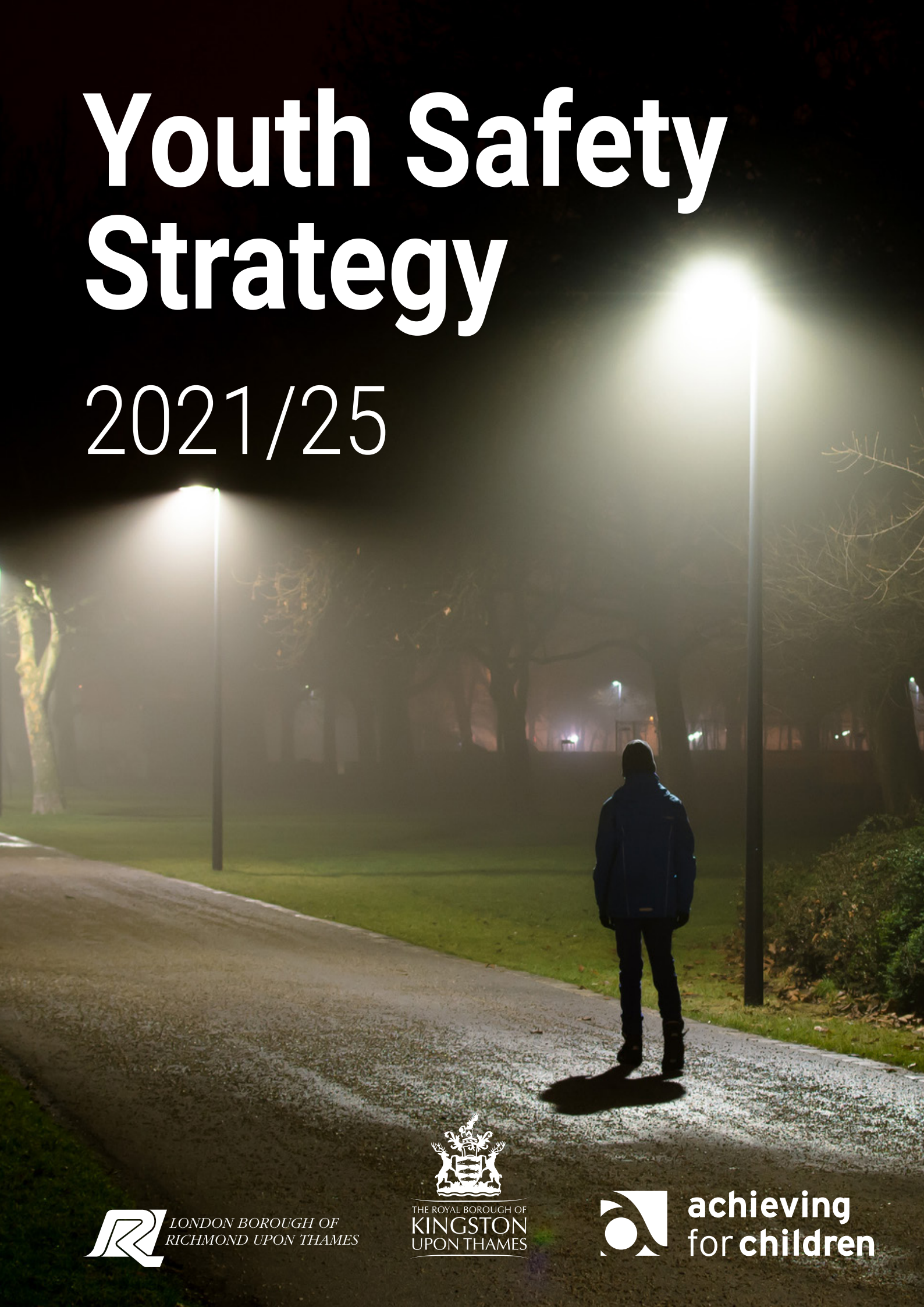
Youth Safety Strategy

2021/25



LONDON BOROUGH OF RICHMOND UPON THAMES

THE ROYAL BOROUGH OF KINGSTON UPON THAMES

achieving for children

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FOREWORD

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Our vision is for a place where all children grow up free from fearing or experiencing violence. We want them to be happy, succeed at school and beyond, and be supported by families and communities who together help them thrive. Most children in Kingston and Richmond do achieve and thrive, however we also know that children and young people are disproportionately affected by high-harm crimes, either as a victim or offender. These include child exploitation (sexual and criminal), county lines, knife crime, serious violence, trafficking, gangs and groups. No child should feel unsafe in their community, however for some, fear of crime and violence has become part of their daily life.

We know that violence is preventable and Kingston and Richmond's violence reduction plans set out the partnership approach to reducing violence and vulnerability in each borough. However, violence cannot be attributed to a single factor: its causes are complex and occur at different levels. We recognise that there is only so much that the council, police and our partners can do to prevent violence so our approach also sets out the foundations for a partnership with the community.

Our commitment to a shared approach to reduce violence requires a shift in the relationship between the public agencies and our local communities. We will adopt a contextual violence reduction approach which builds on existing approaches and frameworks, and focuses on key situations referenced in the contextual safeguarding framework. A shared vocabulary and vision will inform our work with individuals, families and the contexts in which they live their lives.

Key to this will be raising aspirations for children and young people, instilling a belief that they can achieve great things.

01 INTRODUCTION

The Youth Safety Strategy for Kingston and Richmond is a joint strategy between the Kingston and Richmond Community Safety Partnerships which are responsible for its governance. The strategy aims to coordinate how we support and respond to the factors impacting on youth safety for children and young adults aged up to 25. These could include, but are not limited to: Youth Justice Strategic Plan, violence reduction plans, serious youth violence and knife crime, the Mayors office for policing and crime (MOPAC) response to County Lines, Multi-agency Risk Vulnerability and Exploitation (MARVE) Strategy, Kingston and Richmond Safeguarding Children's Partnership (KRSCP) Joint Missing Protocol.

The Youth Safety Strategy seeks to understand what is happening for the children and young people within our community and provide a coordinated response to contextual safeguarding and exploitation (CS&E) concerns. Therefore, the two overarching operational frameworks to be considered within the Youth Safety Strategy are the MARVE Protocol and the Contextual Safeguarding Framework.

The MARVE protocol outlines its purpose as 'to safeguard children and young people from harm as a result of going missing, child sexual exploitation, or trafficking (or exploitation arising as a consequence of being the victim of trafficking, including county line drug dealing)'. A multi-agency focus on risk, harm and vulnerability is critical.
To achieve this, four key areas for activity have been identified: understanding and identification, prevention, intervention and support, and disruption and justice.

Contextual safeguarding

Contextual safeguarding as a framework is provided by the Contextual Safeguarding Network and based on research which identifies how to ensure contextual safeguarding is sufficiently embedded (Firmin, et al., 2016). The framework comprised four domains which outline how to ensure 'a safeguarding and child protection system would be contextual'.

Target

Designed to identify, assess and intervene with the social conditions of abuse (targeted the nature of the contexts in which abuse occurred rather than just the individuals affected by it).

Legislative framework

Drew extra-familial contexts into traditional child protection and broader child welfare and safeguarding processes (which were traditionally focused on families), as opposed to purely community safety and policing.

Partnerships

Built partnerships with sectors and individuals who managed or had a reach into extra-familial settings where children spent their time (such as those responsible for the management of schools, transport services, shopping centres, libraries, take-away shops).

Outcomes

Measured impact on the contexts where children were vulnerable to abuse or harm (rather than just focusing on a change in the behaviour of individuals who continued to spend time in harmful spaces).

Therefore, in an effort to streamline these areas of focus into the 'how' of this youth safety strategy, the strategy will be framed within the four focus areas: identification, assessment, intervention and monitoring.

This therefore ensures a holistic model which can be actioned beyond just the focus of social care to have a community focus. It considers that although adolescents are often described with synonyms to 'risk taking behaviour', children who are at risk of contextual safeguarding and exploitation (CS&E) concerns are not responsible for the harm caused to them and should be protected from it.

This is further understood in the various pieces of research which highlight that for adolescents (children) whose lives have exposed them to adverse childhood experiences (ACEs), neglect, maltreatment, domestic violence and parental substance misuse may be 'push' factors and vulnerabilities leading to exploitation.

As children mature into adolescents, it is important that professionals remember that they are still considered as children and not consider them to be 'mini adults'. Therefore, within this strategy, when discussing the stage within adolescents rather than using the term 'young people', they will continue to be referred to as children. This is to support a child-focused approach to their needs and response to the harm they encounter.

02 AIM

This strategy reflects learning and best practice and is aspirational. It is not a definitive and static document, but will evolve as we continue our work alongside the families we support, the professionals we collaborate with and the communities we serve. It attempts to build capacity and learn from evidence and promising practice, both locally and more widely.

We will always work from the premise of a 'child first' approach, even when the concerns are described as offending behaviour and considered within the concept of contextual safeguarding. The premise and response regarding the identification, assessment, intervention and monitoring of the risks posed to children in their adolescence is that first and foremost they are children, and second that these are safeguarding and child protection concerns. Children whose behaviour is described as risky, harmful, criminal or abusive are often vulnerable and at risk of exploitation. By definition, a child who has experienced exploitation cannot consent to their own abuse, even if they do not see themselves as a victim or their actions appear to be 'consensual' or 'choices'.

We will aim to improve outcomes that have a positive impact for the child. We will prioritise developing, sustaining and nurturing relationships with children, and we will be child-centred, taking into account the wishes and feelings of children, whilst remaining focused on safeguarding and promoting their welfare.

We will not expect adolescents to respond and have the capacity as if they were 'mini adults'. We will evidence this through working in partnership with parents, carers and other concerned adults in the community and the child's life to build their capacity and resilience to help children. We will work to empower families and build on their strengths and expertise. We will be proactive in sharing and analysing information so we identify and have a profile of children at risk of extra-familial harm, by identifying vulnerabilities to crime, to exploitation and/or abuse. We will reduce the vulnerability and the risk of exploitation through providing innovative and evidence-based interventions to children and their families at 'teachable, reachable moments.' We will focus on relationships with children and families, seeking to work 'with' and not 'do to' or 'for'.

03 NATIONAL CONTEXT

Children's Services have a duty to ensure that children are protected from harm within the home, also known as intra-familial harm. However, adolescence is a time where young people spend more of their time outside the home, with their peers, at school and in the community. While recognising that risk taking is a normal part of development and most children are able to negotiate this period of transition from childhood to adulthood without serious consequences.

Research tells us that for children whose lives have exposed them to adverse childhood experiences such as neglect, maltreatment, domestic violence and parental substance misuse, there is an increased likelihood that their own risk taking may raise safeguarding concerns, which may require a multi-agency approach and input from statutory services (Brandon and Thorburn, 2008; Brown and Ward, 2013, Child Information Gateway, 2009, National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC), 2020, Research in Practice 2014).

Since approximately 2012, with serious case reviews linked to child sexual exploitation, such as Rochdale, Rotherham and Derby, there is a growing importance for services to develop a response to extra-familial harm related to child sexual exploitation. This has recently been developed more broadly to consider the other types of exploitation which also occur (not limited to): drug exploitation including county lines, criminal exploitation, gang affiliation, serious youth violence including knife crime, harmful sexual behaviour, and children who are reported missing. This harm often occurs outside the family context and often by a non-family member (peer, adult, or unknown person). This harm may occur within contexts or 'spaces and places' that the child is already known to and new contexts (schools, neighbourhoods, online, wider community). More information in relation to contextual safeguarding.

In July 2020, the Youth Violence Commission published its final report into the root causes of serious violence affecting children, and long-term solutions to this complex problem. The report highlights the drivers of lack of investment in children's early years, exclusion from education, lack of investment in youth services, cuts to policing, the lack of good and well-paid employment, unsafe and unaffordable housing, child poverty and inequality.

An awareness and response from a wide range of partners addressing these different contexts and issues is required when working to safeguard children in their adolescence. Many of the areas highlighted are addressed in Kingston and Richmond's Early Help Strategy, but we need to make sure that we promote the child's and the family's resilience and their ability to respond to changing challenges by equipping them with a variety of coping strategies. Our role is not only to protect, but also to prepare children for adulthood.

We have given consideration to how safeguarding responses to intra-familial harm can often appear to blame the family, overlook and exacerbate the vulnerabilities presented within adolescents. Therefore, we are considering how to adapt our responses to ensure that we provide a response which works with families and their community to address the concerns related to extra-familial harm.

We acknowledge that this is a complex area and that to bring about positive outcomes, we must accept and respond to the complexity of families, their experiences inside and outside the home, and the systems and institutions in which they live and function, whilst building relationships, remaining focused on their need for safety and bring about positive and lasting change. This will support the child's progression from adolescence and prepare them for adulthood.

04 LOCAL CONTEXT

- A 19 year old was enjoying a night out in Kingston when he was fatally stabbed - he had never been in trouble with the police. A 20 year old man was sentenced to 19 years imprisonment for manslaughter.
- Police were called by London Ambulance Service to an injured female in Kingston. At the scene a 17 year old girl was found suffering from stab wounds. A 17 year old female and an 18 year old female were arrested on suspicion of GBH with intent.
- A 25 year old was killed after being hit and dragged under a car for half a mile. He was found by friends in the middle of the road, and despite paramedics rushing to the scene, he was pronounced dead at the roadside.

These are some of the local people who were affected by violence in the last year. They illustrate the consequences of violence locally, to the victims, those who loved them and their communities. It has serious, wide-ranging impacts on the health of victims, perpetrators, bystanders, and families and friends.

We have seen a shift towards serious violence involving young people under 25 years of age, as well as an increase in 'county lines' and associated criminal behaviours. A locality review carried out by the Violence and Vulnerability Unit (VVU) highlighted that there is an emerging issue with gangs, violence and exploitation in Kingston. Disclosures from young people support this, highlighting links and association with gangs and criminal activity as a result of intimidation and threat.

The majority of children affected by youth violence have suffered trauma in their early childhood and it is our most vulnerable who are most at risk. However, it is complex and we know a significant number of our young offenders are also victims of exploitation. There are examples of how young people change from being victim to offender on a daily basis.

Young people know their neighbourhoods well. They need a variety of spaces to be able to freely choose what they do, they need to feel safe and they welcome the presence of adults in their world. They also face challenges and have talked about their fears about knife crime and their frustration that spaces become unavailable and unsafe after dark, which in the winter months makes life restricting. Some have reported knowing young people who carry knives for protection following robberies or stabbings in the area where they live. There is a growing need to build individual and community resilience, as well as raise awareness and understanding of the impact of violent crime and exploitation and the context in which it occurs.

We have strong partnerships in Kingston and Richmond with a shared commitment to reduce violence and exploitation across the community safety partnerships, children and adult safeguarding partnerships and the Youth Offending Service Management Board. Responses to reduce violence and exploitation must be focused on the child and the adult environments that shape them. Children need access to services, guidance and opportunities that build their strengths, capacities and aspirations, and develop their pro-social relationships with adults.

For the Safeguarding Partnership, contextual safeguarding is one of the priorities for 2020/22. Serious youth violence and child criminal exploitation is also a strategic priority for the Youth Justice Service Strategic Board for 2020/24. Work has been ongoing since 2014 around child sexual exploitation and this agenda has expanded over time. This strategy seeks to provide a coordinated approach to the shared priorities of each strategic board.

Whilst Kingston and Richmond are statistically safe and affluent boroughs, we have relatively high incidence of vulnerable adolescent behaviour characterised by substance use, alcohol use, and mental health need for a London borough. Each of these may increase a child's vulnerability to exploitation. Whilst our boroughs may be perceived as peaceful and green, it is important to recognise that there are pockets of deprivation and that boroughs are not impermeable and there is travel within and between our boroughs by children.

Children from Richmond have a higher missing prevalence than from Kingston, for both boroughs, a small group of vulnerable children have multiple missing episodes. We have seen a small rise in referrals for harmful sexual behaviour (HSB) and greater rises for boys, with concerns for criminal exploitation. We know that a proportion of missing children have special educational needs and disability (SEND) and are more at risk of being excluded from school. Our children who are at risk of 'county lines', a form of drug exploitation, may be transported by trains and we also know that cabs, cars and private vehicles have also been used, transporting our children across the London boroughs and out to the counties to places including South Wales.

In the last few years, we have carried out a number of child safeguarding practice reviews with contextual safeguarding themes and in March 2020, a national themed report was published regarding criminal exploitation, which related to some of our local interventions and some Kingston young people.

05 APPROACHES AND FRAMEWORKS

In addition to the contextual safeguarding framework, it is important to understand how we work with children during adolescence. These approaches are outlined below.

Signs of Safety

Achieving for Children uses the Signs of Safety approach within all aspects of the organisation. It is a strength-based approach which not only frames how we record information, but also how we present as professionals with services users and colleagues alike. Signs of Safety is based on the notion that family-led plans, based on prior experiences that have gone well, are the best method of intervention and will have the longest lasting change. In relation to cases where we are working more directly with children, it is important for them to have a say in what goes on their plan, and that everything is written in a way that they understand.

Trauma informed

A trauma informed approach is a change of perspective from 'what's wrong with you' to 'what happened to you'

Trauma can be defined as 'an event, series of events, or set of circumstances that is experienced by an individual as physically or emotionally harmful and that has lasting adverse effects on wellbeing'. Many of the children that we work with will have experienced one or more adverse childhood experiences. Recognising these experiences and developing relationship based approaches that help to mitigate their impact is a key element of a trauma informed approach. Using a trauma informed lens, a child's responses to trauma can be seen as understandable and courageous attempts to survive. A trauma informed approach creates opportunities for children to build a sense of trust, control and empowerment.

Restorative practice

Restorative approaches seek to work 'with' children and families, not doing 'to' or 'for.'

Restorative practice represents an approach to address conflict between individuals and communities which values the dignity of each party involved in an event. It recognises the needs of each other in order to heal situations of harm and relationship breakdown. The integrity of the process is ensured when the needs of both parties are valued and respected equally.

Teachable, reachable moments

Teachable, reachable moments have been proposed as events or circumstances which can lead individuals to positive behaviour change. The teachable moment has been intuitively accepted as an important focus for professionals within helping professions and has recently been explored further by The Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel (2020) and its report on safeguarding children at risk from criminal exploitation.

The report references 'critical moments' and reflects upon a concept in systemic theory literature described as a critical moment which changes social worlds. Systemic therapists promote the importance of acting wisely to identify when the words used at a particular critical moment can have a powerful influence on the direction taken after the conversation has ended.

Identity development: using an identity lens

Recent developments in evidence-based practice (Hazel et al., 2020) highlight the importance of using an 'identity lens' to support children at risk of exploitation and youth violence. The way that a child behaves in any given situation is guided by their identity. We all rely on our personal narrative to inform how we play out any situation, subconsciously asking ourselves, 'what would my life story character do here?'. Our reliance on our identity becomes more obvious in times of stress or when we admit that we are unsure how to behave. Consequently, when a child behaves in a way that is negative or anti-social (and may even be defined as offending), we know that their identity has allowed that. This approach is closely linked to the evidence base considered within the adverse childhood experiences and trauma informed approaches literature.

Recognising the crucial importance of a child's identity to their behaviour means that we can develop tools to better understand negative behaviour from their perspective. It prompts us to look out for clues to their behaviour in how they express their identity. It also provides us with a focus to help them develop their behaviour towards positive outcomes in a Child First way.

Using an identity lens: constructive working with children in the criminal justice system

06 STRATEGIC RESPONSE

Kingston and Richmond Community Safety Partnerships

Kingston and Richmond Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs) are multi-agency strategic groups set up as part of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998. Their role is to determine key priorities for action based on an assessment of risk, threat and harm and to focus resources accordingly. The partnership approach is built on the premise that no single agency can deal with, or be responsible for dealing with, complex community safety issues, and that these issues can be addressed more effectively and efficiently through working in partnership. They are made up of both responsible authorities[11] and co-operating bodies within the boroughs and have a common goal to make their respective boroughs safe places to live, visit, learn and work.

Reducing violence and vulnerability is a strategic priority for both CSPs and there is a requirement from the Violence Reduction Unit (VRU) at the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime for every London borough to have a serious violence reduction plan. The Kingston and Richmond Violence Reduction Plans set out the partnership approach in each borough to reduce violence and safeguard children and vulnerable adults from exploitation.

The definition of serious violence has been agreed across the South West Borough Command Unit for consistency and comprises the following:

- drug related violence
- serious youth violence
- knife crime
- firearms related crime
- gangs and organised criminal networks
- robbery
- night time economy and public disorder
- threats to life
- criminal exploitation linked to gangs and county lines – this relates to county lines that have been dismantled. Gang exit scheme, safeguarding plans for child criminal exploitation, child sexual exploitation and cuckooed addresses.

1 The responsible authorities are Metropolitan Police, Local Authorities, National Probation Service, London Community Rehabilitation Company, London Fire Brigade, SW Clinical Commissioning Group. Co-operating bodies include the London Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC), as well as key local partners with a vested interest in community safety.

The violence reduction plans consist of mandatory actions that the VRU expects all community safety partnerships (CSPs) and boroughs to have in place to deliver a public health approach to tackling serious violence utilising a multi-agency approach including key partners, such as local council, Achieving for Children, Met Police, and probation.

The plans address the following specific themes.

- Governance
- Analysis and enforcement
- Reducing access to weapons
- Safeguarding and educating young people
- Working with neighbourhoods and communities to reduce violence
- Supporting victims of violence and vulnerability
- Positive diversion from violence

Actions are led by key CSP agencies to achieve prescribed outcomes and report back on progress to the CSP and VRU, ensuring ownership and accountability on deliverables. The partners and services outlined in the Youth Safety Strategy supports the CSPs to deliver on key elements of the plans.

Vulnerable Child and Adolescent subgroup (VCA)

The Vulnerable Child and Adolescent Subgroup is a two borough subgroup chaired by a Police DCI and AfC's Director of Children's Social Care. The group meets quarterly and looks at all issues around vulnerable children and adolescents related to exploitation, including trafficking, gangs and groups, harmful sexual behaviour, substance use, sexual exploitation, knife crime, radicalisation, missing children, modern slavery, It looks at the performance of the multi-agency risk and vulnerable to exploitation (MARVE) Panel, which meets monthly.

The aims of the VCA include (but are not limited to):

- providing clarity on how safeguarding is addressed within the specific priority areas of child exploitation, addressing agencies' responses to managing children missing from home, care or school
- having a clear understanding of the local situation regarding children missing from home, care, or school and incorporating national learning and local learning into the subgroups' terms of reference and meeting agenda
- having a clear understanding of the prevalence of child exploitation throughout Kingston and Richmond and incorporating national and local learning into the group's terms of reference and meeting agenda
- being mindful of the increased risk of child exploitation for children privately fostered or trafficked. The sub group also drives the strategic priority for the Youth Justice Management Board of seeking to reduce serious youth violence and child criminal exploitation

The MARVE panel meets monthly and is focused on risks associated with contextual and extra-familial harm.

Youth Integrated Offender Management and Integrated Offender Management Panels (YIOM and IOM)

The integrated offender management monthly risk management panel meetings are a tested method of preventing further offending of the most violent and persistent offenders in the borough. The IOM panel has the engagement of all relevant partners and provides a platform for discussions and assignment of actions to all partners, designed to reduce re-offending. Key IOM partners include the following.

- Police
- Probation Service
- Local Authority Community Safety Services
- Prison resettlement staff
- Local substance misuse services
- YOS/transition worker
- Mental health treatment services
- Local housing services
- Local Voluntary, Community Sector and faith organisations
- Local employment, education and training services
- Department for Work and Pensions
- Children and Adult Safeguarding
- Female offender services

Effective IOM panel work relies on the engagement and meaningful contributions from all these partner agencies, especially for higher priority cases of prolific offenders.

Missing panel

The MISPER panel meets fortnightly on a Wednesday and is a multi-agency professionals meeting which provides an update on responses and actions taken in relation to the missing child. Managers should review all return interviews and any decisions made regarding the missing episode recorded within 24 hours. If there is no involvement from Children's Services, the return interview team manager will lead on reporting in relation to the child. There are strong links with the monthly risk of missing education (ROME) panel which considers children at risk or excluded from school, or missing education for any other reasons. There is a health link with the missing panel.

Daily risk briefings (DRB)

The Youth Justice Service, with police, lead a multi-agency daily risk briefing (DRB) for daily updates on intelligence, overnight arrests and children in police custody so that new information can be acted upon quickly, as required. Please refer to the Daily Risk Briefing Terms of Reference.

07 OPERATIONAL RESPONSE

Arrangements for working together

'Working Together to Safeguard Children, 2018' outlines that as a partnership, we must coordinate and assure our local work around vulnerability and safety for adolescents from early help and prevention to interventions at levels to prevent harm and respond to significant danger and criminality.

The Safeguarding Partnership in Kingston and Richmond oversees the MARVE and multi-agency safeguarding training, child protection conferences and work with children looked after, and those who have left local authority care. Work strands around vulnerable adolescents report to the vulnerable child and adolescent (VCA) subgroup. The subgroup holds our dynamic multi-agency action plan. We undertake multi-agency campaigns in March around child sexual exploitation awareness and around substance misuse at summer holiday time. Regular multi-agency audits take place and report around adolescent risk issues to the VCA subgroup. We have a dataset which considers issues around missing and MARVE and we look at that in each subgroup too.

Online safety is a key element of our approach and this links to our online safety strategy, which has recently been developed, overseen by the learning and development subgroup. We provide regular training and advice to agencies.

Therefore, this strategy is not just the responsibility of colleagues within Achieving for Children, but like other areas of working together a response to a youth safety strategy is a community-wide response. Therefore, each section below outlines how we can each respond, with the aim of each organisation or agency creating its own operational response for implementation of the Youth Safety Strategy. Agencies or organisations encouraged to create an operational response would include, but are not limited to: children's social care, police, health, education, housing, local authority and voluntary sector, community and faith organisations.

An outline of this operational response is provided below to consider the development of each organisation's operational response.

Identification

Our professional understanding of extra-familial harm will help us as professionals in identifying children appropriately who are vulnerable and at risk of extra-familial harm. There are various tools available on the contextual safeguarding network to help all professionals in identification and the use of similar models to the assessment triange. Another aspect of the identification process is the recognition of 'teachable, reachable moments'.

Teachable, reachable moments have been proposed as events or circumstances which can lead individuals to positive behaviour change. The teachable moment has been intuitively accepted as an important focus for professionals within helping professions and has recently been explored further by The Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel (2020) and its report on safeguarding children at risk from criminal exploitation.

Within every organisation there needs to be an operational response to maximise the opportunities for teachable, reachable moments and ensure service provision is aligned accordingly.

Assessment

Assessment should include the use of the various tools on offer from the contextual safeguarding network. This will not always require statutory intervention from Children's Services and/or Youth Justice Service. Universal services and the early help resilience networks may be used to assess need and provide timely interventions that are community based. Organisations may want to consider, in partnership with the contextual safeguarding lead, how this could be incorporated into their operational response to the youth safety strategy. When statutory intervention is required, this assessment and any early help responses will aid in understanding what the worries are for a named child, how the concerns were identified and why statutory intervention is considered appropriate, by evidencing what support has been offered. To support the assessment of whether a child has been a victim of modern slavery, a referral to the national referral mechanism should be completed.

Intervention

Determining the level of Intervention is dependent on the assessed threshold which can be determined by the KRSCP Multi-Agency Threshold Multi-agency threshold document, Kingston and Richmond LSCB (document, the MARVE Protocol (p 27-30). Youth justice interventions will be provided where a child has been deemed suitable for an out of court disposal or convicted of an offence post court.

Resources provided need to consider what support can be offered by each partner agency or stakeholder and when and how referrals into Children's Services may be considered appropriate. Each agency may offer an intervention in their response to the youth safety strategy. The offer provided below through AfC, aligns with the KRSCP multi-agency threshold guidance.

Support for children

Level 1

Kingston and Richmond have a wealth of expertise and experience within our voluntary sector partnership, with many organisations and services working in partnership towards our strategic aims. These organisations are represented across both the strategic and operational partnership and will be fundamental to the aims of this strategy.

- Achieving for Children's Youth Directory
- Richmond's youth offer
- Connected Kingston Children and Young People

Nationally, there is recognition of the need to support young people and those who work with them around the risks to violence. You can find more information about support and resources at The Safety Box or national youth safety websites.

Level 2

Vulnerable to child sexual exploitation (CSE): Child sexual exploitation awareness group (CAG)

The child sexual exploitation awareness group provides a series of up to eight group sessions for young girls aged 13 to 16, to raise awareness of child sexual exploitation, enable them to make the right choices and know where to go for support from specialist services. CAG also provides an introductory session for parents and carers on child sexual exploitation and outlines the programme content. CAG aims to raise awareness of some of the signs of child sexual exploitation.

Vulnerable to child criminal or drug exploitation: Project X

Project X is a new project funded through the Violence Reduction Unit, focusing on reducing serious youth violence and knife crime across Kingston and Richmond. This includes working with children at risk of criminal exploitation as well as victims of serious youth violence and robberies. The project also works within schools to divert children from the criminal justice system and engages with children at the point of arrest and within police custody. This project is called Engage X and seeks to engage children at 'teachable, reachable moments' and before offending behaviour becomes entrenched.

Referral into Children's Social Care is required at Level 3 and Level 4.

Level 3

Risk related to county lines: Rescue and Response

Rescue and Response is a pan-London county lines project created to support children up to the age of 25 who are on the cusp, are currently or have been criminally exploited in the context of county lines. The project has three main providers (St Giles, Abianda and Safer London). The provision of support includes one-to-one support for children exploited from London, help to manage risk and safeguarding, support to move away from criminal exploitation, family support, help to build network analysis through pan-London intelligence gathering and an out of hour's phone number for professionals operated by St Giles Trust to support with rescuing children in the counties.

Level 4

Child sexual exploitation: Phoenix Project

In response to Kingston's and Richmond's LSCB strategy towards a coordinated approach in addressing child sexual exploitation, AfC developed the 'Phoenix Project' in April 2016 to address the key factors that may place children at risk of, or are, experiencing sexual exploitation. The project's aim is to provide direct intervention for children at risk of child sexual exploitation or who are being sexually exploited and to provide a personalised one-to-one support package that responds to the needs identified.

Child drug exploitation, criminal or gang affiliation: Crying Sons

Crying Sons offers targeted dynamic support around the addiction of gang activity and local or county line drug dealing, peer-on-peer grooming and sexual exploitation.

Adolescent Safeguarding and Youth Justice: SHIFT

Kingston and Richmond councils have recently partnered with SHIFT, which aims to break the destructive cycle of children and young people committing crimes so that, instead, they make a positive contribution to our society and build better lives for themselves. SHIFT intends to work intensively with 25 children and young people over an 18 month period, focused on preventing children entering care and custody. SHIFT is also focused on supporting system change within youth justice and the principles of a 'child first' youth justice system.

Transitions to adult services

There are clear arrangements in place to support transitions between Children's Services and Adult Services with agreed strategic partnerships and operational arrangements in place for services such as the Youth Justice Service and National Probation Service, SEND support through education, health and care plans and for children leaving care. There is, however, recognition by the Kingston and Richmond Safeguarding Children's Partnership for specialist services that can reach beyond 18 years where the above transitions do not occur, but young people are at risk of exploitation and violence.

08 AREAS OF FOCUS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF CONTEXTUAL SAFEGUARDING

Response to locations 'spaces and places'

In understanding safety for children, the locations where harm may occur also needs to be considered within the Youth Safety Strategy. These locations may be geographical areas of risk including gang territories, congregation points, anti-social behaviour and crime hot spots, cross borough conflict and physically unsafe areas. Places of concern could include residential addresses, community spaces such as parks, car parks and virtual places including YouTube postings, sites created by children and social network links.

Please send an email to contextualsafeguarding.exploitation@achievingforchildren.org.uk if you have any concerns related to a space or place of concern that is related to extra-familial harm.

Awareness and training

We continue to ensure best practice and remain child-focused by developing training and awareness strategies that develop our awareness and knowledge of contextual safeguarding and exploitation. This is done through three objectives which support the operational and strategic responses to community and youth safety. The KRSCP hosts and commissions much of the local multi-agency training and this is face-to-face and online for a range of adolescent vulnerability topics.

Contextual safeguarding and exploitation training

This is training provided to colleagues within AfC and the wider community that increases awareness and understanding of contextual safeguarding and exploitation, to ensure a coordinated and consistent approach to children who are at risk of extra-familial harm.

Contextual safeguarding and exploitation champions

Practitioners based within AfC can take the lead and support colleagues on best practices related to identification and assessment through direct work.

Community champions

We are plan to develop a community response within the two boroughs where key leaders can be part of the strategy and development of community safety.