

Learning Brief – Serious Youth Violence Rapid Review (2)

Commissioned by the KBSP

Contributors: local authorities (BCC, N Somerset & South Glos), Avon & Somerset police, AWP, Barnardo's, education, alternative learning provision, probation, youth justice and health services



Rapid Review by Becky Lewis

Thresholds and the assessment of risk and need

- More consistency was needed in assessing and applying threshold guidance.
- There were gaps in multi-agency information sharing about exploitation and risk of serious violence.
- Multi-agency assessments should consider the chronology of concerns, to better understand the intersection between intra-familial and extra-familial risks and needs.
- There was a need for greater, multi-agency risk assessment and review and a better understanding across the service about the role of social workers in ongoing case co-ordination for children who are being harmed or harming others through serious violence.

Planning and review processes

- There were examples of good quality multi-agency discussions and information sharing to inform planning, that focused on trying to resolve barriers to educational attainment and engagement.
- However, risk management guidance was not consistently followed for all children and there was need to identify and implement strategies for mitigating the risk in the community - the police should consistently attend planning meetings to be fully involved in mitigating risk for individual children.
- Safer Options violence reduction meetings strengthened agencies' understanding of each other's involvement, but plans were not always moved forward effectively and there were missed opportunities to improve oversight and accountability.
- A single, multi-agency plan led by children's social care would strengthen planning and co-ordination. This should include co-ordination of wider, contextual community plans with individual children's safeguarding, within the police.

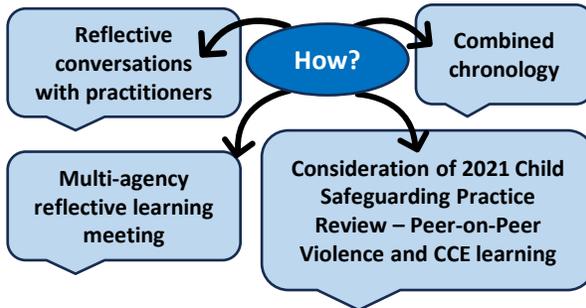
Interventions to reduce involvement in serious violent crime

- There were good examples of relational practice and creative packages of support that managed to engage young people in meaningful discussions.
- Challenges to building and maintaining relationships and effecting change included children's and families' experiences of institutional bias and racism, the influence of peer networks and in part, fears of being prosecuted for offending or retaliation from others in the community.
- Preventative services should be put in place at the earliest opportunity before children become involved in higher levels of conflict.
- Consideration should be given to how to support young people with additional vulnerabilities such as being in care.
- Clear, written assessment and planning by specialist children's recovery services should be shared with the multi-agency network to ensure that their work is understood by the child and their network and to strengthen decision-making.
- Where there are elements of intersectionality between the children (trauma, educational needs, intra and extra-familial risk), professionals would have benefited from using the Safer Options trauma-informed consultation model and Youth Justice Services enhanced case management model, to assist in thinking about the sequencing and timing of different interventions and strategies.
- Consider how enforcement actions could be part of wider safeguarding measures when children harm others and to include community safety in this planning.

Interventions for working with parents and carers of children being harmed and/or harming others through serious violence

- Parents' and carers' voices and information were not given the same value as police intelligence information.
- Implementing safety strategies was challenging due to lack of professional confidence and the families' experiences of structural inequalities.
- The decision by police to not prioritise restorative practice with parents may have impacted their ability to seek help and engage with statutory services.
- Planning and multi-agency reviews could be stronger with greater inclusion of the parent or carer, to help navigate specific challenges.
- Identify parent and carer's needs for support much earlier and consider which services are best placed to meet them, that have the required expertise in CCE.

Key themes



Learning identified

Systems for addressing severe and persistent low educational attendance and children missing education

- Emerging indicators of persistent and severe poor attendance and patterns of suspension should consistently trigger rigorous early help responses from education.
- Improved quality and safety for some alternative providers and consistency in reintegration plans.
- Greater partnership support in planning for children travelling to and from school.
- Ensure education settings have up-to-date information about dynamic risk and community conflict and tensions – sufficiently contextualised to have the greatest impact.

Weapon carrying/machetes

- The partnership should work to understand how young people are acquiring these weapons and take steps to identify strategies for removing them from communities and preventing sale or acquisition.

Safeguarding response to injuries from health setting

- Emergency Department staff should consider potential conflict when young people present with alleged knife injuries – they may need to make a safeguarding referral to children's social care.
- Alert systems such as CPIS should alert practitioners to children experiencing significant harm through extrafamilial harm as a child in need.

Response to retaliation risk

- The use of child protection strategy meetings was positive, as was the work of young people's services in co-ordinating safety plans with the parents.
- Investigations by the police were being led by teams who were not necessarily trained in child protection – meaning children's safeguarding processes were potentially overlooked.

Multi-agency professional culture

- Good professional practice with young people was identified, as well as evidence of professional accountability and challenge, which facilitated improvements in the child's plan.
- However, at times, decisions were made in silos which limited opportunity for good multi-agency disciplinary discussion.
- More focus to be on **how** the safeguarding actions to protect children in the community were to be achieved.
- Identify how the expertise of exploitation specialists could be used in planning for children's safety, including options for disruption.

Post incident response

- Provide opportunities to debrief with police about agency experiences of communication and improvement of regular briefings to school leaders.
- Develop a local, critical incident plan with other partnerships in Avon and Somerset.



KBSP
Executive to
commission
a CSPR

How can we
improve
partnerships
with parents
and carers in
respect of
extrafamilial
harm?

How can we
improve
consistency
of plans for
safeguarding
children
from extra-
familial
harm?

How can
existing
resources be
utilised more
effectively
to improve
severe and
persistent,
low,
educational
attendance?

Immediate recommendations

- BCC area teams to develop a process to review all plans to close or step down children who are flagged as experiencing CCE and CSE, to improve consistency of threshold decision making.
- Home to School Transport Service to review the transport funding policy for children who are experiencing high risk exploitation and serious violence.
- KBSP to request Wiltshire partnership share their learning with the Children's Group to inform discussions about the use of child protection plans for risk outside the home.
- Review and revise processes for communication with education providers about the ongoing incident response.
- KBSP Executive to engage housing in implementing a pathway to enable multi-agency assessment of location risk for children flagged as experiencing CSE/CCE, to inform housing options under the relief duty.
- Threshold capacity within Operation Topaz and the Early Intervention Police team to be reviewed with findings and planned actions to be presented to the Executive.
- 'Operation Totality' officers should ensure timely safeguarding referrals are made and share relevant information with children's social care when assessing risk.
- KBSP Preventing Serious Violence Board to review mechanisms for consideration of community orders as a safeguarding measure, with suspects of serious assaults using weapons, who are not charged.
- ICB to escalate and review with the national CPIS team, the need to widen the categories of safeguarding flags on the CPIS system to include contextual safeguarding markers.
- Acute trusts to review safeguarding training provision to staff in emergency departments around their response to young people presenting with wounds thought to be caused by bladed articles.
- Local authority to encourage professionals to alert service managers to incidents of suspected, disproportionate use of interventions by any agency and reinforce referral pathway to LADO, including for police incidents.
- Barnardo's to direct staff on compliance with written assessments, planning and sharing these with multi-agency networks, and addressing areas for improvement with relevant staff teams.
- Barnardo's to work with local partners to launch the new Exploitation partnership to ensure clear understanding of how to access recovery services in Bristol and how we will work together when there is insufficient capacity to allocate.