



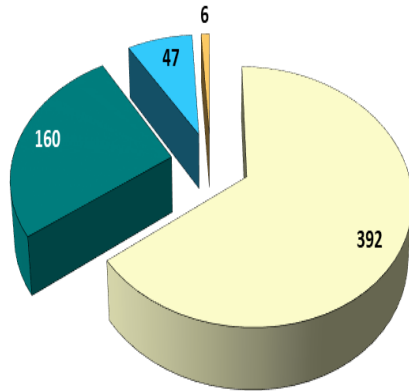
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Perceptions of Serious Youth Violence/Gangs in London – causes and remedies

Highlights from MOPAC final report

Fieldwork – Autumn 2021

605 total respondents



□ Practitioners ■ Young people ■ Local residents ■ Substance misusers

Lockdown:-

- Issues initially died off/altered in presentation – subsequently returned - not always in previous form
- During lockdown rules for YP were less clear/stipulated
- Perception now YP - more out of control; less likely to accept instruction/ direction/discipline

Gang Terminology:

- Not so much of an issue as expected (based on previous research)
- Only one or two feel strongly - in general 'street gang' or 'gang' is widely used by YP and all others.

- Greater instability – previous positions changed/old certainties gone = greater violence
- Social media - Increased insecurity, riskier behaviours, provocations, more exposure to violence/ threats
- Sense YP are '*on their own*'; adults have own mess to deal with – covid, mental health, living costs
- Community outreach scaled back = less YP engagement/ fewer chances to keep straight & narrow
- Youth clubs see less engagement – less advice; less guidance; less steerage
- Increased lack of trust in institutions/authority – YP won't be told now; authority is failed/ broken/ corrupt
- Community trauma evident in communities that lost YP to violence – unrecognised!
- Idolising YP 'fallen' due to street violence – public murals/grieving = constant reminder of imperative for revenge/violence
- Loyalty, retribution, revenge now key – YP easily locked into retribution – a performance for others

- Recent changes ...– strong sense of change for many – skill depletion
 - variable internal confidence amongst staff
 - diluted efficacy/professionalism - some officers don't/won't engage or intervene.
 - affected internal confidence and ability
 - too many 'green' new recruits;
 - many long-standing experienced officers left
 - high profile staffing concerns
- Perception new BCU arrangements affected ability in some areas
- Some reticence about youth engagement since Matrix issues
- Resources thought very variable; only to key boroughs/ hotspots - not equitably spread across London



- Mixed picture re effectiveness across all boroughs
- Partnership working skills – much declined/diminished
- GDPR/data - range from poor to adequate (not beyond). Staff churn stalls working
- Too many agencies across the landscape
- Short-term funding challenges – frontline agencies not funded
- VRUs criticised – no focus/too general; trying to please everyone; reinventing wheel
- IT systems – not shared/ silos don't speak across IT systems
- Crime analysis ability - much depleted; products poorer; lack of professional unity
- Many disjointed services; poor effective coordination within overarching strategies
- Must reframe all this from CJS - social policy/poverty/ health
- Community Safety – withered away, not understood, diminished

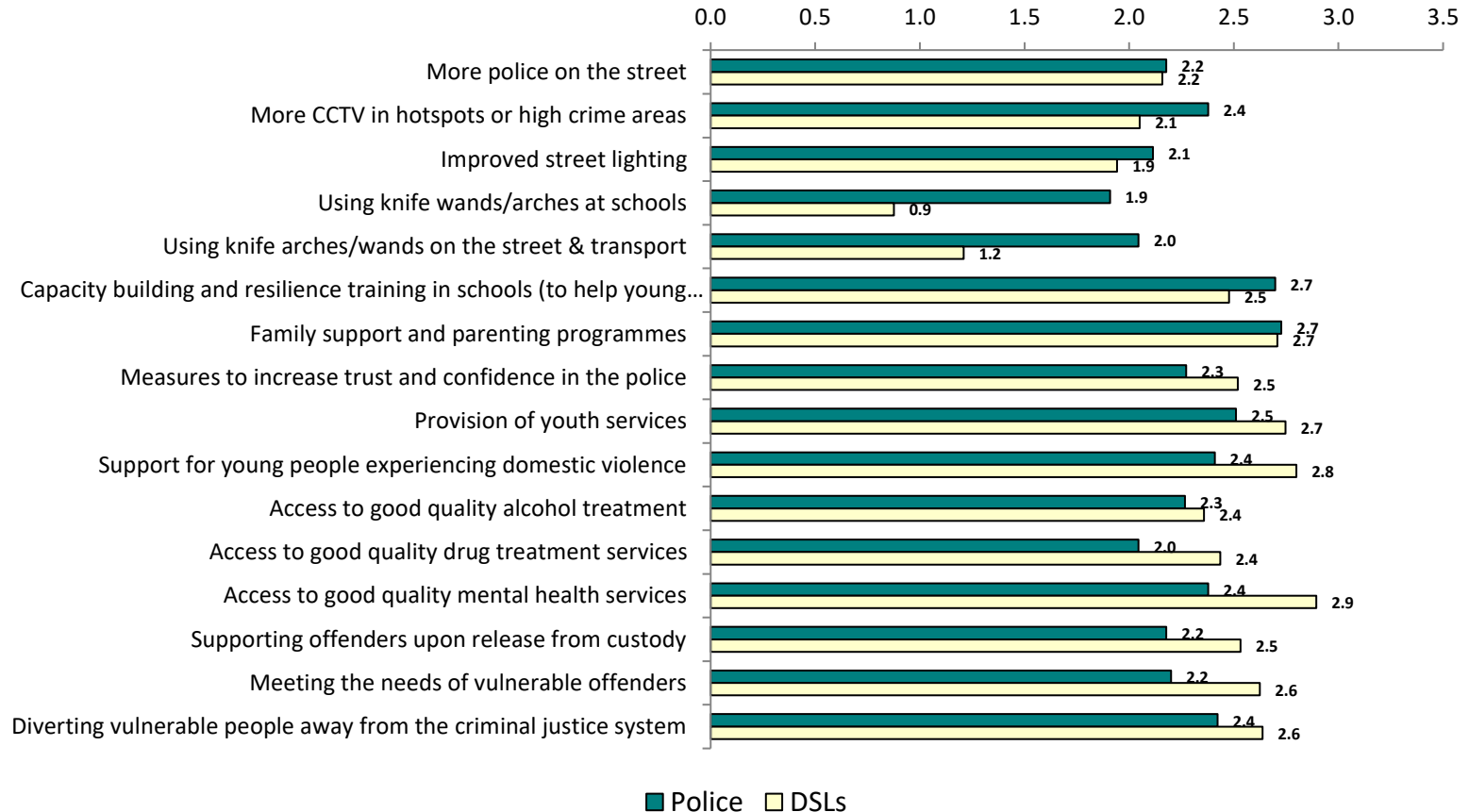


- Active recruitment of YP during lockdown
- Youngers seen as *'out of control'* – won't be ordered by Olders
- Olders/ Elders – a generation gap – Olders had no involvement in Drill / CLs
- Big ££ to YP via Drill music publishing - overnight stars, heroes
- 'Survival Mode' now for many Young people
- High levels of stress/trauma/drug use/anxiety
- Increased social isolation from wider society
- County Lines now seen as regular 'employment'
- Knife-carrying not just for protection – but logical empowerment/passport to move
- Increasing sophistication of gangs – integration with OCGs
- Tighter control of lines re drug dealing - exploitation
- Gangs social media role increasing and expanding

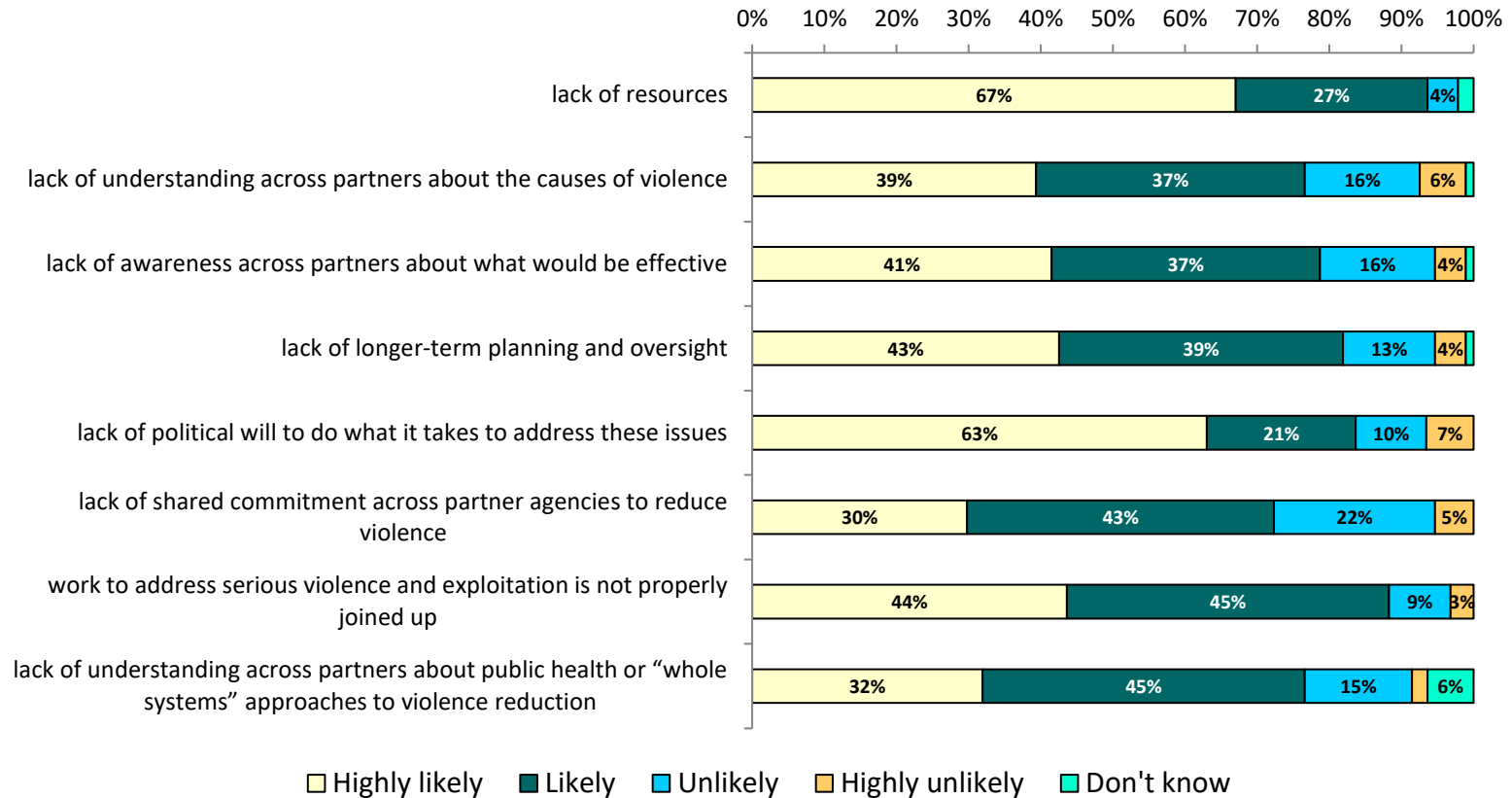
Young People:

- High levels of trauma and mental health difficulties
- Influence of social media/ networks
- High levels of fear of crime = adversely affects travel decisions / relationships
- Sense of 'being on your own' – 'inevitability' of outcomes
- Disassociation from society
- Adults don't understand situation; are silent /complicit
- Massive under-reporting of crime (around schools for example)
- Honest conversations not had – e.g. schools
- Dominant conversation narrative is fear of crime - now dominant social structure for YP
- Orientation/aspiration towards crime, drugs, gangs now more accepted
- Personal impact on mental health - sleeplessness
- Often ask for help - but no follow up – reinforcing belief they are on their own

How important are these issues to reduce SYV & exploitation in your school catchment area? (n=97 –Police and Designated Safeguarding Leads)



How likely are these factors to undermine the effectiveness of future work to reduce SYV & exploitation?





How do we get ahead of this?

- We do not have the policing/partnership structures to address this successfully now or over the long-term
- We face a 21st century problem with 20th century structures, policies and organisations
- These are culturally siloed, operationally slow, unresponsive, unmodernised, unadjusted, technologically ill-equipped, inefficient and unsuitable
- We need a radical new way of working to address this.

How to address this?

- Lack of capable guardians in Public/ Youth Spaces
- Invest in services
- Contextual safeguarding – school routes/ online/ transport
- Tackle Drug Demand & Supply
- Capacity-build young people at school
- Reinstate Community Safety profession
- National Youth Conversation – engagement - Barbershops
- Cmty sweeps/ Trading standards
- Analytical capacity + data-sharing
- Community mobilisation
- Creative solutions – Exploitation, Modern Slavery



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**COUNTY
LINES**

EXPLOITATION AND
DRUG DEALING AMONGST
URBAN STREET GANGS

SIMON HARDING

