

Living in Hackney – 10th December, 2018

Item- Integrated Gangs Unit (IGU)

Report by Maurice Mason, Community Safety and Partnership.

1 Introduction

1.1 The IGU is a co-located partnership approach set up in 2010 to respond to the escalating serious violence linked to gang criminality in Hackney.

1.2 The key aims of the IGU are (performance over rolling 12 months to July 2018):-

- Reduce Serious Youth Violence- 10.5% reduction
- Reducing Gun Crime- 25% reduction
- Reducing Gun Discharge- 25% increase or 5 offences more
- Reducing Knife Crime 1 to 19 years old- 25.9% reduction
- Violence with Injury- 3% reduction

1.3 Since this time investment has been made from MOPAC allocations supplemented with core funding from London Borough of Hackney together with investment in terms of resource from the Police.

1.4 The IGU consists of the following core partners:-

- Police
- Probation.
- Youth Offending Services
- Intelligence Hub together with IGU Manager
- Department of Work and Pensions.
- Community Co-ordinator

1.5 The IGU also commissions the following partners:-

- St Giles Trust
- Empower London
- HCVS
- Mentivation

2 Purpose of this report

2.1 This report will focus onto providing a synopsis of the role of the IGU together with progress to reduce the recent spike in serious gang related violence. To achieve this it will cover following areas:-

- Intelligence Summary
- IGU response to recent increase in gang related serious violence
- Synopsis of IGU Partnership interventions
- Gang Matrix summary
- Safeguarding Young People at risk of gang exploitation

3 Intelligence Summary

3.1 The IGU is managing a cohort of 122 individuals identified via the gangs' matrix (see para 12 below). Thirty of the cohort is in custody at any one time. These are individuals who are over 18 years old in the main (only 10% of the cohort is under 18). These individuals are the more established gang members taking a prevention, diversion and enforcement approach to reducing recidivism. In addition the IGU is a key stakeholder in identification and response to a cohort of young people who have been identified as "at risk" of gang involvement and exploitation (see para 13 below).

3.2 There are 20 established gangs within LBH and since November 2017 we have unfortunately experienced 6 gang related murders with 8 firearms discharges since July 2018 resulting in two serious injuries.

3.3 Recent intelligence includes:-

- Analysis reveals current gang hotspots where interventions will be targeted.
- Most of the firearms incidents have involved shotguns with Police Trident investigating all of these incidents. No-one has been charged with any of the serious firearms offences.
- Since January 2018 there has been 60 serious incidents of violence involving gangs in Hackney. In the main lethal weapons have been used to perpetrate these offences.
- On 27/7/18 a group of gang members were shot at outside of a memorial event. A victim was shot through the buttock resulting in life changing injuries.
- Knife related crime seems to have hit a plateau and is beginning to reduce.

4 The IGU has undertaken the following response to reduce this spike in violence:-

- Trident is investigating the serious firearms incidents.
- IGU currently is managing 92 people on the matrix with 30 being in custody.
- The Police has increased proactive resource in the hotspot areas resulting in numerous arresting of key gang members.
- Youth outreach has been extended in Hoxton.
- A cross border meeting with LB Islington is arranged for 14th August with a representative from Islington attending the IGU intelligence and tasking meeting.
- Crime reduction action plans are in existence for two areas with a further one in development. This links the work of the IGU, Contextual Safeguarding and community safety.
- Progress is gathering pace to better identify those at risk of gang involvement with links being developed to the Children at Risk of Exploitation meeting.
- Operation Sceptre (serious violence reduction) involving enhanced police and partnership patrols is continuing with LBH routinely attracting this resource.
- Operation Winters Nights has focus onto Knife Crime hotspots and the knife seizure in our Borough is one of the highest across London.
- Trading Standards continue to undertake test purchase operations across the Borough with warning being given to a minority of store keepers.
- Much youth related outreach activities have been and are continuing to be delivered in schools, on the street and other venues with prevention in mind.
- Many Knife Crime weapon sweeps have been undertaken directed by the LBH weekly tasking process. With Community led sweeps being planned for the future.

- Enhanced patrols and enforcement in the N16 area together with the proportionate use of Section 60 stop and search powers.
- Partnership Action Plans in two areas with a further one in development.

5 Synopsis of IGU Partnership Interventions

5.1 Empower London- Safer London (EL)

5.2 Empower Safer London provided 1:1 intensive support to 33 young people experiencing child sexual exploitation (CSE). Under MOPAC London Crime Prevention Fund (LCPF) funding over 130 consultations is provided to professionals across the borough, offering expertise and guidance around supporting and working with young people experiencing exploitation, particularly in a gang-related context.

5.3 Being co-located in the IGU has facilitated the EL staff to support young people holistically through sharing knowledge with other practitioners within the unit, for example providing guidance around trafficking and the National Referral Mechanism to safeguard young people who are victims of county lines.

5.4 Of the young people intervened with in the financial year 2017/18, 81% demonstrated an increased understanding of safety and how to implement a safety plan. 81% demonstrated an increased understanding of healthy relationships, including having conversations with their advocate around consent, sex and the law and abusive relationship dynamics. Safer London advocates support young people with their health and well-being, including ensuring access to health services e.g. GP, sexual health and CAMHS – 70% of young people have demonstrated an increase in their levels of health and wellbeing.

5.5 Additionally EL has provided 4 preventative 10-week group work programmes within Hackney schools, including 2 at an alternative education provision.

6 Mentivation- Interventions to Reduce Gang Violence

6.1 Mentivation has deliver four 6-week Gang awareness programmes through-out the LBH in the local PRU, mainstream schools and youth clubs.

6.2 Outcomes:

- They have assisted young people to challenge and re-evaluate wrong thinking and lifestyles around negative peers (gangs) and weapons crimes (gun and knife).
- Stimulated critical thinking and avoidance strategies around offending activities and behaviours.
- Provided consistent adult advice, support and guidance.
- Advice and guidance for teachers' awareness on how to effectively work with young people around the issues they face around challenging and emotional behaviour including offending, gangs and inclusion.

7 Community Outreach:

Undertake community outreach sessions on a weekly basis, covering local crime hotspots and youth provisions in Hackney.

7.1 Outcomes:

- Engage with young people and youth workers in the community.
- Build positive communities within the borough of Hackney
- Gain community trust and support the community to gain to work with other agencies such as police and local council.
- Observe, assess and report on local community tensions.
- Information sharing with other agencies and professionals.

8 Probation and Youth Offending Team within the IGU.

Embedded within the IGU is a team of Youth Workers (YOT) and Probation Officers who are responsible for undertaking preventative and diversionary sessions with 122 young people and adults from within the Hackney Gangs matrix. These teams undertake 121 sessions with the cohort together with group work and other stakeholder interventions such as Parents Voice and work within educational establishments. Their work also extends to supporting cohort members to undertake training activities to endeavour to secure employment for cohort members. An element of enforcement is also evident through the use of the breach legislation and tagging process. Links are also made to other stakeholders such as The Department of Work and Pensions (operative is seconded to the IGU).

9 Hackney CVS

9.1 HCVS has recruited and trained 5 young people to be part of the Stop and Search Monitoring group. One of the youth leaders has developed a training package about acid attacks called "Corrosive", which we will begin delivering in schools and youth clubs in 2018/2019.

9.2 The young people's stop and search monitoring group has delivered Know Your Rights programmes in the following places:

- Hackney Community College
- Evelyn Court
- Forest Road Youth club
- The Edge Woodberry down
- Stormont House
- Morningside Youth club
- Pembury Estate

9.3 Members of the Stop and Search group also attended two parent conferences at Cardinal Pole School and Stoke Newington School.

10 St Giles Trust (SGT)

10.1 SGT provides two officers that are dedicated to the IGU to undertake intensive, specialist help for young people affected by gang-related violence and exploitation. We also prevent young people at risk of becoming involved in gangs and violence.

10.2 Their achievement over the last 12 months include:-

10.2 Housing-SGT has supported thirteen clients to better access housing support. Financial support, to help improve housing situations and referrals made to housing agencies has proven most common interventions. SOS Caseworkers have also supported with emergency housing referrals which involve caseworkers taking their clients to Hackney Housing and presenting them as emergency referral/homeless, caseworkers then dedicate their day to support their clients with their assessments, move and housing benefits.

10.3 Education, Training and Employment (ETE)-More than half of SOS Hackney clients received support with education, training and employment. This form of support is highly stratified by age. Support in this area predominantly focused on job-searches and employability improvements, in addition to supporting young people with their college process.

10.5 Health- SOS Hackney caseworkers supported over 90% of clients with health interventions this year, the vast majority involved encouraging clients to take up a positive activity such as sports or music. Caseworkers also supported clients in attending their GP and health appointments. In addition there has been much support with helping clients access statutory and non-statutory mental health services.

10.6 Reducing Offending- The majority of offending support is based around helping the young people engage with various statutory bodies. 1 in 5 clients from this cohort received support in engaging with the police, attending court appearances and/or engaging in legal professionals. 1 in 2 clients received support with engaging with probation and/or youth offending teams.

10.7 Finance, benefit and debts (FBD) - FBD support was targeted with 40% of clients received welfare rights advice and 20% received financial assistance in times of extreme hardship. Over 10% of clients received debt management advice and around 5% received support in setting up forms of financial accounts.

10.8 Gang Exit-There were 20 reported gang exits representing the 47% of the total client group.

11 Police Stop and Search Accountability

11.1 LBH Stop and Search members have been working on this project to increase police awareness and understanding of young people, mental health. Over several weeks, the Stop and Search members co-produced a training workshop on mental health awareness to deliver to 60 Police officers/NCOs in Hackney. Training to be delivered in April 2018. Young People interviewed police around their attitudes to mental health in February and March (4 interviews).

12 IGU Police Officers intervention

12.1 There are ten police officers working within the IGU. They have undertaken the following interventions:-

- The implementation of a number of covert and proactive operations targeting prominent gang members.
- Highest number of knives seized within London.
- Curfew and bail checks.
- Only London Borough showing a reduction in knife crime.
- Proactive arrest policy for those who are wanted for serious offences.
- Collation of intelligence to inform operational decision.
- Utilisation of targeted Section 60 stop and search power. These are monitored at the Stop and Search Group *ibid*.

13 Gang Matrix summary

13.1 The gang matrix was established by the Metropolitan Police in collaboration with key stakeholders in 2012 to provide a consistent and standardised method of identifying, people who have been involved in gang related criminality and thereby providing a focus for the IGU to reduce their offenders which safeguarding them from exploitation.

13.2 It is important to emphasise that in other London Boroughs it is the Police that unilaterally decides to include an individual on the gang matrix. This is not the case within Hackney where a fortnightly partnership meeting is held to review the gang matrix cohort to ensure that all partners contribute to decision around inclusions onto the gang matrix. Conversely there is flexibility within the process to remove someone from the cohort should they become disconnected from gang activities.

13.3 Under the direction of the Young Black Men's board a work stream has been adopted for the IGU partners to review the gang matrix with improvement in mind.

14 Safeguarding young people at risk of gang exploitation

14.1 Through collaboration with Hackney Children and Families the IGU partnership has identified a further 40 young people who are at risk of gang exploitation. Many of this cohort are already known to Young Hackney and the YOT through existing criminal justice processes. The intention of establishing this group is to better inform mainstream intervention to minimise the risk to these young people who may be susceptible to criminal exploitation.

15 Conclusion

The IGU is a co-located team involving a number of key stakeholders working together to prevent, enforce and divert prominent gang members from gang related criminality.

The IGU attempts to respond to the effects of gang crime and its causes and has a primary raison d'être to divert those who are offending from the gang life style.

Recent successes have included a reduction in knife offences together with reductions in serious youth violence. The LBH Mayoral manifesto commitment 92 explicitly outlines LBH's intention to continue to invest in the IGU to build upon the reductions in serious violence already achieved.

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