Story

Youth Gangs in Lambeth

At present, we believe there are 45 'youth gangs' ('crews', or 'families') operating in Lambeth. The defining characteristics of a 'youth gang' are:

- *It is identified as such by its members and others*
- *It is durable over time*
- *It lays claim to residential or criminal territory*
- *It has a recognisable structure,*
- *It is in conflict with other groups*

Fig. 2.1

Youth Gangs / Crews Operating in Lambeth

Name	Location
Acre Lane Campaign (ALC)	Brixton
Alligator crew	Unknown
Bloodset Muslims	Brixton
Brixton Yard Manz	Brixton
Cartel Crew	Unknown
Clapham Park Dread	Clapham Park Estate
The Crypts	Stockwell Gardens Estate
Dipset Muslim	Unknown
Fully Equipped	Wandsworth
Gipset Taliban	Gipsy Hill/Norwood
G. Street	Wandsworth
Hanna Town	Unknown
Herne Hill Man Dem	Herne Hill
Hot Spots	Stockwell
Junction Boys	Loughborough Junction
K Town Crew	Kennington
Loughborough Soldiers	Loughborough Estate
Man Dem Crew	Brixton
Marcus Garvey Boys	Railton Road
Mash Force	Unknown
Murder Zone (MZ)	Brixton
Myatts Field Posse	Myatts Field estate
O.C.	Myatts Field estate
O Tray 1	Angell Town Estate
Pain in Full (PIF)	Angell Town Estate/Upper Tulse Hill
Poverty Driven Children/	
Peel Dem Crew (PDC)	Borough-wide
Real Soomalian Soldiers	
(RSS)	Unknown
Rema Crew	Clapham
SMN Heathset	Unknown
Southmendem	Unknown
Stick em up kidz (SUK)	Wandsworth
Stockwell Man Dem	Stockwell
Stockwell Park Crew	Stockwell
Streatham Man Dem	Streatham
S. Unit	Unknown
Superstar Gang	Unknown
Surrey Lane Soldiers	Wandsworth
SW 2 Boys	Streatham
Thugz 4 Life (TFL)	Borough-wide
Tulse Hill Man Dem	Tulse Hill
Tulse Hill Thugz	Tulse Hill/Herne Hill
Valley Crew	Streatham
VMD	Streatham
Young Thugz 4 Life (YTFL)	Unknown

(Sources: S. Mahomed, Oct. 2006, MPS Gang Survey Aug. 2007)

Perspectives on the 'Gang Problem'

Much current national and regional policy/strategy tends to regard youth gangs as:

A criminal justice problem with a socio-economic dimension.

The Commission has come to regard them as:

A socio-economic problem with a criminal justice dimension:

Violent youth crime in Lambeth

- ◆ Most common violent offences: **Robbery** (14.3%) **Violence Against Person** (15%).
- ◆ 2.9% recorded fall in robberies in 2006 (MPS) but a **55% rise** at Balham Yth.Ct. 2004-7
- ◆ Between 2006/7 and 2007/8 **Gun Enabled Crime** rose from 56 to 82 incidents (**+46.4%**)
- ◆ In the first half of 2007: **6 murders** in Lambeth: 4 firearms and 2 knives.
- ◆ In 2004-2006 Lambeth had the **2nd highest** rate of **fatal and non-fatal shootings** in the 32 London boroughs
- ◆ Black/Black British YP = **40%** of 10-17s in the borough but **69%** of adjudicated offenders

The ages of victims and perpetrators of gun enabled crime

- ◆ The peak age of victims and perpetrators of Trident-related gang/group gun-enabled crime in London fell from **24** in 2004 to **19** in 2006
- ◆ Many victims are younger than this.
- ◆ In 2003, under-20s formed **16%** of all Trident victims but by 2006 this had risen to **31%**.
- ◆ MPS data indicates that **22%** of gun crime in Lambeth is attributable to children and young people aged 10-18.

Where victims and perpetrators live

Most youth perpetrators and most youth victims live in social housing on gang-affected estates.

Acre Lane Angell Town Brixton Hill

Coldharbour Crystal Palace Myatts Field

Stockwell Gardens Tulse Hill Vassall

West Norwood Housing Estates

These neighbourhoods are amongst the poorest in the borough

- ◆ In 2001, in the wards where gang activity is most prevalent, **47.1% to 60.1%** of families were eligible for **means tested benefits**.
- ◆ The poorest ward is **Angell**, the stamping ground of the **PDC** (Poverty Driven Children).
- ◆ In 2000 Angell was ranked **431st of the 8414 wards** in England for **child poverty** with an *Index Score* of 60.0, against 88.7 for Wirral (the highest) and 0.5 for Gerrards Cross North
- ◆ In 2002 38% of the borough's children were eligible for **free school meals** (national average 17%). In **Coldharbour**, (2nd highest youth crime rate in Lambeth) eligibility was **52%**.

In these neighbourhoods:

- ◆ Many C&YP suffer from a range of **individual, and familial risk factors** (NACRO, 2005).
- ◆ Many are **excluded, self-excluding**, unknown to, or truanting from, school: The *X-It* evaluation (2006) showed 70% excluded/self-excluding
- ◆ There is **limited youth provision**
- ◆ 1984-1997, 40% drop in 16-24s in the labour market. BME YP hardest hit. 36% of Black Caribbean v. 14% White **youth unemployment** (ONS 1998). Lambeth youth unemployment is higher now than in 1993
- ◆ High **criminal victimisation** rates – especially violence/threat to young people
- ◆ Street-based and gun programme workers say **situation is worsening** – *'...some estates are becoming 'no-go areas.'*

Why do young people get involved with gangs?

- ◆ **Money** – via street crime and drug sales (the price of class A drugs is falling)
- ◆ **Status/respect** (local heroes)
- ◆ **Glamour/kudos** guns (the price of guns is falling)
- ◆ **Fear** - they 'join' the neighbourhood gang to gain protection from other gangs
- ◆ **Coercion** - they are pressurised into, illegal, gang-related activities.
- ◆ **Fun** - Many gang-involved young people are primarily interested in conventional activities but because the raison d'être of gangs is crime and violence, they are at heightened risk of criminal involvement and criminal victimisation.

Issues and Questions

Reaching hard-to-reach young people:

Different projects are able to make and sustain contact with different groups of young people - need for coordination/targetting

Workers: Need critical mass of young 'street people' but training and supervision resources lacking

Routes out of programmes: Paucity of routes out of youth programmes into sustainable education training and employment

Support for schools: Little overt gang activity but schools struggling to deal with its effects on students

Parents: of gang involved C&YP need greater support

Policing: Need for decision-making mechanism re enforcement/social intervention + need to establish public trust as a prelude to public reassurance in the most heavily victimised communities

Issues and Questions

Partnership working: Different agencies give different priority/commitment to initiatives

Statutory-voluntary relationship: Can be unequal with vol./community groups unable to shape policy

Faith Communities: Must be involved but how best to use them?

Funding regimes: Short-term funding provides a precarious basis for effective work. Complex bidding arrangements are a disincentive to community/faith groups, waste expertise and jeopardise staffing. *Much Effective gang work currently being done on a shoestring*

Funding decisions lack transparency

Recommendations

1. The development of a culturally relevant **Family Support** service for gang-affected families who are experiencing the impact of family poverty and social marginalisation upon the life chances and self-perceptions of their children and themselves
2. **Neighbourhood Capacity Building** to combat the risks posed to children, young people and families in high crime/low income neighbourhoods, the stigma of residence, the social, economic and cultural isolation it engenders and the illicit opportunities it makes available.

3. The development, in partnership with the Black voluntary sector, community and faith groups, of **Educational Initiatives**, to support schools in reducing the impact of gang culture, combatting truancy and school exclusion, and the other educational difficulties that contribute to gang involvement, and to reduce the over-representation of Black and Mixed Heritage young people experiencing these difficulties.
4. The development of robust, coherent and creative **Employment and Enterprise Initiatives** to combat the high level of Black and Mixed heritage youth unemployment in the borough.

5. The development of high quality, targeted, coordinated and sustainable **Youth & Community Provision** within statutory, and third sector agencies and organisations.
6. The development of a comprehensive **Rehabilitation and Re-Settlement** service that ensures adequate through- and aftercare arrangements for gang-involved young people when they return from penal institutions.
7. The development of mechanisms for **Shared Ownership and Leadership** of the strategy between service heads, service providers in the statutory and third sectors and children, young people and adults from gang-affected families and neighbourhoods.

8. The development of mechanisms to gather accurate, up-to-date, and continuously updated, **Intelligence** about the individuals and groups at risk within gang-affected neighbourhoods, accurate **Assessment** of the risks to which they are subject or may pose to others and the **Targeting** of interventions.
9. The development of forms of **Monitoring & Evaluation** that enable projects to focus their efforts most accurately.
10. The development of transparent forms of **Commissioning & Funding** that ensure the quality of commissioned provision and the adequacy and duration of funding for effective, sustained, interventions.

11. The development of a **Project Infrastructure** resource to support third sector organisations that lack the capacity to bid for funding, monitor and evaluate interventions, produce elaborate reports and accounts and handle day-to-day administrative task (employment, salaries, national insurance tax etc.)
12. The development of adequately resourced and academically accredited **Youth & Community Work Training** to handle the professional development needs of the 'critical mass' of young 'road people' and other volunteers working within the initiative.

13. **Capacity Building in the Black Voluntary Sector** would be central to an effective strategy and existing funding regimes and support networks should be reviewed with this objective in mind.
14. In each of these areas, **Further Work** will be needed at the levels of policy and practice to ensure that the proposed interventions mesh, and that they are achieving their objectives. It will therefore be important that the necessary administrative mechanisms are established to facilitate this

Areas of Intervention

- ◆ **Families:** interventions aimed at building supportive networks for families and forging links between families in neighbourhoods
- ◆ **Neighbourhood Capacity Building:** with Safe Neighbourhoods Teams, Housing Providers, Schools, Faith Groups and Youth and Community Services – aiming to generate greater safety and confidence and open up opportunity for parents and children
- ◆ **School-based work:** On-site mentoring via community/faith groups and links with supplementary schools, Home-school mediation services, Anti-discriminatory action in schools (cf HoC Committee)
- ◆ **Employment:** Training, Job Creation, Social Enterprise, LA Internships, *Employer of Choice* schemes etc., links into *Aim Higher* (FE/HE)

Young & Safe in Lambeth

Strategic Action Plan to tackle violent crime amongst children and young people

Simon Harding
Assistant Director, Community Safety
Cllr Lorna Campbell
Cabinet Member for Health & Care Services



Background

- Increase in incidents of violent youth crime
- Full Council Meeting



Aim of Executive Commission

To develop short, medium and long-term Strategies and 'Lambeth solutions' to reduce the number of young people becoming involved in criminal and violent gang activity in Lambeth and address the factors that led to their involvement



Membership of Executive Commission

- Chaired by Cabinet Member for Community Cohesion
- YOS
- Youth & Play Service
- Exclusions Reintegration Attendance & Admissions
- Police
- Academics
- Voluntary & Community Sector
- GLA



Methodology of Executive Commission

- Commission Meetings
- Field Visits
- Focus Groups with young people
- Literature Review
- Submissions
- Policy Group
- Steering Group



Recommendations

- The development of a culturally relevant **Family Support** service
- The development of **Neighbourhood Capacity Building** initiatives
- The development of **Educational Initiatives**, to support schools in their attempts to reduce the impact of gang culture
- The development of robust, coherent and creative **Employment and Enterprise Initiatives** to combat the high level of Black and Mixed heritage youth unemployment in the borough



- The development of high quality, targeted, coordinated and sustainable **Youth & Community Provision**
- The development of a comprehensive **Rehabilitation and Re-Settlement** service
- The development of mechanisms for **Shared Ownership and Leadership** of the strategy
- The development of mechanisms to gather accurate, up-to-date, and continuously updated, **Intelligence** about the individuals and groups at risk
- The development of forms of **Monitoring & Evaluation** that enable projects to focus their efforts most accurately



- The development of transparent forms of **Commissioning & Funding**
- The development of a **Project Infrastructure** resource to support third sector organisations
- The development of adequately resourced and academically accredited **Youth & Community Work Training**
- **Capacity Building in the Black Voluntary Sector** would be central to an effective gang strategy



Strategic Priorities

1. Targeted diversionary activities
2. Pathways to employment
3. Supporting family life
4. Improved enforcement – Stemming the flow of gang violence
5. Intelligence and information – keeping one step ahead of the problem
6. Delivery – making it happen



Leading Through Action

- Partnership Summit held on 14th February 2008
- Commitment made by leader of the Council, Chief Executive and Borough Commander
- Supported by Home Office, GLA and Local MP
- Senior partners signed up to the strategic priorities



Next Steps

- 18 April 2008 – Conclude consultation
www.lambeth.gov.uk/youngandsafe
- May 08 – Finalise Action Plan
- June 08 – Sign off
- July 08 onwards – Implementation

