

**SCRUTINY REVIEW PANEL 2 – 2018/2019: KNIFE CRIME AND YOUTH ENGAGEMENT
MEETING 4 – 6 FEBRUARY 2019**

PANEL MEMBER FEEDBACK FROM RECENT SITE VISITS

Visit 1

Your Life You Choose Schools Anti-crime Project 2018-2019

(Schools Educational Project for 11-12 Year Olds in the Borough's High Schools)

Brentside High School

Greenford Avenue, Hanwell, London, W7 1JJ

Friday 23 November 2018

Attendees: Cllr Carlo Lusuardi and Cllr Simon Woodroofe

Twyford Church of England High School

Twyford Crescent, Acton, London, W3 9PP

Monday 14 January 2019

Attendees: Cllr Aysha Raza (Chair) and Cllr Praveen Anand

To observe how the Your Life You Choose interactive schools project to prevent young people from becoming involved in crime is conducted by the team of different partner agencies.

Panel Member	Observations/Findings	Conclusions and Recommendations
Cllr Carlo Lusuardi	The visit to <i>Brentside High School</i> was highly enlightening as far as I was concerned but also, I believe, very useful for the children who participated. They appeared to engage fully with many of the sessions, some of which were demanding and thought provoking. It is only unfortunate that as a result of some technical difficulties during the morning plenary, the first break-out session I attended was truncated, which prevented the presenter from completing the discussion of some of the key ideas.	
Cllr Simon Woodroofe	I attended <i>Brentside High School</i> with Cllr Carlo Lusuardi and Harjeet Bains. Also attended by some police, magistrates and pupils from the school. The day started with a video in the assembly hall about how a boy is groomed into criminal activity, how he is affected and how it affects his sister and nan. We then attended a number of Workshops.	

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	<p>Firstly, a Magistrates session with a video of a court hearing involving a child defendant, followed by a discussion of the case study.</p> <p>Then a session about the Youth Justice Service in Ealing. This started with a film followed by a quiz leading to a discussion about the role of police, and about issues such as dispersal areas, drugs, victims and apparently victimless crimes, and on the area of joint enterprise. It was pointed out that the age of criminal responsibility is 10 years.</p> <p>Victim Support: A discussion about the video shown in the assembly hall. The class was split into groups looking at the issue from different points of view, such as the boy, his sister and his nan, before, during and afterwards.</p> <p>Prevent: The session looked at this programme about extremism and terrorism. It seemed a little out of context with the rest of the day. Groups were formed and asked to give presentations on what they meant by the word 'influence'.</p> <p>Finally, we attended an enterprising explanation about the Prison Service from an officer who heads the Education Department at Feltham.</p> <p>All in all, a useful exercise in providing a background to the situation of youth in the justice system. A number of things were learnt, especially that we can become a formal criminal from the age of 10 years. There was little directly about knife crime as such, however.</p>	
Cllr Praveen Anand	<p>Good to see young people who were interactive and contributed very well with @ylyu team.</p> <p>All the teams performed very well to keep young people's attention.</p> <p>Nothing to say which was negative.</p>	<p>Students at Twyford Church of England High School were aware of certain issues but it is clear that all pupils benefit from this programme.</p>

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<p>Cllr Aysha Raza (Chair)</p>	<p>Your Life You Choose (YLYC) training day at Twyford High School was a very educational day for me. The day started with a very poignant DVD viewing with the whole of Year 7. The film has a very believable scenario of how students could potentially fall into bad company and a life of crime. The day was made up of a series of workshops run by many agencies all committed to engaging with our young people and preventing knife crime.</p> <p>The session with the prison service was very graphically illustrated with a reconstruction of a prison cell and life within it. Was fascinating watching the students' reactions to not having their own underwear and the toilet arrangements in prison. The ambulance service session too was very hard hitting with an actual 999 call followed through to a tragic outcome. Again, many of the students were reacting to the reality of death due to knife crime. There was much reaction to how much blood we have in our body and interest in how to stop bleeding with basic first aid. The police session used some case study films which showed scars and wounds as well as looking at different types of weapons and their legality. The role play scenarios and Q&A had no shortage of participants, the workshops connected well with all students. Role playing as magistrates was very interesting to watch as many students felt strongly about guilt and punishment.</p> <p>Asking teachers and agencies delivering this training they all agree that this programme does help inform our young people and acts as a deterrent. If anything, there were calls for this sort of training to be repeated and updated with the same cohort perhaps annually to ensure that lessons are not forgotten.</p>	<p>It might be worth considering such training days at primary schools before students move into their high schools, as it is usually at this point they are most vulnerable to joining gangs.</p>

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	<p>I was very impressed with the whole day but keen to see how this training day is received in a state school rather than a Church of England school, and whether there are noticeable differences.</p> <p>I'm looking forward to seeing the YLYC training days at some of our other high schools in the borough and seeing if there are any differences in how they are received by students. Clearly these days are having some effect but I suppose until we have some concrete data to prove that there is a positive effect on our young people we will not know the extent. Talking to many of the students throughout the day suggests that at least they are questioning and thinking around the subject more than before, and less likely to blindly follow peers.</p>	

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Visit 2**Local Authority High School Headteachers Meeting**

Ealing Education Centre, Mansell Road, Greenford, UB6 9EH

Wednesday 5 December 2018

To consult the Headteachers in order to understand the knife crime issues from an education perspective.

Attendees: Cllr Aysha Raza (Chair)

Panel Member	Observations/Findings	Conclusions and Recommendations
Cllr Aysha Raza (Chair)	<p>Meeting with all our Secondary Schools heads was a really useful discussion which over ran our time slot, everyone agreed it was very productive and important to have this meeting and welcomed our engagement.</p> <p>I learnt a lot about what school communities are coping with, with increased gang activity on and around school premises. How the most dangerous time where young people are most likely to get involved with knife crime is on the commute to and from school. Most students said they carried knives for protection and self-defence, perhaps an improved self defence strategy to drive home the fact that knives add an extra dimension of danger to themselves rather than help the situation. Heads unanimously asked for more community & transport police and park ranger support as cuts in these services have affected safety in schools. It was felt a lot of the positive work done within schools can be undone outside its gates. A lot of gang activity in parks and areas around schools, these might benefit from patrols during school run times in the morning and afternoon. More support needed with mental health of students too, safe spaces where anxieties can be discussed offline without pressure and in confidence.</p> <p>There is much willing and goodwill to take on extra supportive roles and responsibilities but with so many of our schools struggling with staff retention, staff are reluctant to take on extra roles taking up more valuable time. Training was welcomed but most agreed it was difficult to even allow staff training days away as they are needed at school.</p> <p>Need to have data to tackle this increasing issue more effectively. Mapping current provision across the borough to identify where our gaps are and target those areas more effectively would be helpful. Ofsted are currently working on a piece of work providing</p>	<p>Clearly, the emphasis needs to be on early intervention and prevention within the school system. Work needs to start in primary schools if we are going to make a difference. More positive role models and activities to engage our young people are required in making gangs and knife crime a less attractive prospect.</p>

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	<p>evidence of where things stand nationally.</p> <p>Greenford High has a great online mentoring scheme which has been shown to be helpful and they hope to share best practice and roll out to all our schools in the borough. Managing social media and online gaming has added a whole new level of pressure and anxiety on our young people. A lot of the gang grooming and causes of anxiety happens online, at a level that parents and staff are not adequately aware or engaged. Parental awareness and engagement with the situation was thought to be something that the council could help with. Clearly, staff cannot manage any of these gang behaviours outside of school premises where parental support needs to take over. There is a real issue with parents being culturally cut off from young people and oblivious to the real dangers they face. We have heard this from many other agencies too such as youth justice and the magistrates.</p> <p>Most Ealing schools operate a zero-tolerance policy with knife crime and gang related violence. Heads all vociferously told us that they must take the wellbeing of the whole school community into account when exercising exclusions. Need to focus on working with students on the fringes of gang activity and not to forget that girls are also active participants of this culture. It is well known that the cohort of young people that engage in criminal activity and gangs are those that do not engage in the education system or employment. The challenge of adequate provision for this cohort is key to reducing levels of violent gang activity.</p> <p>Schools all provide a wide variety of extra-curricular activities to engage our young people in the arts and sport. However, these are mostly dependent on staff volunteering time and scarce resources. There are some funding streams available such as the 'sugar tax' funding but clearly more support and resources ought to be found for after school activities. With the reduced youth services these school clubs could be only alternative.</p>	

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Visit 3**Northolt High School**

Eastcote Lane, Northolt, Middlesex, UB5 4HP

Monday 10 December 2018

To consult the students on the School Council as Northolt/Greenford is a hotspot in the borough for knife crime.

Attendees: Cllr Aysha Raza (Chair), Cllr Seema Kumar (Vice Chair) and Cllr Chris Summers

Panel Member	Observations/Findings	Conclusions and Recommendations
Cllr Seema Kumar (Vice Chair)	<p>The School Council Group of young people, although hesitant initially, were forthcoming and engaged once they understood the reason why we were there. This is perfectly understandable.</p> <p>Individual experiences were mentioned. Parental reactions and effect of media stories on families or the young people were shared.</p> <p>What stood out for me was that children as young as these had to deal with post code gang related issues having to remove and hide their school uniform items when going from the area they live in to a neighbouring one. Out of area people spotted are approached and asked, 'where are you from?'</p> <p>This sort of altercation and steps taken to cover up is unnatural and, in my view, must disturb the individual or groups. It is unfair such young people have to deal with this.</p> <p>Comments about clothing, appearance and where you come from were also mentioned. Young people must be able to dress well and enjoy themselves if they choose to do so without intimidation.</p> <p>They felt that not all young people in groups or being loud were necessarily bad. They were just young people being happy. I think this is so true and why not? Grown-ups also need to recognise this.</p>	<p>I feel young people may respond better if a visit is less official and maybe have a couple of young people with us. No matter how comfortable one makes them feel there is some hesitation and willingness to really share. I felt we could have heard more.</p> <p>To understand and get a more accurate picture, it would be useful to speak to those young people who are engaged in anti-social activity or are involved in gangs.</p> <p>I think young people talking to other young people would be very useful.</p> <p>Youth Clubs were not considered to be the ultimate solution. More sport would help too as it would release anger or frustration.</p>

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	<p>That is why it's important that recommendations address this. Long term it can bring mental health issues. This was an observation from one young lady in the group.</p> <p>The group we met were young people who I felt were street wise and aware of the society they live in and were trying to adjust their lives accordingly in the best way possible for them. They felt if you are good within and well intentioned then nothing bad will happen. Good confident thoughts in my view.</p> <p>Parental concern was also mentioned. However, managing this was balanced but it's like being one person in front of family and another outside (simply enjoying oneself and doing what one pleases).</p> <p>It was interesting to hear that it was the good guys in gangs who were made to carry out actions at the behest of so to speak 'bad' leaders.</p> <p>Social media was mainly blamed for causing many issues among groups.</p> <p>The general view was Stop and Search should be increased. The more searches the better.</p> <p>Some young people also experience racism or are automatically considered wrong because of who they are or the way they look. They find this hurtful.</p>	