



**THE MAYOR OF NEWHAM'S  
YOUTH SAFETY BOARD**

**REPORT AND  
RECOMMENDATIONS**

**DECEMBER 2019**



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# Forewords



### **Mayor of Newham, Rokhsana Fiaz OBE (co-chair)**

Improving the safety of all our young people is a top priority for my administration. We have a generation of young people who are consumed with fear. Scared to walk alone, because they might get jumped. Afraid to walk in groups, because that might identify them as part of a gang and put them at risk. So instead of spending their days enjoying the abundance of opportunity Newham has to offer, some of our young people are scared and see no future before them. Like me, all parents and carers, alongside the whole community in Newham, want to see the spectre of violence facing our young people eradicated. Newham should be a place where every child and young person feels safe, thrives and where they can reach their full potential through accessing all sorts of enriching opportunities. That's why the work of the Youth Safety Board has been so vital. With the help of young people, residents, family members and our partners on the Youth Safety Board, we've come up with an ambitious and positive agenda which I am committed to implementing in partnership with residents, services and young people themselves. We want to make Newham the best place for children and young people, and the agenda set out in this report will contribute to this considerably.



### **Duncan Bew, Clinical Director for Trauma and Acute Surgery and Kings College Hospital (co-chair)**

As a trauma surgeon, I see the consequences of violence for Londoners and their families on every shift. Where models around the world have been successful it is because they have community credibility and they highlight the opportunities in the community for young people to thrive. In years to come I hope Newham and the Youth Safety Board will come to be seen as the gold standard for youth services.



### **Keisha McLeod, Mother of Corey Junior Davis (member)**

This report is the start of what is necessary. It shows the youth we care, it shows them we are interested in their opportunities for their future and that we are willing to invest in them. I became part of the Youth Safety Board because I am determined to work towards a world where no parent has to experience what I have gone through. It's a huge job but I am very optimistic about what we can accomplish.

### **Keir (Youth Movements representative on the Youth Safety Board)**

Plainly and simply, we're close to a state of emergency regarding youth safety in Newham. Our young people have the right to feel free wherever they travel and it's our responsibility to give them this right. It's not just enough, however, to only have the voices of adults making change. The opinions and suggestions of young people inside and outside of the gang and knife crime issue are invaluable in order to combat this rising issue. I hope that the youth safety board will take steps to solve the gang and knife crime problem and ultimately make Newham a safer and more enjoyable place to be for everyone.

### **M, young man who contributed to the Youth Safety Board**

As a young man of 20, I was glad I was asked about my experience of growing up in Newham because I have never been asked about my younger times in a supportive way before, well not in a way that would be used to make life better for me or others.

The youth safety interview was a good opportunity for me to think through about the support I wished I had had when I was struggling as a teenager. Who helped me and who didn't.

I am happy to know that Newham is looking at different ways of working with young people like myself who have been excluded and ended up in street life. It was a rough time and I felt lost, like no one cared. I hope that things change for the better in the future so no one has to go through what I went through.

# Introduction. Young people's safety is a challenge for us all

Children and young people are at the heart of our diverse Newham community. They are our greatest asset. Every child and young adult in Newham should look forward to a positive future and have confidence that adults will support them as they learn, express themselves and develop the passions, skills and relationships that make them unique.

For children and young people to thrive in this way, they need to feel safe. Although the challenge of violence is not unique to our local area, we in Newham owe it to our children and young people to use all the tools at our disposal to support and protect them. The issue is urgent, even if some of the solutions will take time to work. In this report, the Youth Safety Board established by the Mayor of Newham sets out what it believes needs to be done in the coming years to make Newham a safer place for young people.

Protecting young people is everybody's business, and our recommendations are a call to action for all of us in Newham. Public services such as the council, police, health services and schools and colleges have both a moral responsibility and legal duties to work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of Newham's children, and to work together to protect our local communities from crime. Safety also requires communities to work with services to support our young people, so that all of us together create neighbourhoods which are safe for everyone.

We will be asking public services to demonstrate how they are meeting the youth safety challenge by responding to the Board's recommendations with an implementation plan. Young people and residents are already taking action in their communities and they want to do more. Our recommendations cover how we think the council and other organisations should support them.

We would like to dedicate this report to all those young people and families in Newham who have been affected by violence. We are determined to bring about change so that Newham is a place where every young person is safe.

## Co Chairs

Rokhsana Fiaz, OBE, Mayor of Newham

Duncan Bew, Clinical Director for Trauma and Acute Surgery at Kings College Hospital

## Members

Andy Lewis, St Bonaventure's School

Annu Mayor, resident

Bosedede, member of Youth Movements

Cheska, member of Youth Movements

Dellis Smith, Grange Primary School

Ian Bowles, Metropolitan Police

Jair Tavares, family member

Karthik, member of Youth Movements

Keir, member of Youth Movements  
Keisha McLeod, family member

Marie Gabriel, East London NHS Foundation Trust

Naomi, member of Youth Movements

Paul Stephen, Newham College

Rima Vaid, Clinical Commissioning Group

Sandy Davies, Education Links

Shokoor, member of Youth Movements

Wendy Irwin, resident

### **The Mayor of Newham's Youth Safety Board**

Mayor Fiaz committed to setting up a Youth Safety Board when she was elected in May 2018 and to involve young people in improving the safety of young people in Newham. The Board, co-chaired by the Mayor and Duncan Bew, met seven times between March and November 2019.

The Board's discussions have been informed by a public health approach to violence which is evidence-based and focused on

The Board is made up of young people, residents and family members, and police, health and education representatives. Its recommendations were developed through a process of discussion and deliberation, evidence sessions, a review of data and research from Newham and beyond, engagement with groups of adults and young people, and interviews with young people carried out by staff from the youth empowerment service.

“prevention strategies which address the multiple risk factors which cause and perpetuate violence and promote the protective factors which mitigate against the perpetration and victimisation of violence.”

**(Public Health England, 2019).**

### The Board's evidence base

1. Seven meetings where the Board took evidence from a number of stakeholders.
2. Reports from recent external reviews, consultations and events, involving a total of several hundred Newham residents and young people. They included Safety through Active Participation at UEL (January 2018); Newham Youth Community Response Forest Gate meeting (May 2018); Youth Citizens Assembly (July 2018); Community Links' Community Conversations (January 2019); Newham Citizens Civil Society Youth Commission (April 2019); Newham's Crime and Anti-Social Behaviour Scrutiny Commission Report on Street Violence (2019) and the Word on the Curb #KnifeFree Chicken Box campaign (Summer 2019).
3. Published data from the Metropolitan Police, London Ambulance Service, the Mayor's Office of Policing and Crime (MOPAC), and the MOPAC-funded Rescue and Response project.
4. Individual interviews with fifteen young people (aged 14 – 23 years) carried out by the Youth Empowerment Service.
5. Fourteen group discussions, with young people (Education Links, Tunmarsh School, the Youth Offending Service, Canning Town Baptist Church, RE Matters group), adult residents, local organisations and staff (Canning Town and Plaistow Coffee mornings, the Roma Support Group, Beckton and Royal Docks Community Forums, Canning Town Baptist Church parents group, Newham Council staff focus groups, providers of Positive Activities for Young People, Custom House and Canning Town Faith Network, and the Council's SACRE Board).
6. A review of the wider learning and evidence base on youth safety.

The evidence briefing accompanying this report sets out the evidence base in greater depth. The Board would like to thank all the young people and adults who shared their experiences and suggestions, and the organisations who facilitated the discussions.

For this report, the Board focused on children and young adults up to the age of 24 years who live, work and study in Newham, those who visit the borough, and children who live outside Newham but to whom we owe a responsibility because they are looked-after or placed outside Newham for their safety.

The Board focused on serious violence that impacts young people, criminal and sexual exploitation, and young people's wider feelings of safety in Newham. However, adverse child experiences including violence and abuse in the home, and bullying, harassment, violent extremism and hate crime in schools and communities, often underlie serious violence and exploitation. Children and young people have a right to live free from all forms of violence and harm.

The drivers of exploitation and violence - wider societal and domestic violence, poverty and inequality, and illicit drug markets – are issues which require a response beyond individual local authority borders. Locally, these drivers are being challenged through Newham's community wealth-building agenda and a programme of investment and support for children and young people. The Board calls for local action to be matched by a national primary prevention agenda and decisive action to meet the needs of deprived communities and vulnerable children and adults.

# Youth Safety in Newham: overview of findings

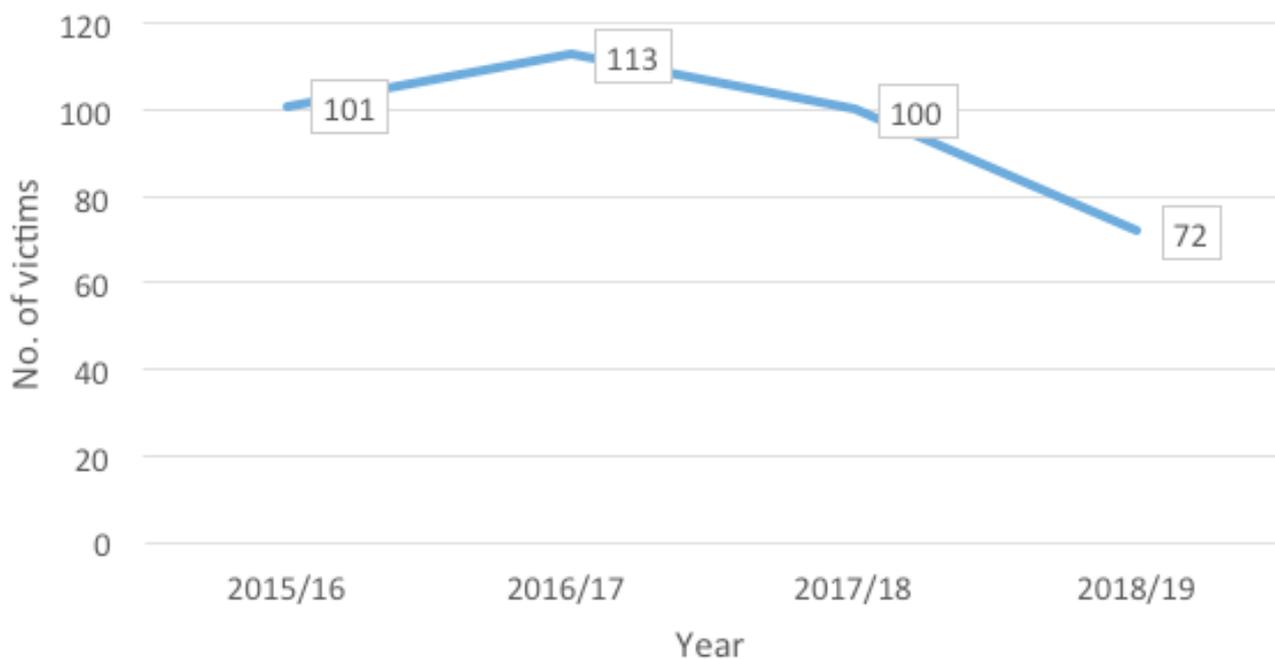
## Violence and exploitation: trends and profiles

Nationally, amidst a long-term decline in all types of violence, high harm violence has risen and is concentrated in metropolitan areas including London. Individual datasets provide only a partial picture of the issues and further disaggregation and qualitative evidence is required to understand young people's complex experiences of violence.

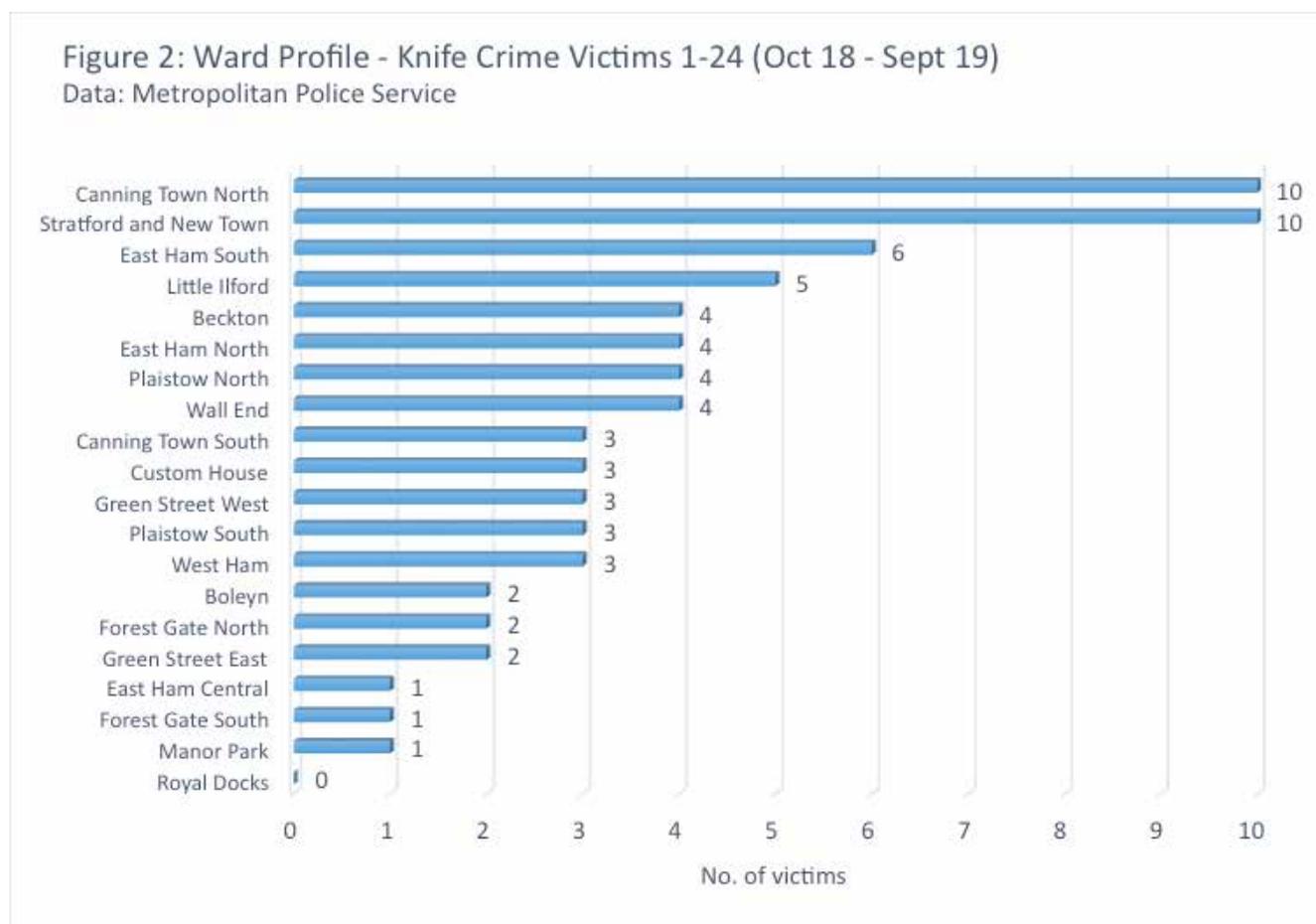
Serious violence affecting young people has risen in Newham since 2012/13. However, reported assaults involving knives with victims aged 24 years or below peaked in late December 2017, and were in decline as of September 2019 (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Newham Knife Crime Victims aged 1-24 years (12 months Oct - Sept)

Source: Metropolitan Police Service



The number of incidences varies across the different parts of the borough. Taking knife crime affecting young people as an example, the highest number of incidents were reported from Stratford and New Town, and Canning Town North wards (Figure 2).



## Mayor of Newham's Youth Safety Board

As elsewhere in London, violent incidents involving 10-16 year olds are most likely to happen in the after-school period, while those involving older teenagers and young adults tend to be clustered later in the evening. These temporal patterns, combined with relatively high rates of recorded violent offences on public transport in Newham, point to the need to focus on safer post-school journeys.

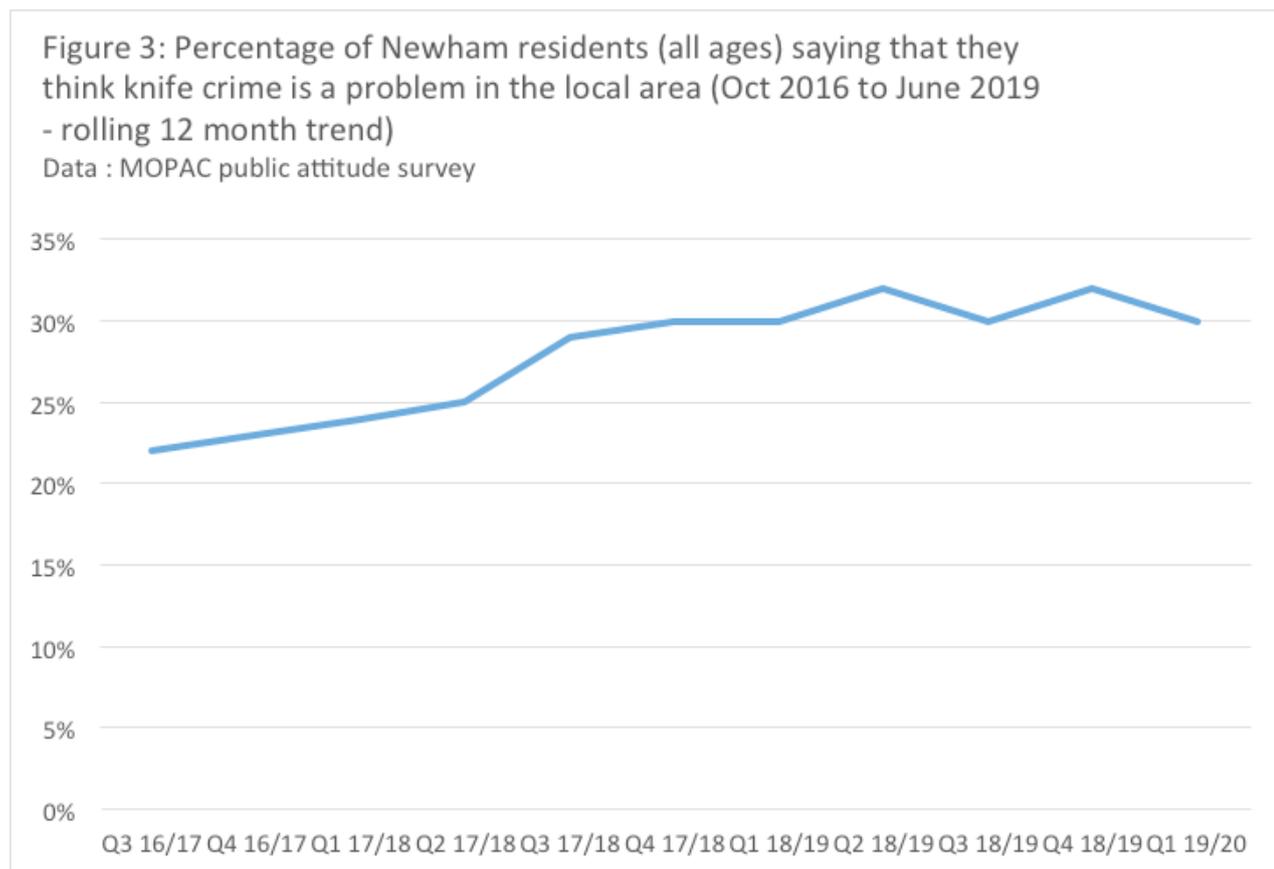
County lines activity – where gangs and organised criminal networks export illegal drugs to other areas using dedicated mobile phone lines - is a serious concern in Newham, with the number of people thought to be involved amongst the highest in London. Other forms of criminal exploitation include children and vulnerable adults being exploited as part of local drugs markets, and theft. In the view of many professionals, child sexual exploitation in Newham, mostly affecting girls, tends to be closely linked to the activities of organised criminal groups.

A large majority of both young victims and suspects in reported incidents of physical violence in Newham live in the borough. Across London, boys and young men are much more likely to be victims and perpetrators of serious violence affecting young people, and to be identified as being involved in criminal exploitation. Boys and young men make up at least 7 in 10 of suspects for all physical violence offences and 9 in 10 of the young people supported by Newham's Youth Offending Service are male. However, girls make up just over half of victims of all incidents of physical violence reported in Newham. Further work is required in order to explore girls' experiences of violence at the hand of partners or ex-partners, and their direct and indirect experiences of exploitation and violence.

Newham has one of the most diverse populations in the country. Children and young people from all backgrounds are affected by violence. However, young people from some ethnic backgrounds are over-represented as victims and in the criminal justice system. Research from East London and beyond shows that young people from the most deprived neighbourhoods are disproportionately likely to be victims of violence. A continuing focus on tackling disproportionality and ensuring equality of access to opportunities for all of Newham's young people should be a priority.

## Feelings of safety and confidence

Although incidents of serious violence affecting young people have declined over the last 18 months, a growing proportion of residents think that knife crime is a problem (Figure 3).



These concerns were reflected in the Board's discussions with children and young people, who

- Generally felt safe in the areas where they lived, or where they had family and friends, but were worried about travelling after dark or to less familiar parts of the borough.
- Expressed concerns about violence but also about anti-social behaviour in their area that they said made them feel unsafe such as sexual harassment, drunkenness, drug-taking, rubbish-dumping and gambling.
- Wanted safer physical spaces, better lighting, a more visible presence from adults (particularly police), access to

phones to call for help, and removing threatening online material.

- Had mixed feelings about the police. Some young people called for a greater police presence, and others said the presence of police made them anxious.
- Prioritised being able to access safe youth provision and a range of activities and hobbies after school.
- Sometimes mentioned feeling unsafe because of content they had seen on social media.

Adults who took part in engagement sessions shared many of the young people's concerns. They

- Wanted a more visible police presence to deter criminals and a robust approach to anti-social behaviour. Some professionals said that better utilisation of schools police could help to build communication and confidence between the police and young people.
- Suggested more free youth activities were needed and that school premises should be used more after school hours.
- Felt it was important that parents had good support and advice if they were worried about their children, and said parents on low-incomes should get more support bringing up children. Others expressed negative views about poor parenting and discipline, and a focus on consumer goods.
- Asked for more community resources to support young people through faith groups, youth activities and so on. Adults often wanted to help but said they were afraid to approach or talk to young people.
- Highlighted how low expectations and labelling sometimes leads to children being excluded or becoming disengaged.
- Expressed concern about the impact of social media and media in making young people more fearful and/or desensitised to violence.

### **Children and young people in need of early intervention**

Effective early intervention offers an important opportunity to reduce Newham children's vulnerability to violence and exploitation.

The Board heard from professionals that in Newham and elsewhere there are examples of children from stable backgrounds who had been victimised or groomed because they were in the wrong place at the wrong time, or were targeted by a perpetrator at a difficult moment in their lives.

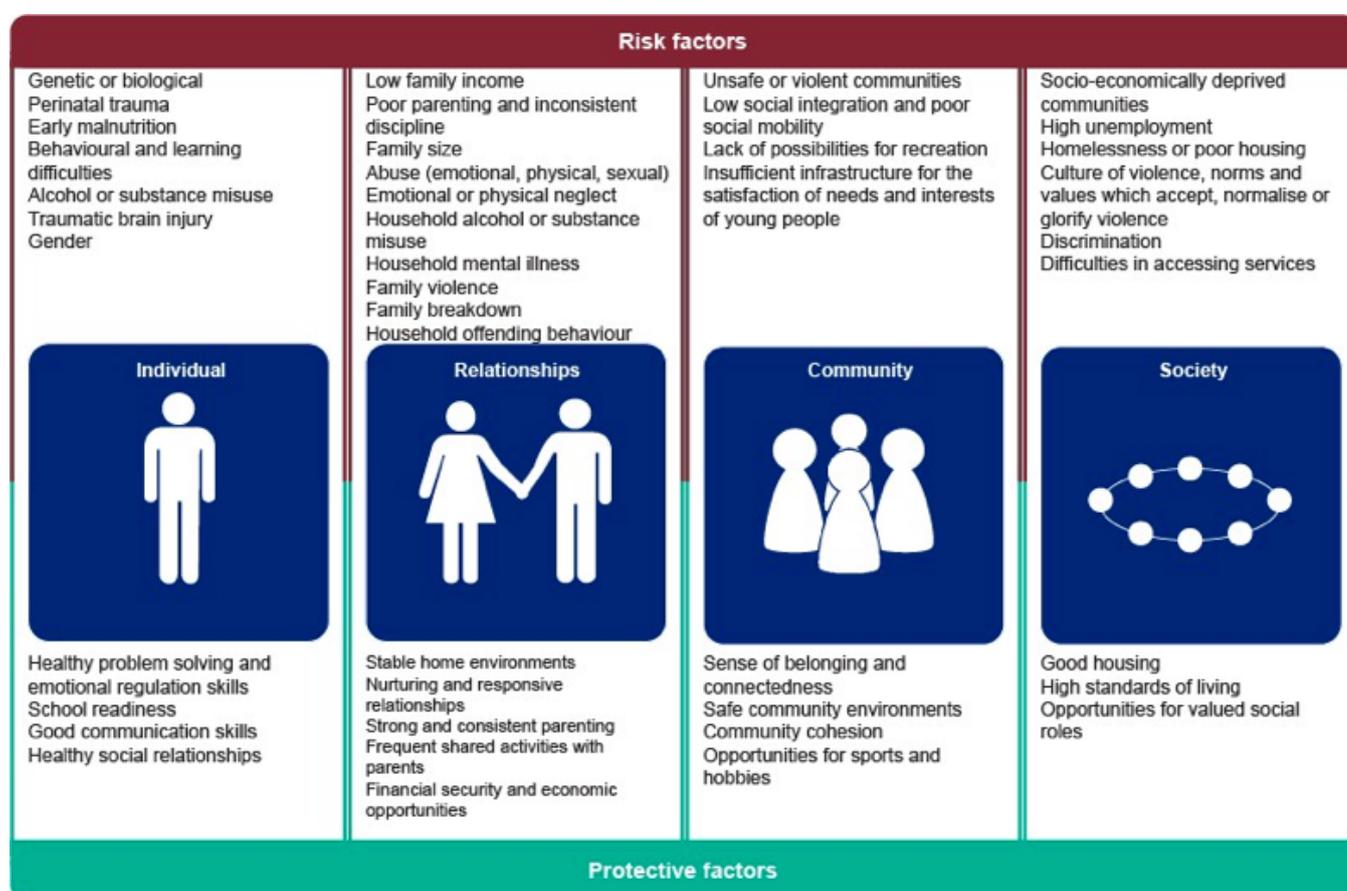
However, in interviews with fifteen young people from Newham who had lived experience of harm, violence or exploitation, a large majority described experiencing adversity, violence or loss in their early lives. They talked about unresolved trauma and mental health problems, and many reported having difficulties with behaviour from an early age, often combined with special educational needs and disabilities. Most were known to children's social care services or the Youth Offending team, many had been out of mainstream school, and a number had attended the Pupil Referral Unit.

Their early experiences are consistent with findings from thematic reviews and research beyond Newham and point to an opportunity to do more to support children and their families to recover and rebuild from early difficulties before the challenges of adolescence and starting secondary school.

Wider evidence reflected in guidance from Public Health England supports a focus on risk and protective factors in children's lives (Figure 4) as a starting point for effective early intervention.

**Figure 4:** Risk factors which increase the likelihood of violence and protective factors which mitigate against perpetration or victimisation of violence

Source: Public Health England (2019), A whole-system multi-agency approach to serious violence prevention, A resource for local system leaders in England



Not all violence affecting young people results from exploitation: some is driven by peer and domestic disputes, mental health and unresolved trauma. Reaching out to adolescents and young adults with accessible and appropriate mental health support, conflict resolution support, and support for those who experience violence in their relationships is a further priority.

The Board heard of the importance of supporting children and young people during important transitions in their lives. Serious case reviews and thematic reviews have highlighted the ways in which the transition to a secondary school can lead to behavioural problems and vulnerability to bullying and exploitation or offending behaviour if vulnerable children are not well supported. Young people have other transitions, too: moving home, bereavement or family changes, or moving into care, may be times when children need careful support to keep them safe.

Overall rates of fixed-term and permanent exclusion in Newham are in line with national averages, although they vary across different schools and different pupil groups. For example, boys, students qualifying for the pupil premium, students with identified special educational needs and students from some ethnic backgrounds were all more likely than average in Newham schools to have experienced more than one fixed term exclusion. Persistent absence, fixed-term exclusions and permanent exclusions, and being unable to attend school full-time for safety reasons, were all identified by young people in interviews as a source of vulnerability.

Interviews for the Board also underlined how difficult transitions out of education and into adult life can be for 16-19 year-olds. Like children, young adults may require nurture and support to deal with past or present trauma, yet they may also face additional challenges, homelessness, poverty and unemployment, and a transition to adult services, which increase their vulnerability to exploitation or involvement in offending

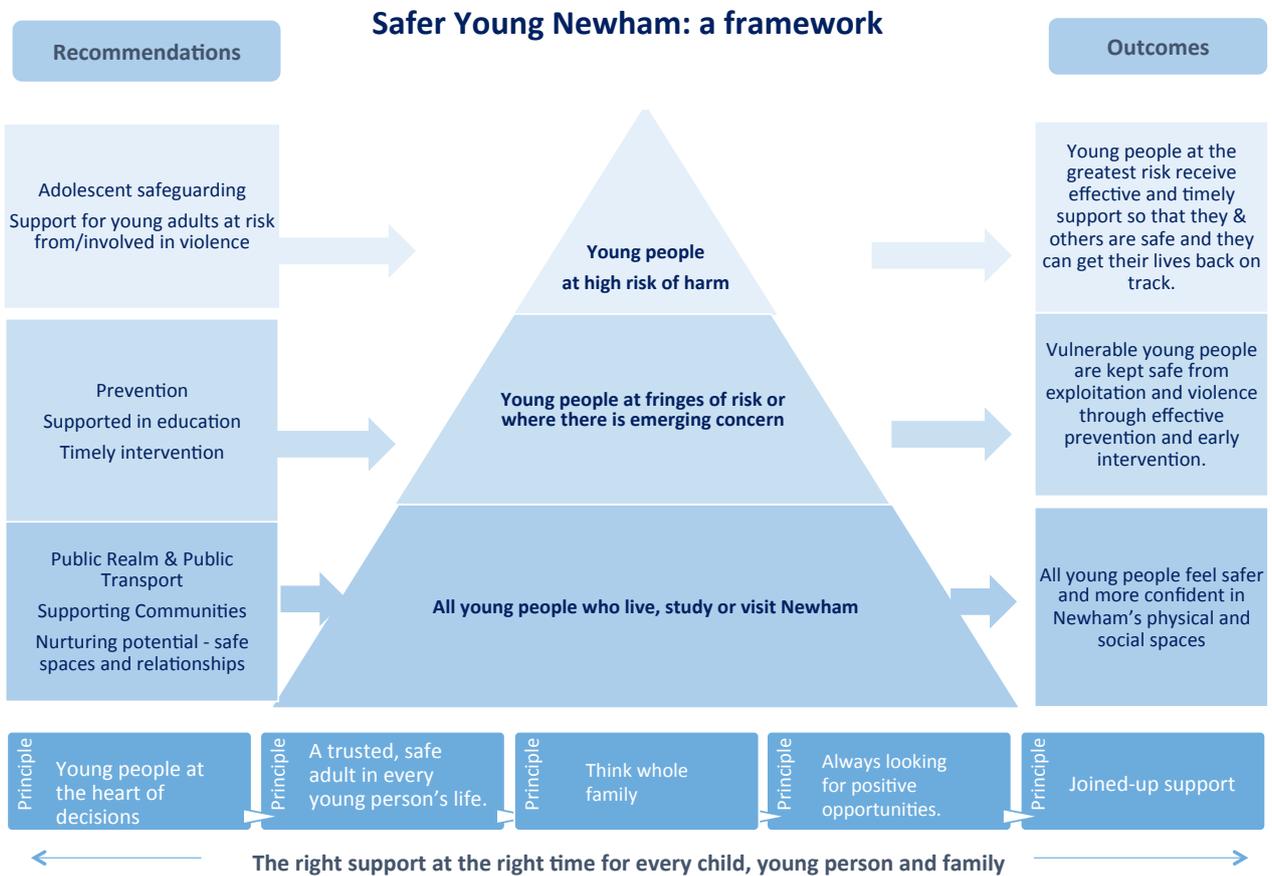
### **Children and young people at the greatest risk**

We know that there is often an overlap between young people who are victims of violence and who have faced adverse and traumatic experiences in their lives, and those who commit violent acts.

Those at the greatest risk need timely support for themselves and their carers or families to keep them safe and support them onto positive education, training and work pathways. Risk can escalate rapidly for children who are being groomed or are witnesses to serious violence, and services need to be swift and responsive to trauma in order to engage children before the risks they face increase, and/or their relationship with their exploiter becomes entrenched. A child who is being exploited may be criminally, sexually, emotionally and physically abused, and needs a complex safeguarding response where the urgency and the depth of the support provided matches the level of need and risk they face, and action is taken to disrupt the activities of exploiters.

Engagement with young people most at risk in Newham highlighted the importance of working with carers and immediate and extended family members, who are often involved in children's lives but struggle to support them and keep them and their siblings safe. The most consistent protective factor for young people at risk is a supportive relationship with a safe, trusted adult. For many children and young people, that adult is a family member. Where a professional or carer is involved, young people said that they wanted those adults to be reliable, well-supported, and to listen to them and understand how their experiences had affected them. Too often, young people said that staff turnover, bureaucracy or an unsympathetic personality meant that they did not get the sustained support that would help them move on with their lives. Many reported having very difficult relationships with the police, and experiences of arrest featured heavily in young people's accounts of pivotal moments in their lives. Greater support to victims of violence in Newham is important: in its own right and as a contribution to ending cycles of victimisation and violence.

Evidence presented to the Board highlighted particular concerns about children who are living outside Newham for their own safety, looked after children (who make up a significant number of Newham children who are thought to be exploited), and vulnerable young adults at high risk of being a victim or perpetrator of violence, for whom there is limited support available.



# Recommendations

The Youth Safety Board has identified 11 recommendations for organisations in Newham for 2020/21 to 2022/23. The recommendations focus on keeping children and young people safe through an approach based on prevention. As the Safer Young Newham Framework shows, they cover all children and young people but include a specific focus on those who are vulnerable or at the greatest risk. They will have maximum impact if they are part of a wider movement where services, businesses, communities and residents come together to make Newham a great place to grow up, to support children and young people to thrive, and to tackle poverty, injustice and discrimination.

The recommendations are intended to achieve three outcomes:

**OUTCOME 1:**  
**All young people feel safer and more confident in Newham's physical and social spaces.**

**OUTCOME 2:**  
**Vulnerable children and young adults are kept safe from exploitation and violence through effective prevention and early intervention.**

**OUTCOME 3:**  
**Children and young people who are at the greatest risk receive effective and timely support so they and others are safe and they can get their lives back on track.**

We will be asking public service organisations to set clear measures of success for each outcome, and to establish how they will implement and respond to the recommendations, working with young people and residents, and combining evidence-based practice with innovation which responds to Newham's unique needs. The Board recommends that five cross-cutting principles are embedded into all work to improve youth safety.

### Five cross-cutting principles for improving youth safety

**Putting young people at the heart of decisions about them.** Young people's voices, the impact of their experiences and trauma and their hopes and aspirations need to be at the part of decisions about them, at an individual and policy level.

**Making sure that every young person has a trusted, safe adult** that they can build a relationship with and rely on. Relationships are at the heart of keeping safe, and ways of working with children and young people need to reflect this sense of love and care.

**Think whole family.** Family – including immediate and extended family members and carers – are a vital source of support for young people.

**Always looking for positive opportunities.** All young people in Newham deserve a great start in life

and hope for the future. When young people have had a difficult start in life, they need everybody in their lives to stay ambitious for them, and to have as many chances as they need to build a new life for themselves. This support and encouragement should continue after their 18th birthday.

**Joined-up support for young people.** Organisations need to work together, to see the whole child whatever their professional remit, and to do what they say they are going to do. This needs organisational grip, effective multi-agency communication and working arrangements, good relationships between well-supported and trained professionals, and a relentless focus on service improvement. Rather than short term initiatives, it requires sustained, predictable change in ways of working, so that organisations can rely on each other, and young people can rely on them.

# Outcome 1:

**All young people feel safer and more confident in Newham's physical and social spaces.**

Although the vast majority of children and young people in Newham have no direct involvement in violence or exploitation, the Board found that worries about safety are widespread, limiting young people's confidence and ability to take advantage of opportunities. Safety in Stratford, around major public transport intersections used by children and young people (Stratford, Canning Town and East Ham), and during the after-school period are of particular concern, but there are areas across the borough where young people's safety concerns need addressing. After a serious incident, when people are most worried, it is important that young people and residents feel supported and know how they can get help if they needed. Making sure that there are more safe and free places for young people to go to outside school hours is a priority.

Residents, families and community and faith groups want to do more to make Newham's physical and social spaces safer for young people. They cannot do this effectively without leadership, sustained support and reassurance and practical well-designed information about how they can help. Service providing organisations need to develop cultural diversity competence and draw on residents and frontline staff to engage effectively with families and communities. Finally, universal services have a vital role to play as beacons of inclusion, safety, information and advice for young people.

The Board has three recommendations to address this. No single organisation can achieve these outcomes alone and collaborative and creative work is required to empower young people and residents to make the change they want to see in their communities, working with business, community organisations and universal services. This is a long-term and ambitious agenda, and careful prioritisation will be needed, drawing on wider evidence of what works and consultation with young people and families. But these are investments

which are worth making. A place that is safe and welcoming for children and young people is a place which is safe for everyone.

**Recommendation 1: Public realm and public transport.** Initiate a programme of work to identify areas and travel routes in Newham where young people feel unsafe, to establish a positive and protective adult presence, and to identify improvements that can help to make public spaces and public transport safe and comfortable for everyone who use them, including young people.

**Recommendation 2: Supporting communities and families and building trust.** Diverse young people, families, community and faith groups should be empowered through a programme of information, dialogue and support which gives them the tools to keep safe, access opportunities and lead change in their local area. This should include effective support and follow-up with young people and communities following serious incidents. Cultural diversity competence, addressing disproportionality and building confidence and trust in the police, schools and council services across Newham's diverse communities and families will be an important foundation for this programme of work.

**Recommendation 3: Nurturing young people's potential through safe spaces and relationships.** Young people should be celebrated through a Newham year of the child, and able to access a diverse and expanded offer of youth services, cultural, sporting and leisure opportunities where they can develop their potential and enjoy themselves with friends in a safe space, making good use of the full range of Newham's facilities and infrastructure.

# Outcome 2:

**Vulnerable children and young adults are kept safe from exploitation and violence through effective prevention and early intervention.**

Whilst recognising that any child or young person can become a victim of violence, the evidence from Newham and from thematic reviews and research in other areas indicates that many young people affected are those that have faced violence, hardship or loss in their early lives, experiencing a legacy of trauma often expressed through early challenging behaviour.

By building on protective factors in children's lives and offering the support that they need at the earliest opportunity, and before the challenges of adolescence and the transition to secondary school, we have the potential to offer children a chance to thrive and to stay safe, as well as avoiding the human and financial costs of exclusion, involvement in the criminal justice system, and poor mental health. Our local businesses, faith, community, and youth groups, and universal services, have an important role in providing positive alternatives for young people.

In addition, the Board believes that timely intervention is vital for a child or young person of any age (including over 18 years) who is showing the earliest indications of being groomed or coerced, before their involvement becomes entrenched through fear, indebtedness and their own participation in criminal activity. Timely intervention includes support at 'teachable' and 'reachable' moments: for example, when young people are admitted to accident and emergency or arrested, and the Board recommends that consideration is given to embedded youth support in custody suites, not currently available in Newham.

Young people at risk of exclusion and those in alternative provision in Newham are amongst our most vulnerable cohorts, and they should be a priority group. The Board believes that schools and colleges should be at the heart of a multi-agency prevention agenda, and supported to avoid exclusion and persistent absence, to keep the most vulnerable children safely in school wherever possible and to ensure the best possible support and opportunity for young people in alternative provision.

It was clear from the evidence presented to the Board that looked after children, care leavers and some children with special educational needs (SEND) are overrepresented amongst the cohort of children and young people who are exploited. The Board has not made a separate recommendation on this, but ensuring these groups of children receive better, more timely support is the bedrock of effective prevention and early intervention.

Finally, the prevention and early intervention agenda should understand and address how young people from some ethnic backgrounds, and some children with particular special educational needs come to be overrepresented amongst students subject to fixed term exclusions, and in the youth justice system.

**Recommendation 4: Prevention.** Children who have experienced family violence, trauma and loss; those with escalating behaviour problems; and/or children with family members involved in violence/exploitation who are of concern, should be able to access support on their timescales, including support for their mental health and for their family, and to help build their social and emotional capabilities and skills.

**Recommendation 5: Timely intervention.** When there are emerging concerns about children and young adults, a rapid response should be available, so that their needs are understood and addressed. This includes attention to 'teachable moments' for young people admitted to accident and emergency, or in custody.

**Recommendation 6: Supported in education.** Children should get the support they need to make positive transitions to secondary school, and to remain safe in full-time education settings which meet their needs, with clear positive pathways and opportunities to get back to mainstream education or training for those in alternative provision. Opportunities for building Newham's curriculum around socio-emotional well-being, life skills and the skills and resilience to stay safe should be explored.

# Outcome 3:

**Children and young people who are at the greatest risk receive effective and timely support so they and others are safe and they can get their lives back on track.**

Protecting the most at-risk young people, and those around them, is a huge responsibility for services in Newham. This work requires different organisations to work together tirelessly and seamlessly, with well-supported and creative staff teams, and the means to support young people at risk, whether they are in Newham or living outside the borough.

Adolescents who are at risk require a distinct safeguarding response which recognises that they may face risks outside the home and from peers, and that there may be locations or situations which are putting a number of young people at risk at the same time. For adolescents, the boundaries between 'victims' and 'perpetrators' may be blurred. Teenagers as well as young adults have to be involved in finding solutions to keep safe. Adolescents who are looked-after by Newham but located outside the borough are a highly vulnerable group, and require focused support. The Board believes that the relocation of Newham's youth offending service within Children and Young People's services, working alongside a new Complex Safeguarding hub, together with a new Newham Safeguarding Children Partnership, offer an ideal opportunity to introduce clarity and consistency in the way that vulnerable adolescents are supported across the council and the partnership, and to improve oversight and grip in the support provided.

Whilst there are some avenues of support for young adults who are at risk of or involved in violence, there is no programme designed to meet their distinct support needs for housing, employment and mental health support. Younger children argued that the greatest risks they faced were from 'olders'. The Board believes that it is important that young adults get the support they require in order to get onto a positive pathway as soon as possible.

**Recommendation 7: An adolescent safeguarding strategy.** An effective strategy should be agreed and implemented which ensures responses to missing episodes; a coherent and child-centred safeguarding and youth justice response; attention to the needs of girls and boys, and of victims, and improved support and safety for any young people placed outside Newham.

**Recommendation 8: Support for young adults at risk from/involved in violence.** A programme should be scoped and developed providing support to young adults who are at risk of involvement in exploitation and/or violence, to address trauma, housing, and transitions into training and work.

# Building capacity to support children and young people

The Board recognises the complexities and challenges of a cross-partnership approach to early intervention and supporting children and young people at risk. Coherent interventions and ways of working, intensity and focus, and delivery at scale underpinned by good evidence and community knowledge will be needed to sustainably improve young people's safety. A whole systems approach geared to supporting children to thrive and stay safe depends on a workforce which is skilled and well-supported in responding to trauma. The Board recognises that this is difficult work, and professionals need ongoing support. The Board therefore has three additional recommendations.

### **Recommendation 9: A whole systems approach which supports children to thrive.**

Staff from all agencies working directly with children and young people should be trained and supported so that their practice helps children to thrive, through trauma informed and nurturing approaches. Human resources policies and practice should set out how organisations will meet their duty of care to staff who work with the most at-risk children and young people, or who witness/are affected by traumatic events.

### **Recommendation 10: Information and analysis.**

Improvements in information sharing and joint analysis should be prioritised, and linked to community dialogue and intelligence so that action is well-informed by an understanding of local concerns, inequalities, community dynamics and shifting patterns of violence and exploitation. Approaches to monitoring children's wellbeing, happiness, resilience and feelings of safety across the borough should be explored.

### **Recommendation 11: Leadership, delivery and accountability.**

To achieve coherence, intensity and delivery at scale, a youth safety implementation group should be formed with representatives from key partner agencies, to take forward action planning against the Board's recommendations. Governance arrangements across the different elements of the youth safety agenda should be reviewed and reformed if necessary to ensure they are fit for purpose and link into the Newham Strategic Partnership, once formed. This should address how the Youth Safety Board can be supported in bringing perspectives from young people, families and resident into accountability and impact monitoring, with a focus on outcomes and innovative ideas.

