

Meeting: Safer Communities Executive Board

Date: 15th October 2008

Report Title: Young people and knife crime – key partnership activity

Report of: Eliza Meechan

Summary:

Reducing violence is a priority in Haringey and there is a wide range of local partnership activity designed to prevent or reduce violent crime among young people. This report provides an overview of some of the projects which focus on knives.

Recommendations:

This report is for information only.

Financial/Legal Comments:

N/A

For more information contact:

Name: Eliza Meechan
Title: Safer Communities Policy Officer
Tel: 020 8489 2984
Email: eliza.meechan@haringey.gov.uk

1. Purpose

- 1.1. To provide an overview of some of the key partnership activity designed to address knife crime among young people in Haringey.

2. Contextual information

- 2.1. Reducing violence continues to be a priority in Haringey. This is reflected in the identification of National Indicator (NI) 15: Serious Violent Crime as one of the 35 Improvement Indicators for the Local Area Agreement
- 2.2. 2008/9 is the baseline year for NI15, however current data (April to June 2008) shows that Haringey ranks 5th lowest among its most similar boroughs,

with 0.15 offences per 1000 population - significantly lower than the group average of 0.25.

- 2.3. There have been 22 fewer knife offences in the borough from April to June 2008 compared with the same period last year.

3. Key partnership activity

- 3.1. There are a wide range of local programmes which aim to prevent or reduce violence among young people. Some of the projects which focus on weapons are described below:

- 3.2. Youth Offending Service / Red Cross Weapons Awareness Training

The Weapons awareness training sessions are held once a month for young offenders who have been sentenced for the offences of Offensive Weapon, Bladed Article, Robbery (where a weapon was used) or any other violence related offence, such as Assault, ABH, GBH etc. These sessions are also open to those considered 'at risk' of carrying weapons. The training will also be provided to some year six students in the borough.

Evaluation of this programme has demonstrated positive outcomes for participants including a reduction in re-offending.

- 3.3. 'What's the Point?'

This anti-knife crime project is co-ordinated by Haringey Peace Alliance. This campaign targets young people aged 11-19 years and consists of informative comic books, presentations and a website with information about initiatives, opinions and activities for young people. The central aim of this campaign is to educate young people about the consequences of carrying a weapon.

The campaign was re-launched at a peace breakfast on 16th September 2008.

- 3.4. Value Life

Value Life is an award winning anti-violence campaign led by students from Gladesmore School. The campaign aims to:

- a) Engage young people by giving them the opportunity to become positive agents of change within the community by developing Value Life further
- b) Educate young people about the issues and challenges surrounding gun and knife crime
- c) Change the negative perception of young people from being the problem to being part of the solution
- d) Develop positive collaborative relationships between students within the various school across the borough
- e) Promote and encourage an anti gun and knife crime culture among young people.

In July 2008 students from Gladesmore were joined by young people from Park View Academy, Woodside High School, John Loughborough, Alexandra Park and Haverstock School (from Camden) for a tour of the borough on open top buses, delivering the value life message. The students then took part in a peace walk up Wood Green High Road and a Peace Concert at the Decorium.

Gladesmore are planning to involve more schools from neighbouring boroughs in 2009, to deliver the Value Life message to a wider audience.

3.5. Youth Inclusion Programme (YIP) expansion

The YIP is a tailor-made programme for 13-17 year olds who are at high risk of involvement in both violent and acquisitive crime and anti-social behaviour. In 2007 the YIP expanded to cover the whole of the borough and to work with a core group of 70 young people. YIP participants are provided with a range of developmental activities provided by YIP workers and volunteer mentors which challenge attitudes to crime and anti-social behaviour. The activities provided are designed to reduce those factors most associated with youth crime (including knife crime) and to enhance those 'protective factors that reduce the likelihood of offending. The intervention can also lead to recognised accreditation. Assessments of this year's core YIP group show an 85% reduction in criminal activities.

3.6. Operation Blunt2

Operation Blunt2 was launched by the Metropolitan Police on 19th May 2008. This initiative continues to focus on addressing the carriage and use of knives in public through a combination of enforcement, prevention and educational measures across the borough. These measures include: high visibility patrols, increased use of stop and search where appropriate, test purchasing operations in partnership with the trading standards and volunteer police cadets. The police are also working closely with schools to provide anti knife crime presentations.

3.7. Guidance to schools

Haringey's Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) and the borough's Safer School Partnership have worked together and alongside schools to consider the safety of secondary aged young people in relation to knife crime. This work culminated in a paper advising schools about the development of protocols for using metal detecting devices in schools. Protocols must be developed in consultation with school staff and circulated to parents before any metal detecting devices are used in school.

The central purpose of using such devices in schools should be as a method of deterring young people from carrying knives and to protect them both in school and in the community.

3.8. Screening of '*Kids, Knives and Broken Lives*'

As part of the Partnership's contribution to Week of Peace this year. Libraries screened '*Kids, Knives and Broken Lives*'. This documentary was part of the Disarming Britain series which investigated why young people carry weapons. The documentary stimulated an animated discussion with a panel of speakers including Cllr Santry, Adam Jogee (co leader of the Youth Council) and Inspector Chris Donaldson.