



THE MAYOR OF NEWHAM'S YOUTH SAFETY BOARD

BACKGROUND EVIDENCE BRIEFING YOUTH SAFETY IN NEWHAM

DECEMBER 2019



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Overview

1. This briefing was prepared to support the report and recommendations of the Mayor of Newham's Youth Safety Board.
2. Nationally, amidst a long-term decline in all types of violence, high harm violence has risen and is concentrated in metropolitan areas including London. Serious violence affecting young people cannot be considered in isolation from wider violence in society including violence within the family, from poverty and inequality, and from supply and demand drivers in illicit drug markets. 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. Sustainable reductions in serious violence requires these local efforts to be matched by a national primary prevention agenda and action to meet the needs of deprived areas.
3. In Newham, the number of young victims of knife crime has declined from a peak in late 2017, although the reasons for this are not fully understood. Stratford and New Town, and Canning Town North wards had the greatest number of reported knife crime incidents in the past year. However, young people and their families are concerned about safety across many different parts of the borough. Safety on public transport and during school journeys is also a concern.
4. As elsewhere in London, violent incidents involving 10 to 16 year-olds are most likely to happen in the after school period. Those involving older teenagers and young adults are more likely to occur later in the evening.
5. Children's exposure to violence – both as victims and suspects in acts of police-recorded violence in Newham – rises between the age of 10 and 13-15 years. A large majority of victims and suspects for violent incidents reported in Newham live in the borough. There is a need to understand and respond to girls' experiences of violence, including from partners and ex-partners, given that girls and young women make up around half of young people reporting physical violence to the police in Newham.
6. For the highest harm violence, London-wide data suggest that victimisation rises in the mid-teens and into early adulthood, and three quarters of victims as well as those accused of serious violence are male. Research based on Royal London Hospital A&E admissions found that injury from sharp objects increases steeply between 14 and 16 years and peaks at eighteen years.
7. The number of people in Newham involved in county lines criminal exploitation is estimated to be amongst the highest of any local authority in London. Across London, around 9 in 10 of those believed to be involved in county lines exploitation are male, and 3 in 4 are aged between 15 and 25 years. Young people and vulnerable adults are also criminally exploited within the borough itself. In the view of many professionals, child sexual exploitation is often linked to the activities of organised criminal groups.
8. Young people who are affected by or involved in violence in Newham come from a range of backgrounds reflecting the diversity of the borough's young population. However, children and young people from certain backgrounds are disproportionately affected by violence as victims, and involved in the criminal justice system. Further work is required to understand and address this, to understand vulnerabilities for specific groups of young people, and to ensure that all services in Newham are accessible and equitable for children and young people from diverse backgrounds.
9. Many young people say they feel safe in the local neighbourhoods where they live, but they are worried about moving around after dark, and about visiting unfamiliar neighbourhoods. Young people and their families are genuinely concerned about safety in public spaces across Newham. They are worried about serious violence, but more broadly about anti-social behaviour: drunkenness, drug-taking, sexual-harassment, rubbish-dumping and

gambling. Young people and adults alike place a high priority on safe youth provision and being able to access a range of activities.

10. Some, but not many, young people mentioned the role of social media in making them feel unsafe. This needs further exploration since professionals, parents and carers in Newham are concerned about the impact of material circulating on social media on young people's well-being and their sense of safety and security, and technology including social media is being identified nationally as one route through which violent conflicts are escalated.
11. The majority of older adults were sympathetic to the pressures that young people face, and noted that many parents and carers faced challenges bringing up children on a low income. Many adults involved in local community or faith groups wanted support so they could offer safe activities or places to go for young people in their area. Some adults did express negative views about children and young people, and of what they regarded as poor parenting. Both adults and young people described how anxiety about violence perpetrated by young people was contributing to an intergenerational divide in the borough.
12. Discussions with young people who had lived experience of harm and violence support findings from research that relationships with a trusted adult are key to improving safety, and that such adults need to be reliable, well-supported, and understand the impact of trauma on young people. Young people highlighted the importance of family members in supporting them, and the strain their situation placed upon family life and livelihoods. Witnessing serious violence and the experience of arrest were traumatic and negative turning points in the lives of a number of young people. Relationships between this group of young people and the police were often difficult, and young people had had very mixed experiences with other professionals. Children and young people who are placed outside Newham for their own safety were particularly vulnerable, and reported a lack of suitable support.
13. A whole systems approach to protecting children and young people, based on an understanding of both the risk and protective factors for exposure to violence offers a well-evidenced starting point for prevention, early intervention and safeguarding support for children, young people and families, as does trauma informed practice by professionals. The need for timely intervention during a period of escalating risk was identified by professionals locally, young people themselves, and in the wider evidence base.
14. Thematic reviews and the Board's engagement with young people in Newham highlight the importance of a life-course approach: of understanding how risk accumulates over childhood, the value of engaging with vulnerable children from mid-to-late primary school age onwards, and how particular life, school, or family transitions can be a window of opportunity for supporting children as well as a moment of increased risk. Transitions to adulthood were identified as a time when young people were vulnerable, but when little support was available.
15. Effective support for children and young people who are looked after or leaving care, those with special educational needs and disabilities, and children who have experienced violence, bereavement or loss in their early lives emerge as key from interviews and wider evidence. Supporting vulnerable young people within education settings and reducing exclusions is also identified as an important dimension of keeping young people safe. Across Newham, permanent and fixed term exclusions and persistent absenteeism are in line with national averages, but some settings and groups of students have higher than average rates of exclusions and absence.
16. The Youth Safety Board's report sets out key principles and broad recommendations drawing on public health approaches to violence reduction, and on recent developments in adolescent safeguarding. This briefing does not include a review of the evidence base for specific interventions, but this will be an important tool in the development of action plans and programmes to implement the Board's recommendations across the Newham partnership.

Introduction

This evidence briefing underpins the report and recommendations of the Mayor of Newham's Youth Safety Board.

Scope

The scope of the Youth Safety Board is broad with a focus on

- children from late primary school age to young adults (up to and including 24 years)
- addressing serious violence affecting young people, criminal and sexual exploitation
- improving young people's feelings of safety in Newham's physical and social spaces

Much of the briefing focuses on violence, exploitation and risk. Recognising that young people's safety goes beyond the most serious acts of violence, the report also looks at evidence on physical violence more generally. However, other aspects of young people's safety including bullying, harassment, or hate crime, are not addressed in this report.

However, it is important to note that the Board's recommendations are framed within a positive approach to young people's safety, where services, families and communities work together to nurture children and young people and support them to thrive.

Sources

The evidence used in the report includes data from local services, research and policy papers from London and elsewhere, case and thematic reviews, discussions with services, local residents and young people, and individual interviews with young people.

Annex A describes the different discussions that took place. The Board also drew on other reports and consultations from Newham, and these are described in Annex B. Annex C summarises the recommendations of the Serious Case Review into the tragic death of 'Chris', a key document for the Youth Safety Board.

Limitations

The evidence-gathering exercise was carried out over a short-time period across a broad agenda and is necessarily limited. This briefing is just the start. The Youth Safety Board report recommends an ongoing focus on information and analysis, drawing together information from different services, and bringing quantitative data together with community dialogue and intelligence to inform action and prioritisation.

The exercise did not include a comprehensive evaluation or review of the impact of current interventions to improve youth safety in Newham, or a detailed appraisal of potential interventions.

Definitions

The definitions used in the report largely follow government definitions.

Serious violence affecting young people: any offence of most serious violence or weapon enabled crime, where the victim is aged 1 to 24 years old.

Child Criminal Exploitation occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, control, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into any criminal activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial or other advantage of the perpetrator or facilitator and/or (c) through violence or the threat of violence. The victim may have been criminally exploited even if the activity appears consensual. Child Criminal Exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology.

County Lines: County lines is a term used to describe gangs and organised criminal networks involved in exporting illegal drugs into one or more importing areas within the UK, using dedicated mobile phone lines or other form of “deal line”. They are likely to exploit children and vulnerable adults to move and store the drugs and money and they will often use coercion, intimidation, violence (including sexual violence) and weapons.

Child sexual exploitation is a form of child sexual abuse. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology.

The Board’s focus on young people up to the age of 25 years meant that it also looked at young adults who are vulnerable to exploitation or involvement in violent offending.

Report structure

The report has 3 sections

- Section 1 describes what we know about violence and exploitation in Newham, when and where it occurs, and who is affected and involved.
- Section 2 describes what residents and young people, including young people with lived experience of harm and exploitation, told the Board about their feelings of safety and experience of services.
- Section 3 draws on evidence from Newham and beyond to highlight some of the priority areas for improving youth safety in Newham.

Section 1: Violence and exploitation affecting young people - a profile

This section of the evidence briefing focuses on what we know from data about serious violence, on physical violence more generally, and exploitation affecting young people in Newham.

It is important to note that the way young people and their families feel about safety is affected by wider contexts of violence, and that overall levels of violence in Newham remain high. For example, Newham was within the five boroughs in London with the highest recorded levels of gun crime (all-age), acid attacks, sexual violence and domestic abuse in the 12 months up to September 2018.¹

This section uses police data on knife crime where the victim was a young person, police data on wider reported violence where the suspect or victim was a young person, and data from the London Ambulance Service (LAS) on assault calls from Newham. It also draws on analysis conducted by the Greater London Authority of London-wide data on serious youth violence. Taken alone, each dataset provides only a partial view of the issues and further disaggregation and qualitative evidence is required to understand young people's complex experiences of violence.

Violence and vulnerability affecting young people is complex and multi-faceted. For example, the sections below highlight the relevance of partner violence to youth safety. Neither is serious violence outside the home necessarily linked to criminal exploitation or gang affiliation. As Whitney Iles and Keir Irwin-Rodgers note: *"the proximate reasons for knife crime with injury offences involving young people are numerous and varied. Many incidents are triggered by isolated episodes of trauma re-enactment, serious issues around mental health, and interpersonal conflicts that have nothing to do with street gangs."*² It is also important to note that wanting to spend more time with peers outside their homes, schools or formal youth or sporting provision is a normal part of young people's development, even if it may entail some risk to young people's health or physical safety, depending on the context. Based on ethnographic studies with young people from largely Black and minority ethnic backgrounds in East London, Anthony Gunter argues for a balanced understanding of the sense of identity, attachment, and entertainment that young people get from spending time together in public spaces, alongside the risks, and argues against stereotyped assumptions that Black and Minority Ethnic (BAME) young people who are outside in public spaces are gang-affiliated.³

Young victims of knife crime: numbers and trends

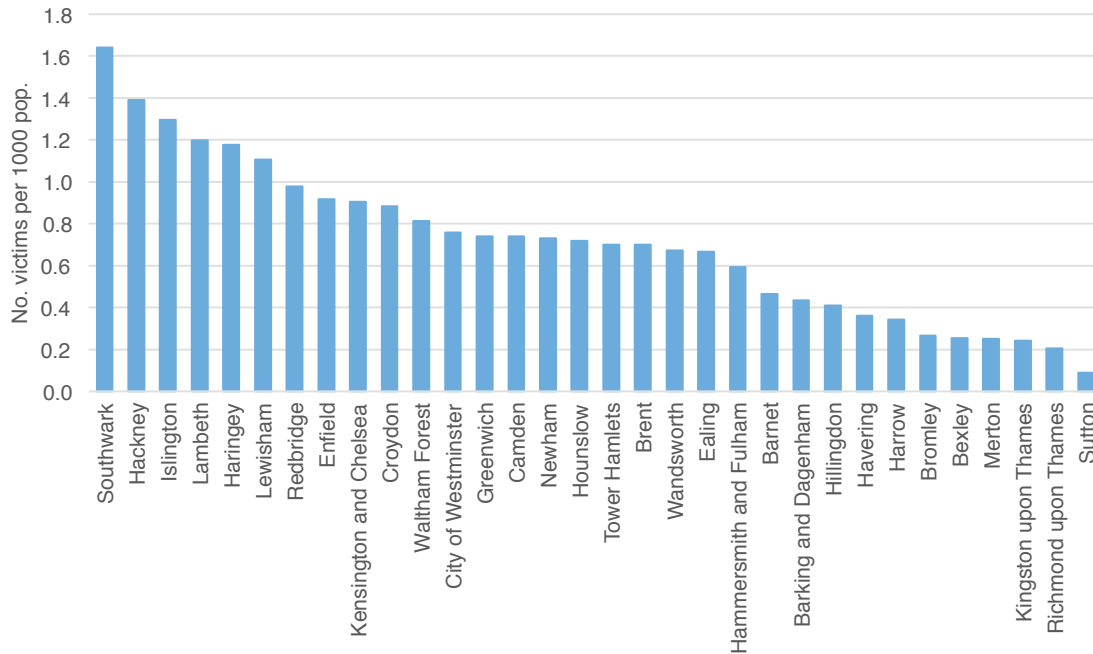
There were 72 victims of knife crime aged 1-24 years in the 12 months up to September 2019. This was the eighth highest total in London. However, once the size of Newham's young population was taken into account, Newham had the fifteenth highest *rate* of young knife crime victims out of London's 32 local authorities (Figure 1)

¹ Newham Community Safety Partnership (2019) [Strategic Assessment 2019](#)

² Iles, W and Irwin-Rodgers, K. [Are Gangs to Blame For Serious Violence In The UK?](#), Huffington Post, September 7th 2018

³ Anthony Gunter (2018) [Race, Gangs and Youth Violence](#), Policy Press; Bristol

Figure 1: Knife Crime Victims aged 1-24 years rate per 1000 1-24 year olds:
London wide rank (rolling 12 months to September 2019)
Data: Metropolitan Police Service



The number of young knife crime victims in Newham has declined since 2017, and declined more steeply in Newham than in London as whole (Figure 2). Data from the London Ambulance Services on callouts to Newham for assaults on young people also show a similar downward trend. Gun-related offences (all ages) have also declined since 2017.⁴ These declines follow a period of robust community engagement and enforcement in Newham, but it is a measure of the complexity of exploitation and violence that we do not have a complete explanation for this change.

Figure 2a: Newham Knife Crime Victims aged 1-24 years (12 months Oct - Sept)
Source: Metropolitan Police Service

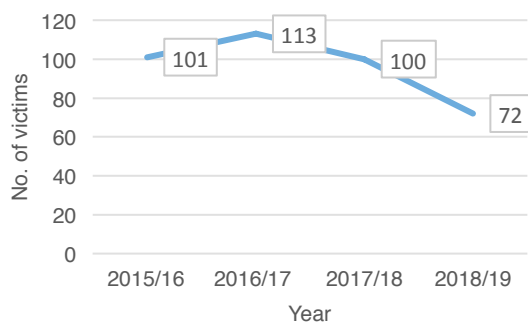
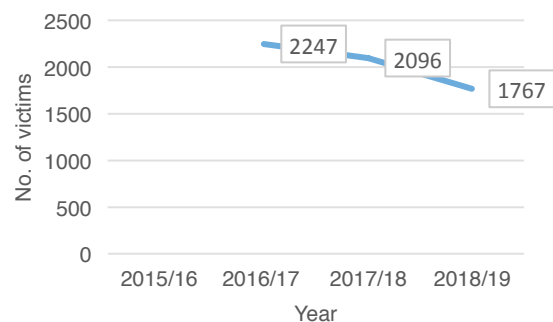


Figure 2b: London Knife Crime Victims aged 1-24 years (12 months Oct - Sept)
Source: Metropolitan Police Service



The location and time of incidents

⁴ Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC), [Weapon enabled crime dashboard](#)

The number of young victims of knife crime varies between different wards, although the number of serious incidents is above the London average across many wards. Figure 3 shows the number of young knife crime victims per ward in the 12 months leading up to September. Together, Stratford and New Town and Canning Town North account for the largest number of incidents.

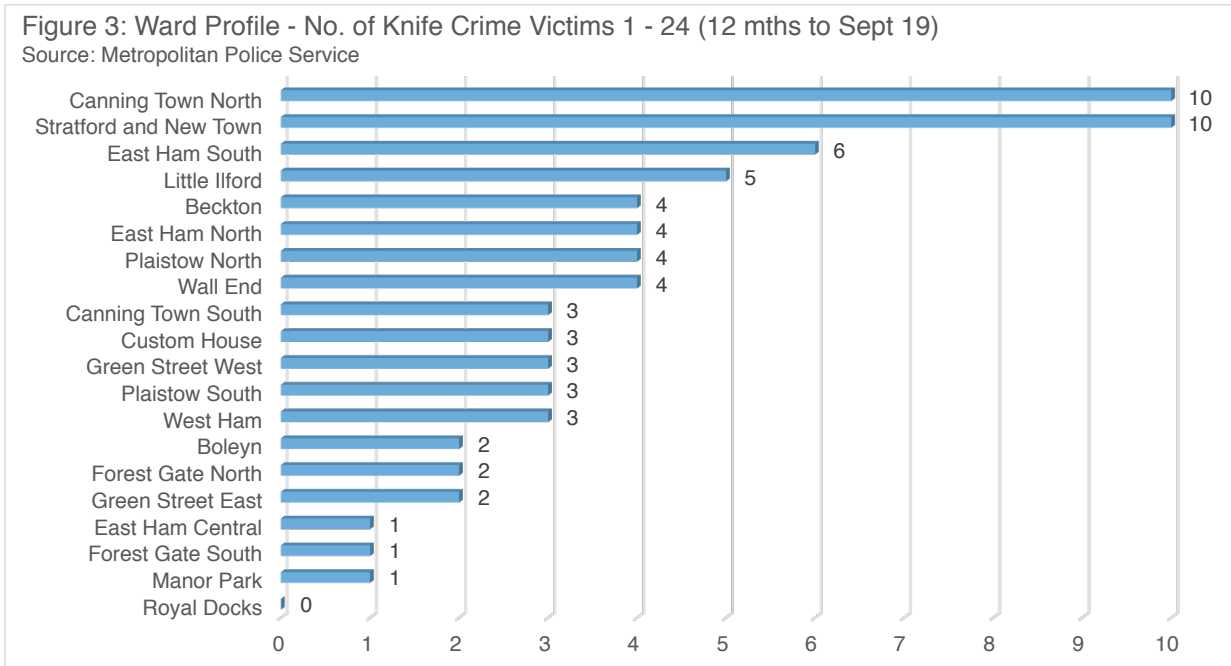
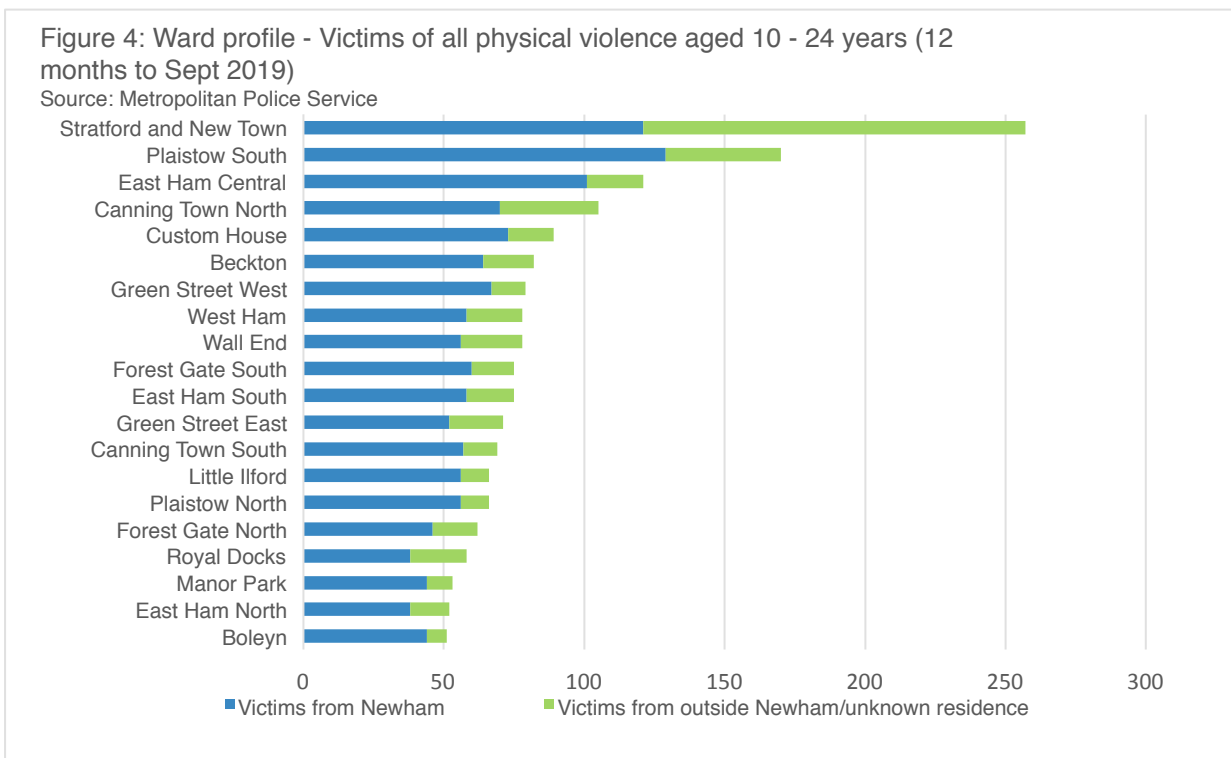


Figure 4 shows the locations of violent incidents where victims were aged 10-24 years took place, covering the same period, but including a wider range of physical violence (ranging from common assault, actual bodily harm, and grievous bodily harm to murder). These incidents include violence which is perpetrated by partners/ex-partners or family members and some were likely to be located in people’s homes. The figure shows a much higher volume of incidents overall, with incidents where a

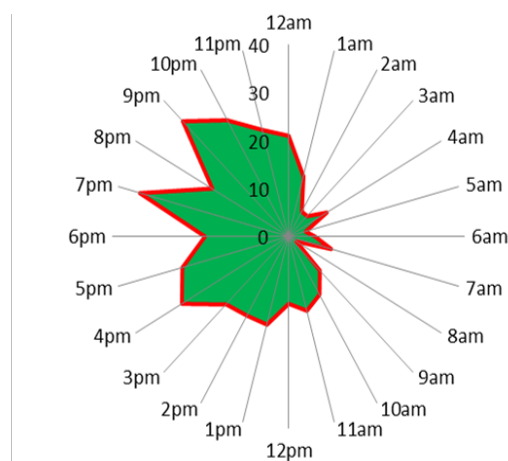


young Newham resident was a victim relatively evenly spread across different wards.

British Transport Police data points to the importance of addressing young people's safety on public transport. Between October 2017 and September 2018, Newham had the 4th largest number of reported incidents (all ages) recorded by British Transport Police in London. Stratford station accounted for around half of all incidents reported from stations. Around 4 in 10 of incidents reported to British Transport Police were violent incidents⁵. Analysis of children's bus travel across London using zip card data shows large concentrations of weekday boardings in Stratford, and smaller but significant clusters of bus boardings in East Ham and Canning Town, with children from many schools using same stops and corridors and moving across borough boundaries⁶.

Data from London Ambulance Service (LAS) on assault-related call-outs to Newham provides an indication of the times of day when children and young people in Newham are most likely to be assaulted. Peak-callouts are between 4pm – 5pm, 7pm and between 9pm – 10pm. Broken down by age, ambulance data shows that ten to sixteen year olds are most at risk in the after-school period, while young adults are at risk later at night. This is in line with London-wide patterns⁷.

Figure 5: London Ambulance Service (LAS) Assault related call outs in Newham for 1-24 year olds - hourly breakdown



Research using a decade of emergency data from the Royal London Hospital (the nearest Major Trauma Centre for Newham) found that a large proportion of stabbing incidents affecting children and young people occurred within one kilometre of home. Children were significantly more likely than young adults to be stabbed between 1 and 5 km from home, but less likely than young adults to be stabbed more than 5km away from home. Further analysis suggested that children's patterns of injuries were related to journeys to and from school. Ten to fifteen year olds were more likely to be stabbed during the after school period between 4 and 6pm, and sixteen to twenty four year olds were significantly more likely to be stabbed after midnight.⁸

⁵ Newham Community Safety Partnership (2019) [Strategic Assessment 2019](#)

⁶ Firmin, C and Abbott M. (2018) [A Route to Safety: Using bus boarding data to identify roles for transport providers within contextual safeguarding systems](#). Children and Society DOI 10.1111/chso.12267

⁷ Greater London Authority, [A Public Health Approach to Serious Youth Violence: Supporting Evidence](#), July 2019

⁸ Vulliamy P, Faulkner M, Kirkwood G, et al [Temporal and geographic patterns of stab injuries in young people: a retrospective cohort study from a UK major trauma centre](#) BMJ Open 2018;8:e023114.

The profile of young people who are victims or suspects of violent incidents

London-wide data provides an overview of the profile of victims and offenders in cases of reported **serious youth violence** (serious violence where the victim is aged 1-24 years).

Of **victims**, three quarters of serious youth violence victims are male, eighty five per cent were aged 15-24 years, thirty nine per cent are from a White ethnic background, twenty six per cent are from a Black ethnic background, and sixteen per cent are from an Asian ethnic background.

Of **offenders**, three quarters are male (77 per cent). Sixty per cent are aged between 13 and 28. Forty-one per cent of offenders are from a White ethnic background and thirty-five per cent are from a Black / African / Caribbean / Black British ethnic background.⁹

In order to build up a picture of young people in Newham affected by violence, the Board considered police data for 12 month period (October 2018 to September 2019) on a wide range of acts of **physical violence** reported in Newham, ranging from common assault, actual bodily harm, and grievous bodily harm to murder, where either the victim or the suspect was aged between 10 and 24 years. It is important to note that this is a broader range of incidents than those included under the serious youth violence definition, or knife crime with injury. The data include only those incidents which were reported to the police, and the available demographic information is limited. For example, there is no information about household income, and information about ethnic background is sometimes based on visual appearance rather than self-defined, with very broad categories which do not reflect the diversity of Newham's population¹⁰. Despite these limitations, the data provide insights into young people's exposure to physical violence in Newham.

As far as noted in the data available, the majority of both suspects and victims – seventy six per cent of suspects and eighty per cent of victims - lived in Newham at the time of the incident. Of the remainder, most came from other London boroughs, particularly the neighbouring boroughs of Waltham Forest, Hackney, Redbridge, Tower Hamlets and Havering, for both victims and suspects with smaller numbers coming from other London Boroughs.

Of young people from Newham suspected of committing acts of violence¹¹

Just under 3 in 4 (70%) of suspects were boys or young men, and around 1 in 4 (27%) were girls or young women, with the rest unknown.

The proportion of Newham's young population who were suspects in acts of physical violence (Figure 6) was close to zero at age ten years, increased until the age of thirteen or fourteen years, and remained at roughly the same level until around twenty-two or twenty-three years, after which there was a small decline.

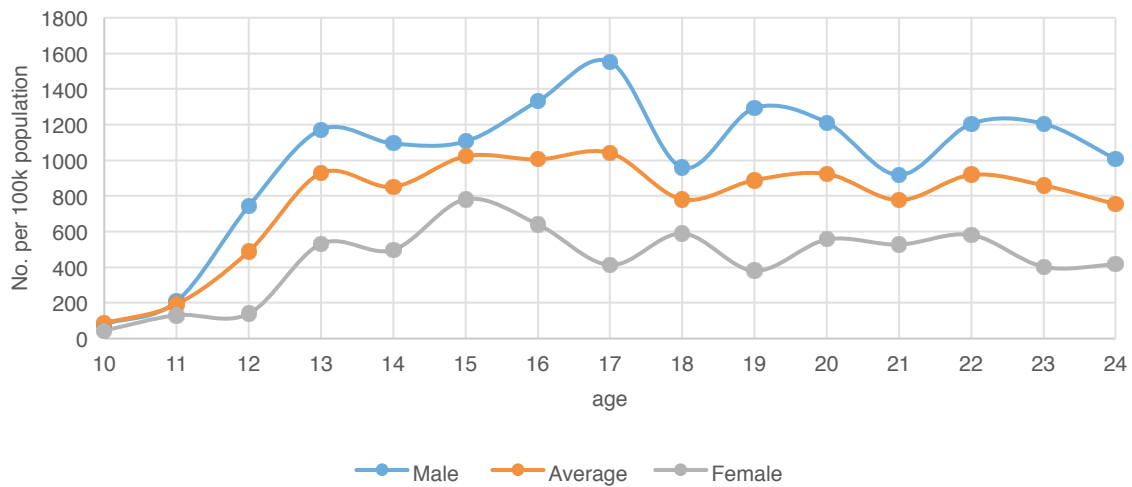
⁹ Greater London Authority, [A Public Health Approach to Serious Youth Violence: Supporting Evidence](#), July 2019

¹⁰ Information about ethnic background is based on visual appearance as described by police or how young people identified themselves (more commonly for victims than suspects). This was compared with census categories for the Newham population data using the methodology set out in the 2002 [Guide to Self-Defined Ethnicity and Descriptive Monitoring](#), from the Association of Chief Police Officers of England, Wales and Northern Ireland. Note that 2011 census data is nearly a decade out of date and population churn in Newham is high.

¹¹ To allow comparison with information about Newham's population, figures for suspects and victims are based on records where the young person lived in Newham and where there was a record of their ethnic background. It is important to note that the figures are based on a count of incidents: in some cases, the same individual may be involved in more than one incident.

Figure 6: Rate of Newham residents aged 10-24 years per 100k population who have been notified as suspects of acts of violence by age and sex (12 months to Sept 2019)

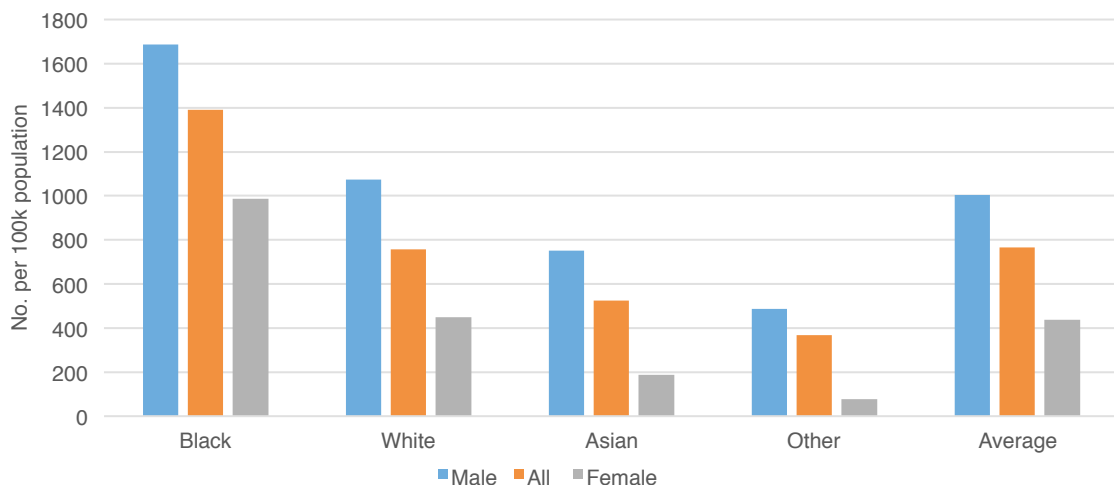
Source: Metropolitan Police Service



Young people from a Black / African / Caribbean / Black British background were overrepresented as suspects, and those from Asian/Asian British backgrounds and others were under-represented, taking into account their representation within Newham’s young population at different ages. The proportion of young people from White backgrounds who were suspects was close to the average for young people in Newham as a whole (Figure 7).

Figure 7: Rate of residents of Newham aged 10-24 years who have been notified as suspects of violence per 100K population by ethnic background and sex (12 months to September 2019)

Source: Metropolitan Police Service



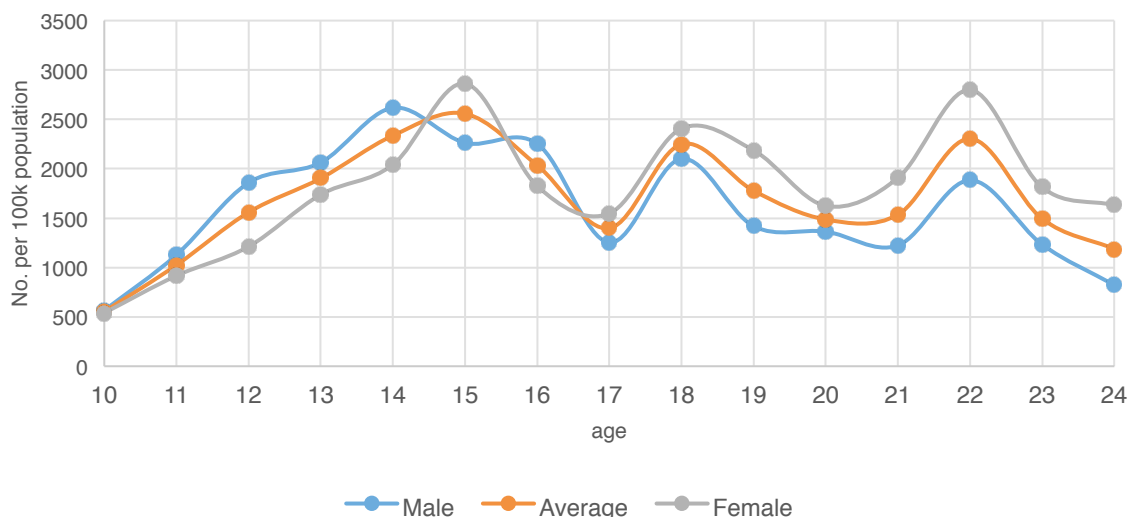
Of young people from Newham aged 10 – 24 years who were victims of acts of violence

Just over half (51%) of victims who reported acts of violence were girls or young women, and just under half (48%) were boys or young men.

Girls and young women were more likely to identify their assailant than boys and young men. Of those cases where the gender of the assailant was clear, assailants were more likely to be male. Twenty eight per cent of those girls and young women who reported an assailant, reported a partner or ex-partner, with girls or young women from a White background much more likely than girls from other backgrounds to report that a partner/ex-partner was responsible.

The proportion of Newham's young population who were victims of acts of physical violence was around 1 in 200 at age 10 and rose to a peak of around 5 in 200 around 15 years for girls, and just over 5 in 200 at age 14 years for boys. From around the mid-teens, victimisation declined gradually overall, and girls were victimised at a higher rate than boys (Figure 8).

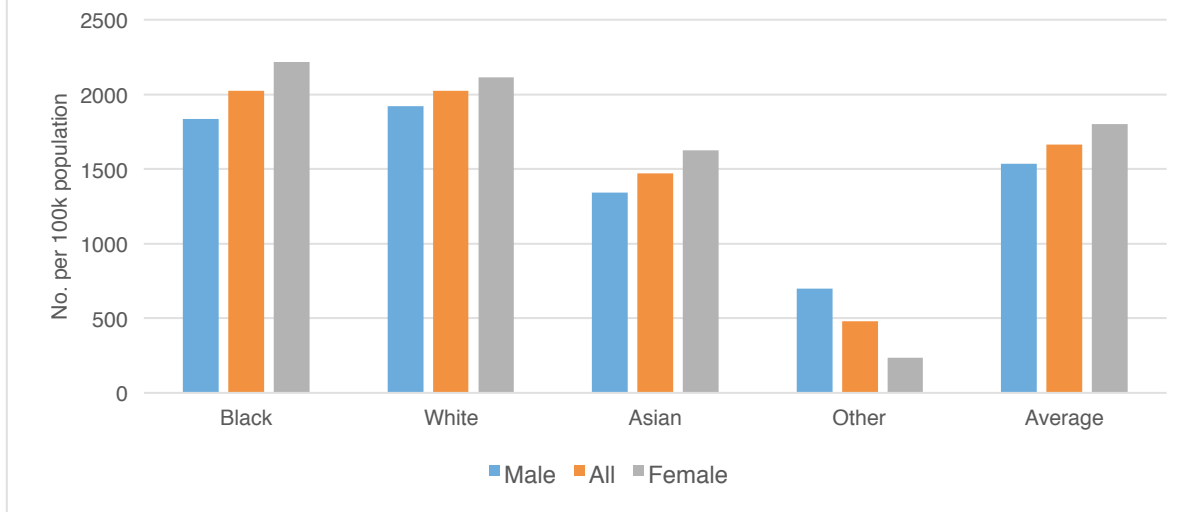
Figure 8: Rate of Newham residents aged 10-24 years per 100k population who were victims of acts of violence by age and sex (12 months to Sept 2019)
Source: Metropolitan Police Service



Young people from a White and Black / African / Caribbean / Black British ethnic background were over represented as victims relative to their proportion in Newham's young population, where young people from Asian/Asian British and other backgrounds were under-represented (Figure 9).

Figure 9: Rate of residents of Newham aged 10-24 years who were victims of reported violence per 100K population by ethnic background and sex (12 months to September 2019)

Source: Metropolitan Police Service



This picture of a steep rise in physical violence in the mid-teens and into young adulthood echoes findings from other data and research. A study based on data from the Royal London Hospital (the Major Trauma Centre for Newham) focused on some of the highest harm violence. It looked at under 25's attending after an injury involving a knife or other sharp implement and found a sharp increase in stab injuries between the ages of 14 and 16, with injuries peaking at 18 years. In this study, 9% of patients were aged 15 years or below, 47% were aged 16 to 19 years, and 43% were aged 20 to 24 years. 71% of victims lived in the most deprived quintile of local areas.¹² Data from the London Ambulance Service on assault-related calls in Newham for the period April 2018 to March 2019 shows that that nearly 9 in 10 calls for under 25's were made for young people of 15 years and above, and more than half (55%) were for 20 to 24 year olds.

Violence, exploitation and vulnerability to exploitation

There are serious concerns about the role of criminal exploitation in Newham in driving serious violence. There is no authoritative figure for the number of children and young people from Newham who are exploited, but evidence from different sources helps to build up a picture of exploitation in Newham. As described in reports by the Children's Commissioner, the number of young people at risk is likely to be larger than children who are known by services or the police to be involved in gangs/criminal exploitation¹³ or child sexual exploitation¹⁴, in Newham as elsewhere.

Newham has amongst the highest number amongst London authorities of individuals of all ages thought to be involved in county lines drug supply. Evidence from the pan-London Rescue and Response project which is funded by MOPAC and aims to understand, target and respond to county lines has suggested there are 265 Newham-based individuals of all ages who are linked (or suspected to be linked) to county lines activity. Across London, most of those involved in county lines are male (89%) with a predominant age range of 15 to 19 years (46%), followed by 20 to 25 years (29%).¹⁵

¹² Vuillamy et al, *ibid*.

¹³ Children's Commissioner for England, (2019) [Keeping kids safe Improving safeguarding responses to gang violence and criminal exploitation](#)

¹⁴ Berelowitz, S. et al (2013). "If only someone had listened" The Office of the Children's Commissioner's Inquiry into Child Sexual Exploitation in Gangs and Groups Final Report.

¹⁵ Rescue and Response County Lines Project, [Strategic \(August\) Assessment 2019](#)

The profile of those young people (under 25 years) provided with casework support by the project highlights a range of vulnerabilities linked to exploitation. Seventy percent of the young people supported were aged between 15 and 18 years, 83% were male, 20% were looked-after children, 43% of those of school age were known not to be attending school, 58% were known to children's social care, and 36% were recorded as having a gang link, with 72% having had at least one missing episode at the point of referral.¹⁶

In addition to county lines exploitation, some children and young people in Newham are criminally exploited as part of local drug lines, or to undertake theft. The Rescue and Research project, and Newham staff, note that the profile and risk factors for young people who are criminally exploited locally are similar to those for young people exploited through county lines. 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.

Improvements in recording by Newham of data about children who are exploited or at risk of exploitation is been underway with the introduction of an exploitation screening tool for children who are known to children's social care, and initial assessments. When children go missing from care or home, it can put them at risk of grooming or exploitation, or be an indicator that they are being exploited. Missing episodes are followed up by return home interviews provided by workers from the youth empowerment service. A large number of young people reported as missing are those who are looked-after, in part because of a requirement that missing episodes must be reported for this group. Seventy percent of those looked-after young people going missing in the six months from April to September 2019 were sixteen or seventeen year-olds. Not all young people who are looked-after live in Newham, and a very high proportion of young people who have gone missing most frequently are those living outside the borough.

Young people at risk of offending

Newham's Youth Offending Service (YOS) aims to reduce offending and reoffending and it works with a wide range of young people aged 10 to 18 years. Many of the young people supported by the YOS have no involvement in violence or exploitation, although a large proportion might be considered vulnerable. In 2017/18, ninety-one per cent were male and nine per cent were female. Nineteen per cent were aged between 10 and 14 years and eighty one per cent were aged 15 to 17 years. The number of 10 to 14 year-olds supported by the service fluctuates from year to year, but has declined overall since 2013/14. Young people from White and particularly Black / African / Caribbean / Black British backgrounds are overrepresented amongst first time entrants to the youth justice system in Newham.

¹⁶ Rescue and Response County Lines Project, [Strategic \(August\) Assessment 2019](#)

Section 2: What do residents and young people say about youth safety?

In understanding residents and young people's perspectives views about youth safety, the Board drew on consultations carried out by other organisations as well as direct conversations with small groups of adults and young people, and individual interviews with young people with lived experience of harm. More detail about the different discussions is included in Annex A and Annex B.

In a number of **events and consultations engaging both adults and young people** conducted by other organisations or groups in 2018 and early 2019, there were several common themes:

- Better multi-agency collaboration and a focus on local support so that young people get the support they need
- Early intervention and prevention which supports parents and carers to have discussions with young people, and focuses on mental health and young people's wellbeing
- Listening to young people and engaging them through creative arts and sports, involving them in safe havens and practical responses such as first aid
- Focusing on opportunities, careers advice and social mobility for a positive future for young people from all backgrounds
- Reducing school exclusions
- Building better relationships, addressing concerns about Stop and Search, with the police and more visible, community policing
- Tackling disproportionality in young people's involvement in the criminal justice system, and in school exclusions
- Better support for communities and families after serious incidents

Adults who took part in engagement sessions shared many of these concerns. They

- Wanted a more visible police presence to deter criminals and a robust approach to anti-social behaviour. Some professionals said that better use of school's police liaison officers could help to build communication and confidence between the police and young people.
- Suggested more free youth activities were needed – particularly in areas with less youth provision - 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. Some adults said parents on low-incomes should get more support bringing up children. A few made negative comments about what they regarded as poor parenting, a lack of discipline and/or the impact on children of too much focus on consumer goods and technology.
- Asked for more resources for community and faith groups to support young people.
- Adults often wanted to help but said they were afraid to approach or talk to young people, because they were frightened of them or did not want to be accused of trying to harm 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.

These concerns were reflected in the Board's discussions with **groups of 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.
- Were positive about many places in the borough, such as Stratford and the Westfield Shopping Centre, and some of the borough's parks, but also were also worried about safety in

these areas and were very aware of specific incidents where young people had been injured, killed or sexually assaulted

- 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, harassment based on religion, 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 the removal of 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.

Young people with lived experience of harm

Fifteen young people aged between 14 and 23 years agreed to share their reflections on the support they had received with the Youth Safety Board, through interviews with the youth workers who support them. All of the young people had been at risk of harm at some time in the recent past, and many had entered the care system at some point, either earlier in childhood or as a consequence of becoming involved in exploitation or offending behaviour.

Each of the young people interviewed had a unique life story, but many had had experiences of loss, violence or hardship while they were growing up. Many described having difficulty at school as a consequence of having Special Educational Needs or Disabilities, or of behavioural difficulties, often leading to exclusion from mainstream school. For some young people, there were other pivotal events in their lives

- Being arrested – particularly for the first time – was described as traumatic
- Witnessing serious violence could trigger a series of events putting young people's well-being and safety at risk
- Some young people had got involved in drug-dealing as a consequence of placement breakdown, losing their accommodation, or fearing destitution

Many young people said that their parents or extended family members were their most constant support, although stress, separation and conflict over young people's activities could strain their relationship.

Young people said that they valued those professionals who showed genuine human concern, and took the time to listen to them, treated them normally, and did not give up on them. They valued youth and social workers who did what they said they would do and really tried to sort practical problems out quickly. However, they reported many examples where social workers or support workers had left abruptly, were hard to contact or didn't do what they said they would do. Some young people reported that they felt workers had had a low opinion of them, or treated them like criminals instead of victims. While some young people said they hoped the police could do more to work with young people and tackle violence, many of those with direct experiences of the criminal justice system were hostile towards the police and described a series of difficult experiences around stop and search and particularly of arrest.

Some young people placed outside the borough had had good experiences, but access to local services, and support from Newham-based workers had been limited. Some young people who had been moved for their own safety had experienced huge disruption to their education, relationships and support structures, at great cost to themselves and their families.

Section 3: Improving youth safety - evidence from Newham and beyond

The Board heard from professionals that in Newham and elsewhere, there are examples of children who were well supported at home and doing well at school who had been victims of grooming or exploitation because they were in the wrong place at the wrong time, or were targeted by a perpetrator at a difficult moment in their lives. Sometimes violence destroys the lives of young people with no warning.

However, in interviews with 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, and difficulties at school. This section draws on evidence from Newham as well as national evidence to understand how children and young people can be better supported and the devastating consequences of violence and exploitation avoided for children, families and communities.

The wider context for violence and exploitation

This section focuses on the experiences of individual children and young people and their families. However, national and international evidence highlights the need to tackle the underlying drivers of violence affecting young people by tackling wider cultures of violence, reducing demand in drug markets, and reducing poverty and inequality.

To protect children and young people it is important to address the normalisation of violence in society and to tackle underlying issues such as violence against women and girls and children, cultures of bullying and discrimination, and the impact of alcohol and substance-misuse. Children who suffer violence and other adverse experiences during childhood are at increased risk of becoming either victims or perpetrators of violence later in life¹⁷. A broader violence reduction encompasses many strands ranging from early support for families, to changing the social norms that support violence, working with high risk groups, alcohol interventions, and community-based and environmental approaches.¹⁸

Nationally, amidst a long-term decline in all types of violence, high harm violence has risen and is concentrated in metropolitan areas including London¹⁹. Recent recorded rises in robbery and knife/gun crime across the UK are partly linked to a growth in drug-related cases, with strong links between crack cocaine markets and serious violence.^{20,21} The growth of county lines drugs supply has been reported to be linked to increasing levels of violence, as gangs seek to exercise control over the young people and vulnerable adults exploited by them, and to maintain their share of illicit drugs markets²².

There is a well-established link between levels of violence and poverty and income inequality within and between countries²³, and across London boroughs²⁴. More than ninety per cent of Newham's children live in the bottom 50 per cent of deprived areas in the country²⁵ and more than half of children in Newham live in poor households (after housing costs).²⁶ Austerity has created a pinch-

¹⁷ Bellis, M. et al (2012) [Protecting people Promoting health A public health approach to violence prevention for England](#), Report by The Centre for Public Health, Liverpool John Moores University for Department of Health

¹⁸ Bellis, M. et al (2012) *ibid*

¹⁹ Office for National Statistics (July 2019) [Crime in England and Wales: year ending March 2019](#)

²⁰ Home Office (April 2018) [Serious Violence Strategy](#)

²¹ Kincaid, S. et al (2019) [Serious violence in context: Understanding the scale and nature of serious violence A report by Crest Advisory](#), Crest Advisory

²² Violence and Vulnerability Unit (2018) [County lines - a national summary & emerging best practice](#)

²³ Grimshaw, R. and Ford, M. (2018) [Young people, violence and knives - revisiting the evidence and policy discussions](#), UK Justice Policy Review FOCUS Issue 3, Centre for Crime and Justice Studies

²⁴ Greater London Authority, (2019) [A Public Health Approach to Serious Youth Violence: Supporting Evidence](#),

²⁵ National Statistics, Income Deprivation affecting children index, [English indices of deprivation 2019](#)

²⁶ Stone, S. and Hirsch, D. (2019) [Local indicators of child poverty, 2017/18](#), Centre for Research in Social Policy, Loughborough University, for End Child Poverty Coalition

point with rising household poverty, and pressures on public expenditure reducing the avenues of support available for families who need them most.²⁷ The overrepresentation of young people from Black and Minority Ethnic backgrounds in the youth criminal justice system is high and rising²⁸. Action to tackle social injustice is vital so that children grow up in safe environments. Locally these issues are being challenged through a community-wealth building agenda and investment in children and young people. Sustainable reductions in serious violence requires these local efforts to be matched by a national primary prevention agenda and action to meet the needs of deprived areas.

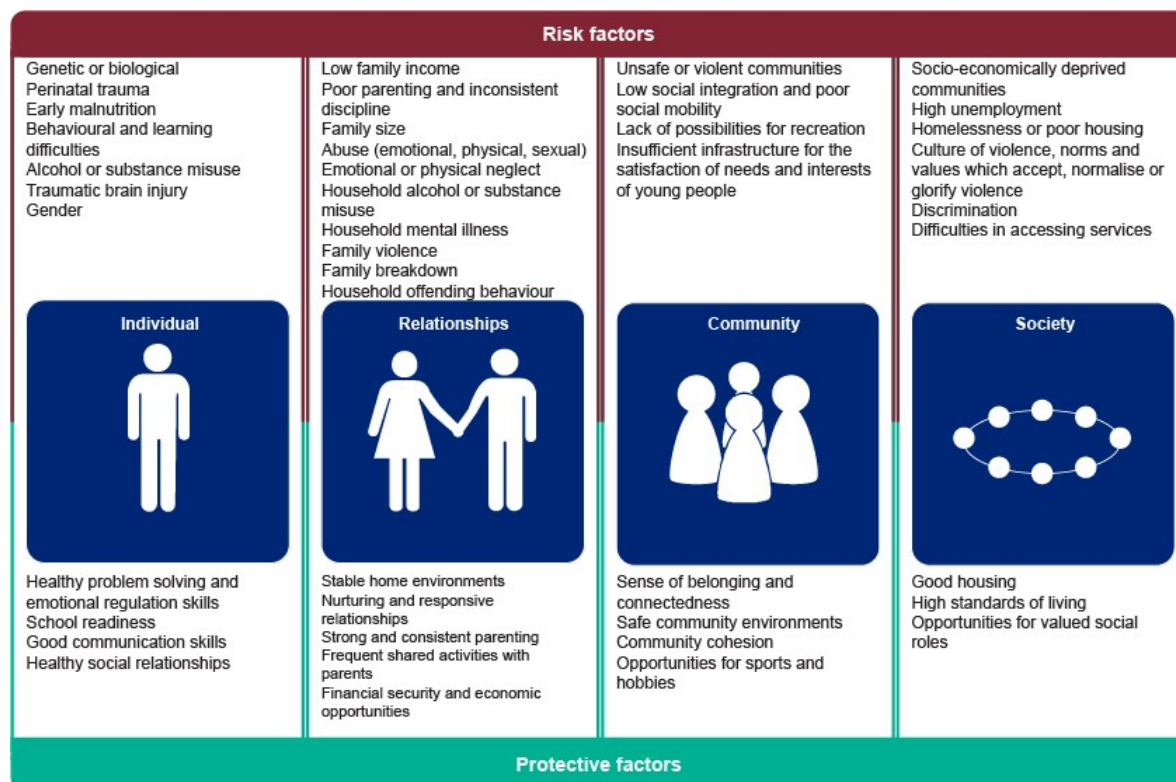
Risk and protective factors for harm and violence in adolescence and young adults

Figure 10 is reproduced from Public Health England and summarises the evidence base on the risk and protective factors which shape exposure to violence. There is a strong evidence base linking risk factors with violence, with modelling suggesting that around half of all of violence perpetration in England could be attributable to adverse childhood experiences.²⁹ No single factor is likely to lead a young person to become a victim or perpetrator of violence. Instead, an interaction of different individual, familial, community and societal factors can shape young people’s outcomes.

An understanding of protective factors provides a starting point for supporting children and families to overcome trauma and adversity. In particular, having a trusted relationship with a safe adult emerged repeatedly in Board discussions, in interviews with young people with lived experience of harm and is reflected in the Board’s cross-cutting principles for action. The importance of trusted relationships for child development is well established, although to date there is a lack of firm empirical evidence which demonstrates in practice that a practitioner–child trusted relationship can protect children from becoming victims of exploitation³⁰. Family members – including extended family – provided vital support for young people. A focus on whole family support is part of the Board’s recommendations.

Figure 10: Risk factors which increase the likelihood of violence and protective factors which mitigate against perpetration or victimisation of violence (from Public Health England (2019³¹))

The Board heard that it is important not to focus on a single point in time, but to consider how difficult



³¹ Public Health England (2019): [A whole system multi-agency approach to serious violence prevention: A resource for local system leaders in England](#)

experiences can accumulate over childhood, and how school, family or life transitions can mark a turning point – for better or worse - for young people. There is consensus that concerted efforts to support children who are potentially at risk need to begin at least in the last two years of primary school, and to pay particular attention to the transition from primary to secondary school as a window of opportunity for intervention. This is borne out by lessons from serious case reviews in Newham, and is the basis for work underway in primary schools carried out by the Early Intervention Foundation in Lambeth and Wandsworth.³²

The need for a **life-course** approach is underlined by two thematic reviews from Tower Hamlets and Croydon.

In Tower Hamlets, a review explored themes and interventions in the lives of six boys, five of whom committed serious violent offences and one boy who was a victim. It found that agencies needed to get better at understanding how multiple adversity and the cumulative traumatising impact of violence within the family and through gang exploitation could raise the risk of serious violence. *“A distinct pattern that can be seen for most of these children is a very troubled home environment, early behavioural issues, followed by associating outside of the home with delinquent peers, which in turn leads to them being the victims of serious assaults and violence. They were also all excluded from school losing that key protective factor.”*³³

In Croydon, a review examined the experiences of 60 vulnerable adolescents. It found that they had experienced similar adversity in their early lives. All 60 were known to social care – more than half of them by the age of five – and 70% had been referred to child and adolescent mental health services. The review particularly emphasises the pivotal importance of education, and the impact of exclusion on young people’s lives. Of the 19 young people in the cohort who received a fixed term exclusion in primary school, all went on to receive a criminal conviction. By the time the children reached adolescence, with their trauma from earlier adversity unresolved (and a striking number suffering the impact of bereavement) services struggled to support them effectively³⁴.

Early intervention, prevention and exclusions

Interventions which reduce risk and build on the protective factors or people in children’s lives offer the potential to keep young people safe and support them to thrive. Early help ‘as *‘support as soon as a problem emerges, at any point in a child’s life, from the foundation years through to the teenage years*³⁵ and early intervention which *‘works to **prevent problems occurring** or to tackle them head-on before they get worse*³⁶ were identified as a priority by the Board, along with supporting children to flourish in schools, reducing exclusions and high quality alternative education.

Many of the individual young people with direct experience of exploitation and violence (see section 2) spoke movingly about how their unresolved, unrecognised trauma had contributed to their vulnerability. Sustained improvement in support for children with SEND, children affected by domestic abuse, children who are looked after, and care leavers are required to provide them and their families with the support they need and to build resilience during adolescence and young adulthood. Early help is everyone’s business, and developing an early help strategy which harnesses the potential of families, community and voluntary sector organisations, the education and health sector, youth workers and the youth justice system as well as the council to provide support for adolescents and their families when they need it, is a priority for Newham.

³² Waddell, S. and Jones, N. (2018) [Intervening early to prevent gang and youth violence: The role of primary schools](#), Early Intervention Foundation; London.

³³ Alex Chard (2015) [Troubled Lives Tragic Consequences: A Thematic Review](#), report for Tower Hamlets Safeguarding Children Board

³⁴ Charlie Spencer, Bridget Griffin & Maureen Floyd (2019) [Vulnerable Adolescents Thematic Review](#), report for Croydon Safeguarding Children Board

³⁵ Department for Education, (2018) [Working Together to Safeguard Children](#)

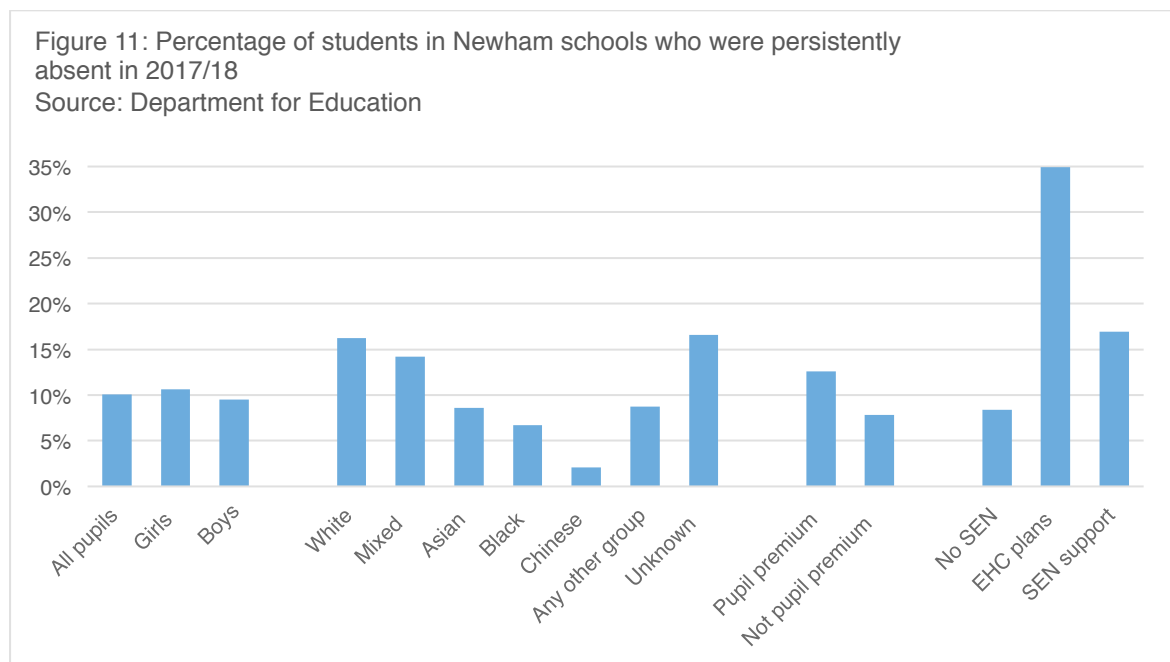
³⁶ Early Intervention Foundation (2018) [Realising the potential of Early Intervention](#), Early Intervention Foundation: London

Newham’s education system is generally high-performing and most children thrive and are well-supported. At its best, education can be highly protective for the most vulnerable children. The Board heard examples of schools in Newham with effective strategies for nurturing and supporting pupils with challenging behaviour or who are exhibiting signs of risk. However, those children whose educational trajectories are disrupted risk a loss of hope, spending time out of school unsupervised and bored, and potentially being out of sight of professionals who can protect and help them.

In 2019, the Independent Timpson Review of School Exclusions concluded that “it would be wrong to suggest that we have evidence that exclusion of any kind causes crime or that preventing the use of exclusion would, in itself, prevent crime”. However, it found clear evidence that exclusion – and persistent absence - is a marker for young people being at higher risk of becoming a victim or perpetrator of crime, and that all too often “fixed period and permanent exclusion can, rather than providing an intervention point to get the right support in place, entrench poor outcomes for vulnerable children”.³⁷ Thematic reviews from Tower Hamlets and Croydon both highlight school exclusion as a pivotal moment when children lost the key protective factor of school

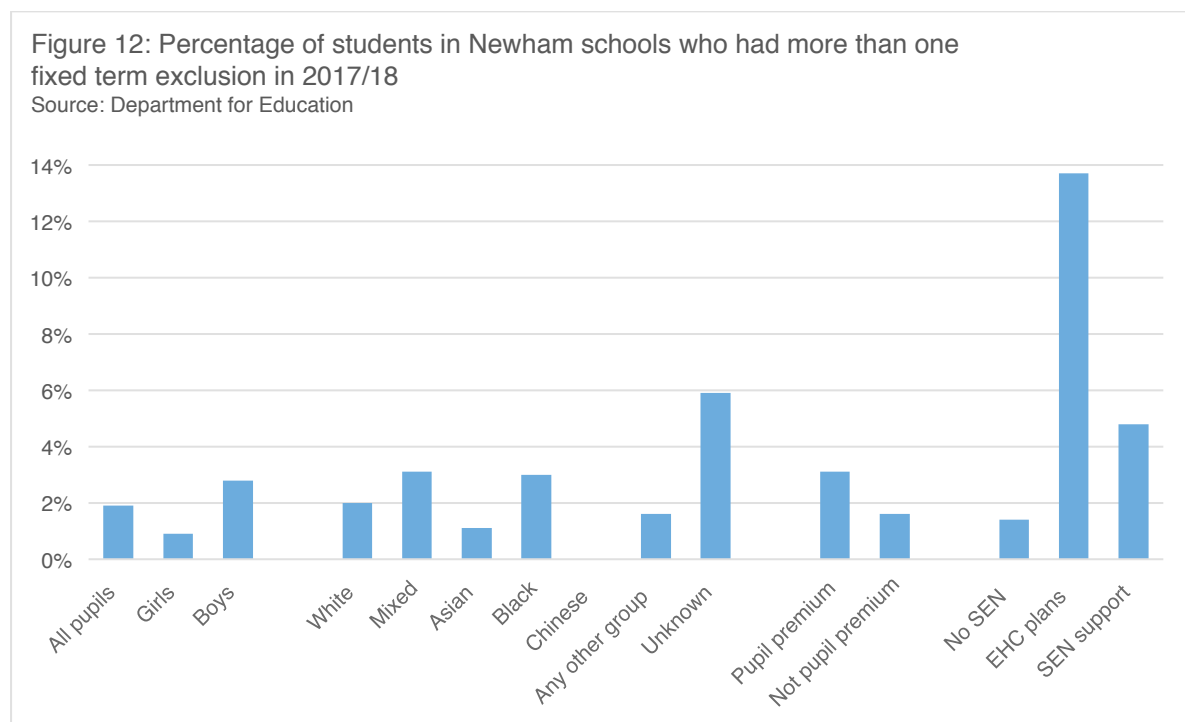
Persistent absence, fixed term exclusions and permanent exclusions in Newham are all therefore indicators of potential concern. All increase between year 7 or 8, peaking at year 10 or 11. Permanent and fixed term exclusions across Newham are in line with national averages, with a modest upward trend in fixed term exclusions between 2013/14 and 2017/18, and no clear trend in permanent exclusions. In many schools, levels of exclusions are low. A small number of schools account for more than half of fixed term exclusions, and a small (and overlapping) number of schools account for more than half of permanent exclusions in Newham, although these figures need to be understood in the context of differing school intakes.

Figure 11 shows the profile of students at Newham schools who were persistently absent (missed more than 10% of school sessions) in 2017/18, and with more than one fixed term exclusion in 2017/18. Students from White, Mixed and Unknown ethnic backgrounds, those in receipt in pupil premium, and those with Education, Health and Care plans (EHCPs) or receiving Special Educational Needs (SEN) support were all more likely than average to be persistently absent. It is important to note that in 2017/18, Newham had a very low percentage of students with EHC plans in comparison to other local authorities, and work is underway to reduce the high rates of persistent absence and fixed term exclusions for this group identified in Figure 11 and 12.



³⁷ [The Timpson Review of School Exclusions](#), May 2019

The number of permanent exclusions in Newham are too low to allow a demographic breakdown. Figure 12 shows the profile of students at Newham schools who had more than one fixed term exclusion in 2017/18. It shows that boys were three times as likely as girls to have more than one fixed term exclusion. Students whose ethnic backgrounds are mixed, Pupils from Black / African / Caribbean / Black British or unknown (generally new arrivals), those receiving pupil premium, and those with EHC plans or receiving SEN support were all more likely than average were also more likely to have more than one fixed term exclusion.



Students who remain on the school roll at mainstream schools but access alternative provision through six week 'directed placements', sometimes on a rolling basis, have also been identified as a vulnerable group. Finally, off-rolling, *"the practice of removing a pupil from the school roll without using a permanent exclusion, when the removal is primarily in the best interests of the school, rather than in the best interest of the pupil"* (Department of Education definition) is illegal. Tackling off-rolling relies on continuing vigilance and robust follow-up where students are removed from school rolls.

Alternative education provision offers a further window of opportunity for children who have been excluded or need time out from mainstream education to get the specialist support and individual attention they need. Currently, these opportunities are not fully realised for all. A programme of work is underway to reduce exclusions and improve alternative provision in Newham, following a review in 2019.

Supporting children and young people who are exploited or at high risk

The Board did not commission or undertake an impact review of services in Newham for children and young people who are at risk of exploitation or violence. Instead, its broad recommendations were informed by a series of evidence sessions (with briefings provided on services in Newham), engagement with young people (see above), information from serious case reviews and inspections in Newham, and – importantly – evidence from elsewhere about the support that children and young people in similar circumstances need. From these sources, some gaps and a number of broad areas for development were identified by the Board and reflected in the recommendations.

The Board heard how the risks to young people who are exploited often increase rapidly. During a period of escalating risk, children may come into contact with the police and criminal justice system, accident and emergency or health services, may go missing from home, care or education, or they may communicate their distress to professionals such as youth workers, school staff or their friends or family through words or behaviour. Evidence gathered through the London Response and Rescue project describes how young people are groomed and recruited, in different venues and using different methods which entice young people, and targeting their vulnerabilities. It notes that association with others involved is the factor that most increases the chance of involvement. Some young people are targeted at particular points in their lives, such as during a family breakup or when they are on the cusp of being taken into care. Debt bondage is a key tool used to control young people.³⁸ Both the Rescue and Response project and recent research³⁹ note the growing role of technology (including social media) in recruiting and controlling vulnerable people as part of criminal exploitation.

The Board learned from Serious Case Reviews about the importance of timely, holistic intervention and the need to avoid drift. From young people, the Board learned about the importance of listening, being believed, and timely and practical support from trusted, reliable adults. Many young people have extensive interactions with a range of different professionals over a period of time. However, a step-change in approach is needed to ensure that the support available is timely, joined-up, and based on the needs of children and their families.

Those who are placed outside the borough for their own safety were amongst the most vulnerable of Newham's young people, and most in need of seamless support, but – as elsewhere⁴⁰ - struggled to cope with the disruption to their lives and the aftermath of the trauma they had experienced.

Evidence shows that there are younger adolescents (aged 10 to 14 years) in Newham who are victims of knife crime, are engaged with the YOS, and/or are exploited. This is a key age group for early intervention and support. However, evidence gathered by the Board also pointed to the importance of effective support for older adolescents and young adults. Qualitative interviews highlighted the need to support vulnerable young adults at key transition points: homelessness, not having money, and not having access to support were important triggers for young adults becoming exploited and involved in criminal activity. Services to address the complex needs of young adults who have experienced trauma and are victims and/or perpetrators of violence are very limited in Newham. Younger children also felt that tackling the risks they faced from 'olders' or young adults was important to keeping them safe.

Evidence on support in Newham for young people at risk of exploitation or violence

Independent evidence on the effectiveness of support for children at high risk comes from inspections and a serious case review. Actions are already underway to implement the recommendations of each review.

Ofsted inspection of LB Newham **Children's Social Care Services** (2019): the service was judged to be 'inadequate' overall. Services for children who need help and protection was judged to be 'requiring improvement', with Ofsted finding that "*when children in Newham are identified as being in need of help and protection, they are appropriately safeguarded*" and that "*children at risk of immediate harm are quickly identified.*" Inspectors found more focus than before on children who are going missing or are being exploited, but this did not necessarily mean that individual children were getting the support they need. Their recommendations included improving safety planning for children at risk of exploitation, and making sure that more children who have gone missing have 'return home' interviews after they get back and that staff use information from the interviews to help make children

³⁸ Rescue and Response County Lines Project, [Strategic \(August\) Assessment 2019](#)

³⁹ Kincaid, S. et al (2019) [Serious violence in context: Understanding the scale and nature of serious violence A report by Crest Advisory](#), Crest Advisory

⁴⁰ Firmin, C. (2019) [Relocation, relocation: home and school-moves for children affected by extra-familial risks during adolescence](#). Children's Geographies.

safer. Action to address all the issues raised in the inspection is underway through a plan and programme of improvement.

Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation inspection of LB Newham's **Youth Offending Service** found that the service required improvement, as a consequence of high workloads, the number of cases, and the complexity of children's lives, and the demands on workers time. It pointed to difficulties deliver out of court disposals: the voluntary interventions agreed between the police, YOT, and the child or young person and their family. Action to address the inspection findings and implement recommendations is underway.

The **Serious Case Review** following the tragic murder of 'Chris' in late 2017 was published in 2018 made a number of recommendations which are included in summary form in Annex C. These were accepted in full and an action programme was put in place to implement them. The Youth Safety Board's recommendations have been informed by the reviews' wider themes: the need for effective multi-agency assessment and support; a safeguarding-led response to young people at risk of exploitation and/or gang affiliation which provides flexible, culturally competent responses to criminal and sexual exploitation; independent return home interviews; a focus on school transitions and on alternative provision and the pupil referral unit; and better support for the children's workforce. Other issues raised by the review such as role of social media, and decisions about relocation, pose continuing challenges to be addressed throughout adolescent safeguarding and broader youth safety interventions.

Wider evidence on support for youth safety

There are a multitude of reviews, research reports and evidence reports on youth safety. The Board drew on a number of these in developing its recommendations for Newham.

Public Health England's guidance "A whole-system multi-agency approach to serious violence prevention"⁴¹, sets out five principles – collaboration; co-production; co-operation in data and intelligence sharing; counter-narrative development; community consensus - which are central to a place-based response to serious violence, informed by public health principles. These evidence-based principles are threaded through the whole systems approach recommended by the Youth Safety Board.

Evidence and recommendations from national research and from two important thematic reviews from London have helped to shape the Youth Safety Board's recommendations on early intervention and safeguarding for adolescents. Recent developments in understanding of understanding and addressing the risks young people faces in places and relationships outside the family – 'contextual safeguarding'⁴² – have shaped the board's focus on making Newham's physical and social spaces feel safer for young people. The need for transitional safeguarding⁴³, recognising that many young people need appropriate support and protection beyond age 18 and that there should be no 'cliff edge' of support between children's and adults' services, has informed the Board's recommendation that effective support is made available for young adults at risk from violence and exploitation.

Two thematic reviews highlight the importance of addressing violence in the home, prevention and early intervention, and putting schools at the heart of multi-agency support for young people. The Tower Hamlets review *Troubled Lives Tragic Consequences* (2015) made a number of recommendations, including the need to address the systemic link between violence and abuse in the home and gang-related violence, and to actively promote the protective factor of education and the need, wherever possible, to support schools to hold children within educational settings. Croydon's *Vulnerable Adolescents Thematic Review* (2019) found that services struggled to address children's trauma from early adversity "Children's Services took action to safeguard children due to identified

⁴¹ Public Health England (2019) [A whole-system multi-agency approach to serious violence prevention: a resource for local system leaders in England](#)

⁴² Firmin, C et al (2019) [Safeguarding during adolescence – the relationship between Contextual Safeguarding, Complex Safeguarding and Transitional Safeguarding](#), Research in Practice Briefing Note

⁴³ *ibid*

risks of significant harm in the home, schools took actions to address troublesome and aggressive behaviour in school, and the YOS, Gangs teams and Police, focussed on their offending behaviour and gang lifestyle. The opportunity to effectively intervene early had been lost, and the children's motivation to change had diminished." Services struggled to engage parents, who had lost trust in the system and found the number of agencies involved hard to deal with. The review's key findings focused on the importance of early help and prevention; greater recognition and response to children's emotional health and wellbeing; the need for an integrated, whole systems approach across agencies, communities and families; multi-agency intervention with schools at the heart; and attention to disproportionality, linked to ethnicity, gender and deprivation.

The Youth Safety Board's report sets out key working principles, and the important areas where the Board feels services, communities, residents and young people need to work together to achieve a safer Newham for young people. In some cases this work is well underway, in some areas there are gaps. The recommendations are not intended to be prescriptive about specific interventions or practice models. The detail of approaches is a matter for partners to develop in consultation with young people, residents and partners, and drawing on best evidence about both individual interventions, and systems, that have achieved promising results for youth safety.

Annex A: Mayor of Newham’s Youth Safety Board Evidence Base

The Board’s report and recommendations drew on evidence from a number of sources in addition to the references noted in the text.

1. Meetings

The Board held seven meetings during the period March to November 2019. Each meeting focused on a different topic(s), and members were provided with a briefing for each meeting giving an overview of some of the most relevant activities in Newham.

	Date	Topic (s)	Speakers
1	March 28 th	Agenda-setting and Terms of Reference	
2	May 20 th	Making Connections: learning from initiatives in Newham and beyond	Lib Peck, London Violence Reduction Unit James Appiah, Andy Lewis, Zin Derfoufi, Newham Citizens Youth Civil Society Commission
3	June 24 th	Support for Young People at Risk	Fran Pearson, Chair, Newham LSCB Michelle Edwards, Head of Newham Youth Offending Team Lynn McIntosh, Complex Safeguarding Lead
4	July 25 th	Prevention and early intervention	
5	September 11 th	Education and youth safety Transitional safeguarding	Inputs from the education representatives on the group: Sandy Davies, Paul Stephen, Andy Lewis, Dellis Smith Dez Holmes: Research in Practice
6	October 5 th	Board away day: focus on recommendations	
7	November 4 th	Agreeing recommendations and looking to the future	

In addition, a small evidence sub-group chaired by Mayor Fiaz met three times between May and September, to review the data and evidence base in greater detail than was possible in Board meetings.

2. Previous events and engagement exercises

Between January 2018 and the Board’s first meeting in March 2019, there were a number of events and consultations which provided important insights and evidence about what matters to young people and residents in Newham. These formed an important part of the evidence used by the Board. A summary is included in Annex B.

	Date	Event/report
1	January 2018	Addressing Safety through Active Participation Youth Movements one day conference organised in partnership with University of

		East London.
2	May 2018	Newham Youth Community Response: report of meeting organised by residents of Forest Gate following the murder of Sami Sidhom.
3	July 2018	Youth Citizens Assembly, event focused on youth safety with around 100 young people
4	January 2019	Community Conversations, Community Links' report of discussions with residents and young people about youth safety
5	April 2019	Newham Civil Society Youth Commission: report of a Commission supported by Newham Citizens with recommendations focused on youth safety
6	July 2019	The London Borough of Newham Overview & Scrutiny Commission, Crime and Anti-Social Behaviour Scrutiny Commission Report on Street Violence
7	Summer 2019	Material from public canvassing carried out in Stratford by the organisation Word on the Curb's in response to the Home Office's #KnifeFree Chicken Box campaign. Word on the Curb kindly provided photographs from this exercise.

3. Engagement with adults and young people – groups

Because of the rich evidence base from recent engagement with young people and residents, the Board decided not to hold large engagement or consultation events, but instead to visit a small number of community events and groups of adults and young people to understand their views about youth safety.

	Date	Discussion	Adults/Young People
1	May	Plaistow Coffee morning	Older adults
2	May	Roma Support Group	Staff
3	June	Custom House Coffee Morning	Older adults
4	June	RE Matters group	Young people from 4 schools
5	June	SACRE meeting	Adults from schools & faith organisations
6	June	Custom House and Canning Town Faith Network Meeting	Residents and local faith representatives
7	June	Education Links	Young people in alternative education
8	June	Tunmarsh School	Young people in alternative education
9	July	Royal Docks Community Forum	Residents and local organisations
10	July	Beckton Community Forum	Residents and local organisations
11	July	Newham Youth Offending Service	Young people supported by the YOS
12	July	Council staff focus group	Cross-section of Council staff working directly with young people in Newham
13	July	Custom House Baptist Church	Four discussions with parents, under 11's, 11 – 16 year olds, and young adults
14	September	Positive Activities for Young People meeting	Voluntary and community sector organisations working with young people

The methodology used for the discussions varied according to the wishes of the organisers, ranging from a presentation and discussions, to participatory mapping exercises with young people (see below) about the places they liked and feelings of safety.

Picture 1: mapping Newham (year 9 and year 10)

Picture 2: favourite places (primary school aged children)



Board members and officers also attended other meetings with community, faith and voluntary sector groups which helped feed into the Board's thinking.

4. Engagement with individual young people

To support the Board with insights and suggestions from young people with lived experience of violence and exploitation, staff from the youth service carried out informal interviews during June and July 2019 with fifteen young people. The majority of the young people interviewed had participated in the summer 2019 intensive programme. The interviews were recorded, transcribed and a report based on the discussions was shared with members of the Board.

Annex B: Overview of additional consultation events and meetings drawn on by the Youth Safety Board

1. Safety through Active Participation (January 2018)

This one-day event in January 2018 organised by Youth Movements at the University of East London brought young people and professionals together to talk about how to improve youth safety. Emerging themes included support for parents; career advice; mental health; work in primary schools; first aid; show consequences of action; and more visible policing.

2. Newham Youth Community Response (May 2018)

This report includes issues and questions raised at a meeting of more than 200 residents organised by residents of Forest Gate in the wake of the tragic murders of Corey Junior Davis and Sami Sidhom. Residents prioritised five issues:

- multi-agency intervention, and the need to learn from on and adapt the Scottish Violence Reduction Unit approach
- early intervention and prevention, including supporting parents to seek help, and working with schools to support practical skills, resilience and positive relationships, recognising the pressure they are under
- youth consultation and participation, so that young people have things to do and can have a sense of belonging and can resist the pull of gangs
- providing work opportunities, careers advice and a sense of potential and opportunity for young people from all backgrounds,
- community policing, ensuring that young people can develop better relationships with the police, that there is a visible presence on the streets particularly after serious incidents, every murder is solved, and gang-related violence against women and girls is tackled.

3. Youth Citizens Assembly (July 2018)

More than a hundred young people attended a meeting with Newham's Mayor to share ideas about youth safety. The most popular recommendations included access to youth services, access to jobs and work experience, using CCTV and street lighting to make young people feel safer, mentoring, counselling and second chances for young people excluded from school. Making services more young-person friendly was a cross-cutting theme, with calls for better quality and a more diverse range of activities, using social media, street promoters and pop-up services such as counselling to reach young people wherever they are.

Young people's views about what made them feel unsafe were focused on public spaces. They talked about feeling unsafe at particular times (especially at night); in specific places (parks, alleyways, security gates, Beckton, Forest Gate, Stratford; public transport and at the back of the upper deck of buses); at a certain place AND time (in an alleyway in the dark; on public transport at night); safety when dressed a particular way (when wearing Islamic clothing, when groups of people were wearing tracksuits); and of particular kinds of behaviours in public spaces (being followed, strangers shouting or making weird noises).

The most popular suggestions for improving safety included better lighting for parks and streets, a more visible presence from adults (overwhelmingly police, but also Transport for London staff and youth workers), access to phone boxes so that young people who did not have a mobile could call for help, removing threatening online material. Some young people felt stop and search was effective and should be increased, others said 'continuous stop and search' made them feel unsafe and anxious. Many young people mentioned the importance of education and support to reduce bullying and discrimination. Some said that a more positive approach to the borough would help them feel safer.

4. Community Conversations (January 2019), Community Links

The report summarises findings from conversations held with over 200 people in Newham in 2018, one-third under 25 years. Recommendations include joined-up responses to youth violence;

advocates to work with young people and act as focal points for multi-agency interventions; attention to mentoring, mental health and detached youth work, well supported and recognised youth workers; engagement to rebuild trust between young people and the police, particularly on stop and search; co-located services in family hubs with supportive family services and employment; alternatives to pupil exclusions or prison sentences where appropriate; positive engagement for young people through creative arts and sports; working locally so that places where young people socialise become opportunities to intervene rather than 'risky' places; use Community Conversations to develop genuinely community-led approaches to violence; and a positive approach that supports young people's potential and talent.

5. Newham Civil Society Youth Commission (April 2019)

The Commission's work was based on discussions with over 500 young people and parents in schools, faith communities and charities between December 2018 and March 2019 to find out how youth violence affected them and what could be done. The Commission used hearings to develop recommendations including: a local Violence Reduction unit to implement a public health approach; first aid, bystander and self-defence training for young people; promoting the 'Youth Charter Social Coach' mentoring programme; support to enable parents to discuss knife crime with children; training, engagement and accountability between young people and the police, including around Stop and Search, issuing of paper receipts around stop and search and young people to sit on the Stop and Search monitoring board with the chance to report abuses; an 'Exclusions, at what cost?' conversation for schools to investigate the practice of off-rolling in Newham and its impact on our young people; awareness-building on grooming; continued investment in youth services; more meaningful paid employment opportunities for young people in Newham.

6. The London Borough of Newham Overview & Scrutiny Commission, Crime and Anti-Social Behaviour Scrutiny commission on Street Violence (July 2019)

This report was presented at London Borough of Newham's Cabinet meeting in July 2019 and made ten recommendations

- 1 - A Multi-agency Contextual Safeguarding Strategic Approach
- 2 - A Divert Programme
- 3 - Competitive Sports for young people
- 4 – The Youth Perspective – engagement with young people on solutions
- 5 - Test Purchases for knives and acid
- 6 – The Sale of Acid
- 7 - Surrender Bins
- 8 – Programme Funding Bids for additional resources for addressing violence
- 9 - Capacity Building and Resilience Training
- 10 - Data Collection and Analysis

7. Word on the Curb #KnifeFree Chicken Box campaign (Summer 2019)

Following controversy over the Home Office's #KnifeFree campaign, Word on the Curb invited passers-by in Stratford to write comments on chicken boxes to share their views about youth safety. The campaign kindly provided the Board with photographs from this exercise. Key themes include:

- Young people: elevating and listening to young people, improving early intervention and mentoring, and providing more activities for young people, in hubs, and churches, particularly after school, including music, art and sport
- Criminal justice: mixed responses including some suggestions around tackling institutional racism in the police, and reducing stop and search, particularly of people from Black backgrounds. Other suggestions include more police on the street, more searches, more security in Stratford Park, zero tolerance approaches, and harsher 'life for a life' sentences.
- Parenting: support families, particularly single parent families with resources and assistance, and support for male role models.
- Awareness and skills: campaigns against knives in schools and on social media; support knife crime amnesties, vocational projects and life skills training in schools.
- Across all the themes there were references to tackling racism and improving opportunities for people from Black backgrounds.

Annex C: Recommendations from the ‘Chris’ Serious Case Review

This important review was published in 2018. It looked at the lessons learned following the tragic death of Chris, who was shot in Newham when he was fourteen years old. The review made fourteen recommendations, all of which are key for youth safety and all of which were accepted. They were (in shortened form) -

1. Improve assessments across different services.
2. Review the Multiagency Risk and Vulnerability Panel (MRVP)
3. Link work on child criminal and child sexual exploitation, and consider creating a contextual safeguarding hub.
4. Better policies and support for young people at risk of gang affiliation and criminal exploitation.
5. Independent return interviews after missing episodes linked to child criminal exploitation.
6. Improvements to specialist case work for gang affected and exploited young people
7. Better support for at-risk young people who are moving from primary to secondary education.
8. A review of pupil referral unit provision in Newham.
9. More professional development on Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)
10. Ensuring best practice when young people and families are relocated outside Newham.
11. Identify Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE) Champions in key services across Newham
12. Better understanding by agencies of the role of social media plays in tensions and violence
13. Consider commissioning a specialist Young Men’s Service
14. Make trauma-informed debriefing and clinical support available across the children’s workforce

The full report and recommendations are available from www.newhamscp.org.uk .