

BOROUGH / PROJECT :

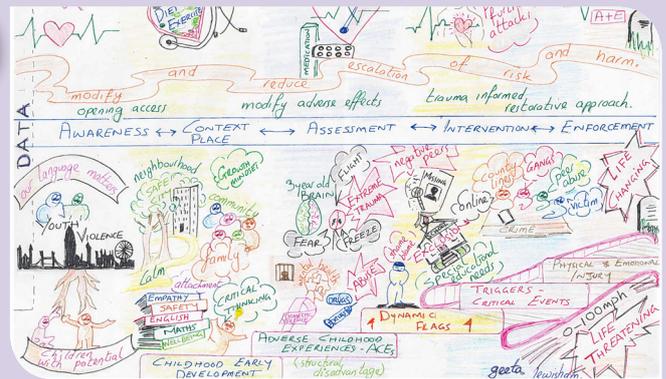
Lewisham Council

– A partnership approach to addressing violence and vulnerability



PROBLEM :

Concerns around violence, drug dealing and criminal exploitation.



[click image to enlarge]

SOLUTION :

There are several strands to Lewisham’s approach to violence and vulnerability and peer on peer abuse, and it is this combination of approaches, each with their particular aspects and strengths, that enables effective holistic action to deliver improved outcomes - that include a 67 per cent reduction in repeat victim assaults.

BACKGROUND :

Lewisham has, since 2008, invested significant partnership focus and resources in tackling the issue of Serious Violence. Its four year strategy (2014-2017) has identified Serious Violence as a priority, as well as ensuring its Safe Plan 2017/18 refreshes the partnership’s understanding of the issues and current action plan.

For 18-19 the Partnership seeks to answer further the following:

How do we become a less violent society?

Exposure to and actual violence impact significantly on communities and individuals. Violence covers serious youth violence, peer on peer abuse, gender based violence including domestic abuse. These crimes are high harm as well as contributing significantly to the overall crimes in the borough.

How do we shape a safer place and space?

Research has gradually evolved to recognise the role that contextual, as well as developmental and familial, factors play in the process of adolescent development. The social spaces where young people spend their time is a key area of consideration when developing approaches. As young people explore and assert their independence from family contexts during adolescence, the relationships they form outside of their homes, and the nature of the spaces in which these form, influence their exposure to safety, risk and abuse

How do we understand and ensure negative bias is reflected upon and protected against?

A number of reports have evidenced the disproportionate impact on aspects of our community through the Criminal Justice system. It is clear that the language used to describe issues, individuals and agencies needs to be objective and unbiased to ensure that fairness and equality is at the heart of approaches by all. Social cohesion and integration are at the heart of tackling discrimination with open and regular community dialogue being crucial.

Summary of the 'Lewisham landscape':

In setting the **18 – 19 direction of travel** a number of aspects have been taken into consideration. The Partnership is adopting an approach that challenges and ensures that issues are not normalised asking difficult questions to tackle the hardest issues.

There are a number of drivers for the approach which include:

- The London Mayor's Police and Crime Police 2017-2021 which has been adopted by Lewisham as the 4 year statutory Strategy. (Strands include A better police service, A Criminal Justice System for London, Keeping children and young people safe, VAWG. Hate crime and counter terrorism).
- Regional work being undertaken in respect of the London Landscape, devolution options and future projections in respect of harm and vulnerability and any regional and sub-regional commissioning across agencies
- Reviews in respect of disproportionality and cohesion including Baroness Young, MP David Lammy, and Dame Louise Casey
- Findings from reviews being undertaken by central and regional government and partners including MET police drugs strategy, London VAWG refresh, DIP review, IOM review, Youth Custody prison reform etc.
- Inspection outcomes and identified learning from Domestic Homicide Reviews and Serious Case reviews that relate to the Partnership
- Information from our local strategic needs assessment and local residents survey Lewisham's local assessment profiles (LAP)
- Overwhelming dominance of drugs markets as predictor of violence.
- County Lines (groups based in Lewisham involved in drug markets outside London) including co-lead on 'Rescue and Response' pan London project.
- Partnership examples – integration achieved by Missing, Exploited, Tactical / Serious Youth Crime Prevention Panel / Self Assessed Violence and Vulnerability Matrix (SAVVY – which is used by a few county police forces) / Focused Deterrence / communications/ schools/ parents and trusted adult/ trauma informed approach.

Reducing Violence and Promoting safety in the Community

Youth Violence was the single focus for the Partnership in 2017/2018. Areas of peer on peer abuse, gender based violence, and other violence were prioritised recognising the significant harm. However violence remains a significant concerns with its rise in Gun and Knife crime. Knife crime for under 25 has however seen a 2% reduction which suggests the approach adopted to tackle serious youth violence (including under 25 year olds) is having an impact.

Gender based: A detailed analysis has been undertaken on all 8 strands of the Violence against Women and Girls agenda alongside a detailed deep dive into Domestic Abuse in 17/18.

The focus on Domestic abuse and Sexual violence due its volume remains a focus, however through greater

understanding of the other strands increased actions is required across all the strands. Through the deep dive it highlighted that 4 out of 10 incidents related to male victims with psychological and violent incidents were predominantly within family relationships not intimate relationships.

In the period analysed 368 children witnessed Domestic abuse with almost half witnessing violence with girls and under 5s being significantly represented. The impact of witnessing violence causes significant trauma.

Peer-on Peer: This was a specific focus in 2017/2018 with greater understanding of the drivers including Trafficking of Children to deal drugs of exploitation both sexual and emotional.

Considering these aspects together linking Missing, Exploitation, Trafficking & serious violence including Drug Dealing has enabled and approach focusing on safeguarding, Risk, Harm and Vulnerability.

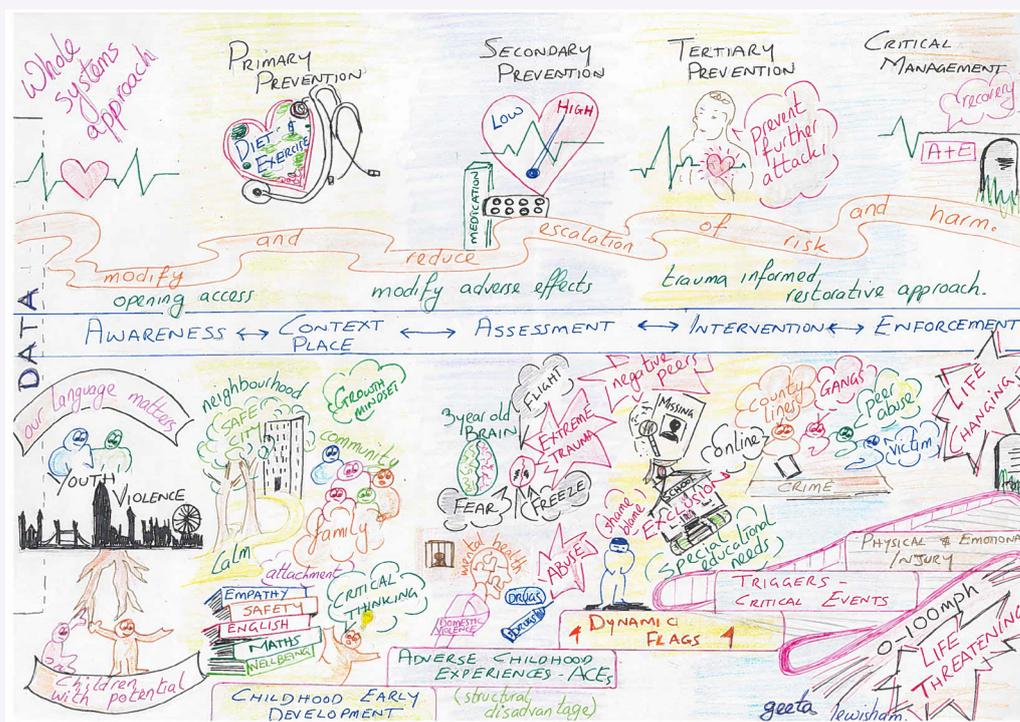
County Lines: The issues of drug dealing in London and out of London has been a significant driver of violence and harm to young people. With clear multi agency grip, support and proactive approaches there is some evidence of shift in these issues. The multi-faceted approach has shown significant enforcement outcomes for those organising and leading the offending alongside reductions in drug offences, youth custody and knife injury for under 25 year olds. This approach is showing positive short and medium term impacts. Every organisation is working towards common goals in preventing vulnerable young people from becoming susceptible to grooming and criminal exploitation within Lewisham and nationally.

ACTIONS :

A **trauma-informed approach** recognises the impact trauma has on an individual's development and responses. The trauma shapes basic responses of flight or fight and makes consequential thinking challenging.

Restorative approaches recognise that the language used impacts significantly on a person's self purpose. Language that blames and shames does not provide a platform to find the positivity and can add trauma to an individual or an organisation.

Unconscious bias is something everyone has. Recognising this in ourselves and ensuring these biases do not impact on decision-making or behaviours is critical to tackle issues of discrimination.



This diagram details a whole systems approach to serious youth violence by Geeta Subramaniam, Head of Public Protection and Safety, LB Lewisham and Chair of London Heads of Community Safety and Youth Offending Team Assistant Directors Network.

Practice model implementation:

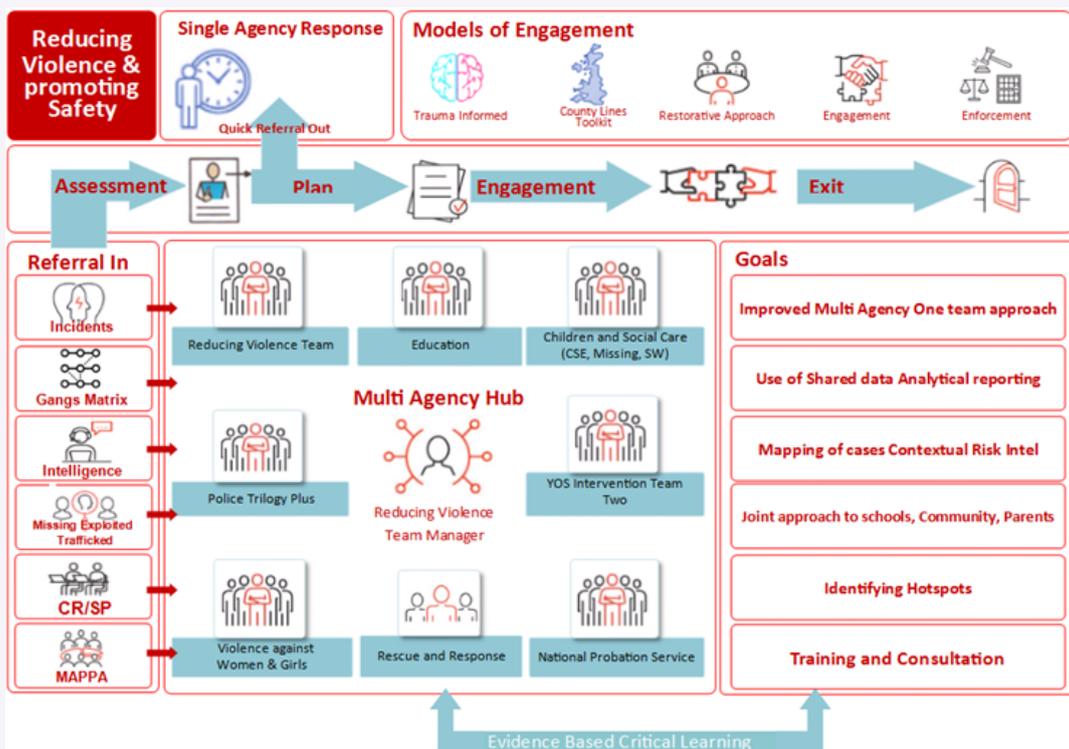
- Maintain solutions that are working such as trauma informed/family focussed and restorative
- Co-design risk approaches
- Work alongside communities to develop local approaches
- Wide scale skills training
- Work with schools and youth groups to create safety mapping
- Expand on the work of the Safer Lewisham Business Partnership
- Work with communities to understand contextual safeguarding
- Co design safe space approaches
- Development of integration and cohesion in changing environments
- Public Space Protection Orders (PSPO)
- Online space solutions
- Include unconscious bias training in the Lewisham universal schools program
- Support the embedding of the Trauma-informed staff model across agencies
- Develop a toolkit for blind testing decision making on cases across agencies
- Work with agencies to develop a sense of pride and belonging for Lewisham children

Reducing Violence and Promoting Safety in Lewisham – a co-ordinated response

The safety and risk that young people and young adults face is a rapidly changing scene. There is a gathering awareness of the connections between Serious Youth Violence, County lines activity and Criminal Exploitation. The proposed approach is a refresh of the Serious Youth Violence approach for Lewisham to develop a new collaborative partnership model for complex safeguarding responding to these emerging challenges.

The strength of Multi-agency hubs which bring services together are proven and evidenced. This model recognises that complex safeguarding issues affect all ages so we are committed to improving outcomes for children, young people and adults.

The hub is a referral and intervention service for people who are presenting at the various monitoring panels and brings services together to action plan, task and co-work complex cases. It is the means to following through on actions to reduce risk and vulnerability in a co-ordinated, collaborative and effective way. Critical learning through intelligence mapping and information –sharing will build local understanding and support the new pan London County lines hubs (Lewisham lead for South London).



OUTCOMES:

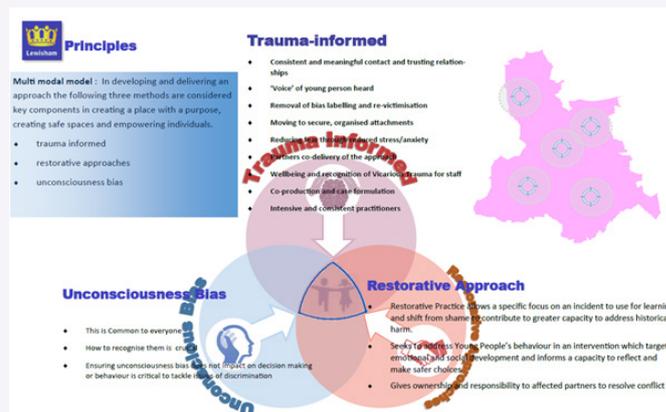
This holistic approach is essential to having short and long term impact. The collective partnership response has enabled this work to be shaped and adopted. There will be ongoing review of the process and interventions and changes made as required.

The Borough partners and residents have identified the following as being essential for our collective approach:

- Reduction in harm and vulnerability being critical as part of an overall prevention, intervention and enforcement approaches
- Promoting welfare of children at the heart of the approach always
- Focus on deficits leads to negative perceptions and self-fulfilling prophecies.
- Working at early stages restoratively
- Finding solutions always
- Consistent, meaningful common language can change public opinion and reputation
- Reducing fear, harm and Re-victimization is critical.
- Considering contextual and geographical risks.
- Improving trust, confidence and satisfaction in this agenda
- Considering systemic approaches that link to agency changes whilst improving outcomes and impact
- Using data and analysis which is single, collective and cumulative whilst also considering future foresight modelling

EVALUATION: To date the emerging evidence is proving:

- Reductions in serious offending and youth custody.
- Partnership activity which has resulted in enforcement leading to lengthy custodial sentences to adult perpetrators to enable a safeguarding approach to vulnerable children.
- Through the shared ethos and high quality training and staff development program increased resilience and capacity
- adoption of the model by the wider education, health and social care partnership
- Goldsmiths University are evaluating Lewisham's approach based on the Tri modular approach below.



FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT :

Geeta Subramaniam-Mooney

Head of Crime Reduction and Supporting People

Tel: 020 8314 9569